OLD FRENCH SERIES · VOLUME 22

The Romance of the Rose

Jean de Meun

Le Roman de la Rose

The Romance of the Rose

Part Three: Nature, Genius, and the Rose

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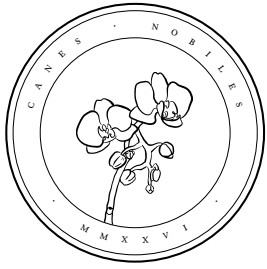
with a word-for-word interlinear English translation

preserving the original word order



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The Old French text follows Ernest Langlois' text, Le Roman de la Rose par Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, Société des anciens textes français, tomes IV and V (Paris, 1922–24), verses 14547–21780

Translated and composed with AI, edited by Christopher Hench
Artwork by Esther Steves

Jean de Meun's continuation runs on from verse 14547, where Fair Welcome answers the Old Woman, and this third part of the whole Romance ends at 21780, the last verse of the poem. The spelling is Langlois', and his accentuation is his own rather than the Société's rule: the acute falls on a final é or -és, so esté, verité, and trés, and elsewhere only in chiét; the grave only on a final -ès, as in près, emprès, and Herculès; the circumflex nowhere; and the tréma wherever two vowels do not make a diphthong. The letters u and v, i and j, are distinguished. The verse number the margin carries every fifth row is Langlois' own, which he prints every fourth. The 187 verse paragraphs his page indents that do not open a section are indented as he sets them, and the speeches he leaves without an opening or a closing mark are left so.

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Fair Welcome Answers the Old Woman

I

The old woman has finished her sermon, and Fair Welcome fears her less than before; the castle would be easy to take but for Jealousy and her three porters, who rejoice that Wicked Tongue is dead. Fair Welcome answers that he knows nothing of love and wants no more wealth than he has, but since he took the lover's garland, the young man may come to see him while Jealousy is away. The old woman promises to hide him.

Ainsinc la vieille a sarmoné.
Thus the old-woman has preached
Bel Acueil, qui mot n'a soné,
Fair Welcome who word not-has sounded
mout volentiers tout escouta.
very willingly all listened
De la vieille meins se douta
Of the old-woman less himself feared
qu'il n'avait onques fait devant,
than-he had ever done before
e bien se vait apercevant
and well himself goes perceiving
que, se ne fust pour Jalousie
that if not it-were for Jealousy
e ses portiers, ou tant se fie,
and her porters in-whom so-much herself trusts
au meins les treis qui li demeurent,
at-the least the three who to-her remain

qui toujourz par le chastel cueurent
who always through the castle run
tuit forsené, pour le defendre,
all maddened for it to-defend
legiers fust li chasteaus a prendre;
easy were the castle to take
mais ja n'iert pris, si come il cuide,
but ever not-will-be taken so as he thinks
tant i metent cil grant estuide.
so-much there put those great study
De Male Bouche qui morz iere
Of Wicked Tongue who dead was
ne faisait nus d'aus laide chiere,
not made any of-them ugly face
qu'il n'estait point laienz amez:
for-he not-was at-all within loved
toujourz les avait diffamez
always them had defamed
vers Jalousie e touz traïz,
toward Jealousy and all betrayed
si qu'il iert si forment haïz
so that-he was so strongly hated
qu'il ne fust pas d'un ail raienz
that-he not were at-all for-a garlic ransomed
de nul qui demourast laienz,
by any who dwelt within
se n'iert, espeir, de Jalousie:
if not-it-was perhaps by Jealousy
cele amait trop sa janglerie.
she loved exceedingly his chatter

Volentiers li prestait l'oreille,
Willingly to-him she-lent the-ear
si riert ele triste a merveille
so in-turn-was she sad to marvel
quant li lierres chalumelait,
when the thief piped
qui nule rien ne li celait
who any thing not from-her concealed
don il li peüst souvenir,
whereof it to-her might come-to-mind
pour quei maus en deüst venir.
for which harm thence should come
Mais de ce trop grant tort avait
But in this exceedingly great wrong he-had
qu'il disait plus qu'il ne savait,
that-he said more than-he — knew
e toujourz par ses flateries
and always by his flatteries
ajoustait aus choses oïes;
added to-the things heard
toujourz acreissait les nouveles
always increased the news
quant eus n'ierent bones ne beles,
when they not-were good nor fair
e les bones apetisait.
and the good made-small
Ainsinc Jalousie atisait,
Thus Jealousy he-stirred-up

come cil qui toute sa vie
as he who all his life
usait en jangle e en envie;
spent in chatter and in envy
n'onques messe chanter n'en firent,
nor-ever mass sing not-thereof they-made
tant furent lié quant mort le virent.
so-much were glad when dead him they-saw
Riens n'ont perdu, si con leur semble,
Anything not-have lost so as to-them seems
car quant mis se seront ensemble,
for when put themselves will-be together
garder cuident si la pourprise
to-guard they-think so the enclosure
qu'el n'avrait garde d'estre prise
that-it not-would-have fear of-being taken
s'il i venait cinc cenz mil omes.
if-it there came five hundred thousand men
«Certes», font il, «po poissant somes,
Certainly say they little powerful we-are
se senz ce larron ne savons
if without this thief not we-know
garder tout quanque nous avons.
to-guard all whatever we have
Ce faus traïteur, ce truant,
This false traitor this vagabond
aut s'ame ou feu d'enfer puant,
may-go his-soul into-the fire of-hell stinking
qui la puist ardeir e destruire!
which it may burn and destroy

Onques ne fist çaienz fors nuire.»
Ever not he-did in-here except harm
Ce vont li trei portier disant,
This go the three porters saying
mais, que qu'il aillent devisant,
but whatever that-they may-go relating
forment en sont afeibleié.
greatly thereby are weakened
Quant la vieille ot tant fableié,
When the old-woman had so-much talked
Bel Acueil reprent la parole;
Fair Welcome takes-up-again the word
a tart comence e po parole,
at late begins and little speaks
e dit, come bien enseigniez:
and says as well taught
«Ma dame, quant vous m'enseigniez
My lady when you me-teach
vostre art si debonairement,
your art so graciously
je vous en merci bonement;
I you thereof thank kindly
mais quant palé m'avez d'amer,
but when spoken to-me-you-have of-loving
dou douz mal ou tant a d'amer,
of-the sweet ill in-which so-much there-is of-bitter
ce m'est trop estrange matire.
this to-me-is exceedingly strange matter
Riens n'en sai fors par oïr dire,
Anything not-thereof I-know except by hearing say

ne jamais n'en quier plus saveir.
nor ever not-thereof I-seek more to-know
Quant vous me repalez d'aveir,
When you to-me speak-in-turn of-wealth
qu'il seit par mei granz amassez,
that-it be by me great amassed
ce que j'ai me soufist assez.
this that I-have me suffices enough
D'aveir bele maniere e gente,
Of-having fair manner and noble
la vueil je bien metre m'entente.
there wish I well to-put my-attention
De magique, l'art au deable,
Of magic the-art of-the devil
je n'en crei riens, seit veirs ou fable.
I not-thereof believe anything be-it true or fable
Mais dou vallet que vous me dites,
But of-the young-man whom you to-me tell
ou tant a bontez e merites
in-whom so-many there-are goodnesses and merits
que toutes graces i acueurent,
that all graces there run-together
s'il a graces, si li demeurent;
if-he has graces so to-him they-remain
je ne bé pas qu'eus seient meies,
I not aspire at-all that-they be mine
ainz les li quit; mais toutes veies
rather them to-him I-leave but all ways
nou hé je pas certainement,
not-him hate I at-all certainly

ne ne l'aim pas si finement,
nor not him-I-love at-all so perfectly
tout aie je pris son chapel,
although have I taken his garland
que pour ce mon ami l'apel,
that for this my friend him-I-call
se n'est de parole comune,
if not-it-is by word common
si con chascuns dit a chascune:
so as each-man says to each-woman
bien puissiez vous venir, amie.
well may you come friend
— Amis, e Deus vous beneïe.
Friend and God you bless
Ne que je l'aime ne l'eneur,
Nor that I him-love nor him-honor
se n'est par bien e par eneur.
if not-it-is by good and by honor
Mais puis qu'il le m'a presenté
But since that-he it to-me-has presented
e reçeü son present ai,
and received his present I-have
ce me deit bien plaire e soeir,
this me ought well please and suit
s'il peut, qu'il me viegne voeir,
if-he can that-he me may-come to-see
s'il a de mei voeir talent:
if-he has of me to-see desire

il ne me trouvera ja lent
he not me will-find ever slow
que nou receive volentiers;
that not-him I-may-receive willingly
mais que ce seit endementiers
provided that this be meanwhile
que Jalousie iert hors de vile,
that Jealousy will-be outside of town
qui forment le het e devile,
who strongly him hates and reviles
si dout je, coment qu'il aviegne,
so fear I however that-it may-happen
s'ele iert or hors qu'el n'i seurviegne,
if-she will-be now out that-she there may-come-upon
car, puis qu'ele a fait emmaler
for since that-she has made pack-up
tout son harneis pour hors aler,
all her gear for out to-go
e de remaindre avons congié,
and of remaining we-have leave
quant seur son chemin a songié,
when upon her way she-has dreamed
souvent en mi veie retourne,
often in mid way she-returns
e touz nous tempeste e bestourne.
and all us she-storms-at and turns-upside-down
E, s'ele i vient par aventure,
And if-she there comes by chance
tant est vers mei crueuse e dure,
so-much is toward me cruel and hard

s'ele le peut çaienz trouver,
if-she him can in-here find
n'en puisse ele ja plus prouver, 14660
not-thereof may she ever more prove
se sa cruauté remembrez,
if her cruelty you-remember
je serai touz vis desmembrez».
I will-be all alive dismembered
E la vieille mout l'asseüre:
And the old-woman much him-reassures
«Seur mei», fait ele, «seit la cure.
Upon me says she be the care
De l'i trouver est ce neienz, 14665
Of him-there finding is this nothing
e fust Jalousie çaienz,
and were Jealousy in-here
car je sai tant de repostaille
for I know so-much of hiding
que plus tost en un tas de paille,
that more soon in a heap of straw
si m'aïst Deu e saint Roumi,
so me-help God and saint Romi
trouverait un euf de froumi 14670
one-would-find an egg of ant
que celui, quant repost l'avraie,
than him when hidden him-I-would-have
si bien repondre le savraie.
so well to-hide him I-would-know
— Don vueil je bien», fait cil, «qu'il viegne,
Then wish I well says he that-be may-come

mais que sagement se contiegne,
provided that wisely himself he-conduct
si qu'il se gart de touz outrages.
so that-he himself guard from all outrages
— Par la char Deu, tu diz que sages,
By the flesh (of-)God thou speakest as wise
com preuz e com bien apensez,
as worthy and as well thoughtful
fiz, qui tant vauz e qui tant sez.»
son who so-much art-worth and who so-much knowest

The Old Woman Brings the Lover In

II

The old woman hurries to the lover with the news, and he promises her a mantle, a gown, and boots. She tells him to come by the back door; he finds it ajar, slips in, and finds Wicked Tongue's gate broken by False Seeming and Constrained Abstinence, and Love's host inside. The poet blesses them and says that whoever would be a traitor should take False Seeming as his master.

Leur paroles atant faillirent.
Their words thereupon failed
D'ileuc atant se departirent.
From-there thereupon themselves they-departed
Bel Acueil en sa chambre va,
Fair Welcome into his chamber goes
e la vieille ausinc se leva,
and the old-woman likewise herself rose
pour besoignier par les maisons.
for to-work through the houses

Quant vint leus e tens e saisons
When came place and time and season
que la vieille pot seul choisir
that the old-woman could alone perceive
Bel Acueil, si que par loisir
Fair Welcome so that at leisure
peüst l'en bien a lui paler,
could one well to him speak
les degrez prent a devaler,
the steps she-takes to descend
tant que de la tour est issue;
until that from the tower she-is gone-out
n'onques ne cessa des l'issue
nor-ever not she-ceased from the-exit
jusqu'a mon ostel de troter;
until-to my lodging of trotting
pour mei la besoigne noter
for to-me the business to-tell
vint s'en a mei lasse e taganz:
came herself-thence to me weary and panting
«Vieng je», dist ele, «a tens as ganz,
Come I said she in time for-the gloves
se je vous di bones nouveles,
if I to-you tell good news
toutes fresches, toutes nouveles?
all fresh all new
— Aus ganz! dame, ainz vous di senz lobe
For-the gloves lady rather to-you I-say without deceit
que vous avreiz mantel e robe,
that you will-have mantle and gown

e chaperon a penne grise,
and hood with fur gray
e botes a vostre devise,
and boots at your wish
s'ous me dites chose qui vaille.»
if-you to-me tell thing which may-be-worth
Lors me dist la vieille que j'aille
Then to-me said the old-woman that I-go
sus ou chastel, ou l'en m'atent.
up into-the castle where one me-awaits
Ne s'en vost pas partir atant,
Not herself-thence wished at-all to-part thereupon
ainz m'aprist d'entrer la maniere:
rather me-taught of-entering the manner
«Vous enterreiz par l'uis darriere»,
You will-enter by the-door back
dist ele, «e jou vous vois ouvrir,
said she and I-it to-you go to-open
pour meauz la besoigne couvrir:
for better the business to-cover
cist passages est mout couverz;
this passage is very covered
sachiez cil uis ne fu ouverz
know that door not was opened
plus a de deus meis e demi.
more it-has than two months and half
— Dame», fis je, «par saint Remi,
Lady said I by saint Remi
coust l'aune dis livres ou vint»,
cost the-ell ten pounds or twenty

car mout bien d'Ami me souvint,
for very well of-Friend to-me it-came-to-mind
qui me dist que bien promeïsse,
who to-me said that well I-should-promise
neïs se rendre ne poïsse,
even if pay not I-could
«bon drap avreiz, ou pers ou vert,
good cloth you-will-have either blue or green
se je puis trouver l'uis ouvert.»
if I can find the-door open
La vieille atant de mei se part;
The old-woman thereupon from me herself parts
je m'en revois de l'autre part,
I myself-thence go-back of the-other part
par l'uis darriere ou dit m'avait,
by the-door back where told me-she-had
priant Deu qu'a dreit port m'aveit.
praying God that-to right port me-he-guide
A l'uis m'en vin, senz dire mot,
To the-door myself-thence I-came without saying word
que la vieille desfermé m'ot
which the old-woman unlocked for-me-had
e le tint encore entreclos.
and it kept still half-closed
Quant me fui mis enz, si le clos,
When myself was put in so it I-closed
si fumes plus seürement,
so we-were more securely

e je de ce meïsmement
and I of this especially
que je soi Male Bouche mort:
that I knew Wicked Tongue dead
onques ne fui si liez de mort.
ever not I-was so glad of death
Ileuc vi sa porte cassee.
There I-saw his gate broken
Je ne l'oi pas plus tost passee
I not it-had at-all more soon passed
qu'Amours trouvai dedenz la porte,
than-Love I-found within the gate
e son ost qui confort m'aporte.
and his host which comfort to-me-brings
Deus! quel avantage me firent
God what advantage to-me did
li vassal qui la desconfirent!
the vassals who it defeated
De Deu e de saint Benoeit
Of God and of saint Benedict
puissent il estre benoeit!
may they be blessed
Ce fu Faus Semblanz, li traïtres,
This was False Seeming the traitor
li fiz Barat, li faus menistres
the son (of-)Fraud the false minister
dame Ypocrisie sa mere,
(of-)lady Hypocrisy his mother
qui tant est aus vertuz amere,
who so-much is to-the virtues bitter

e dame Astenance Contrainte,
and lady Abstinence Constrained
qui de Faus Semblant est enceinte,
who by False Seeming is pregnant
preste d'enfanter Antecrit,
ready of-bearing Antichrist
si con je truis en livre escrit.
so as I find in book written
Cil la desconfirent senz faille:
Those it defeated without fail
si pri pour aus, vaille que vaille.
so I-pray for them be-worth what may-be-worth
Seigneur, qui veaut traïtres estre,
Lords who wishes traitor to-be
face de Faus Semblant son maistre,
let-him-make of False Seeming his master
e Contrainte Astenance preigne:
and Constrained Abstinence let-him-take
doubles seit e simple se feigne.
double let-him-be and simple himself feign

The Host Within, and Danger's Ambush

III

Inside, Sweet Looks brings the lover to Fair Welcome, they exchange courtesies, and Fair Welcome offers him whatever he has. When the lover reaches for the rose, Danger, who has been hiding in a corner writing down their words, drives him off, and Fear and Shame run up. They rebuke him for taking Fair Welcome's honest offer basely and for betraying the one who received him.

Quant cele porte que j'ai dite
When that gate which I-have told
vi ainsinc prise e desconfite,
I-saw thus taken and defeated
e trouvai l'ost armé laienz,
and I-found the-host armed within
prest d'assaillir, mes eauz veianz,
ready of-assaulting my eyes seeing
se j'oi joie, nus nou demant.
if I-had joy any not-it may-ask
Lors pensai mout parfondement
Then I-thought very deeply
coment j'avraie Douz Regart:
how I-would-have Sweet Looks
estes le vous, que Deus le gart!
behold him you whom God him keep
Qu'Amours par confort le m'enveie.
for-Love for comfort him to-me-sends
Trop grant piece perdu l'avaie.
Too great while lost him-I-had

Quant jou vi, tant m'en esjoï
When I-him saw so-much myself-thereof I-rejoiced
qu'a po ne m'en esvanoï.
that-by little — myself-thereof I-swooned
Mout refu liez de ma venue
Much in-turn-was glad of my coming
Douz Regarz, quant il l'a veüe;
Sweet Looks when he it-has seen
tantost a Bel Acueil me montre,
at-once to Fair Welcome me shows
qui saut sus e me vient encontre,
who leaps up and me comes toward
come courteis e bien apris,
as courteous and well taught
car sa mere l'avait apris.
for his mother him-had taught
Enclins le salu de venue,
Bowing him I-greet on arrival
e il ausinc me resalue,
and he likewise me greets-in-turn
e de son chapel me mercie.
and for his garland me thanks
«Sire», fis je, «ne vous peist mie,
Lord said I not you it-may-grieve at-all
ne m'en devez pas mercier;
not me-for-it you-ought at-all thank

mais je vous dei regracier
but I you ought thank-again
cent mile feiz quant me feïstes
a-hundred thousand times when to-me you-did
tant d'eneur que vous le preïstes.
so-much of-honor that you it took
E sachiez que, s'il vous plaisait,
And know that if-it you pleased
je n'ai riens qui vostre ne seit
I not-have anything which yours not be
pour faire tout vostre vouleir,
for to-do all your will
qui qu'en deüst rire ou douleir.
whoever that-thereof should laugh or grieve
Tout me vueil a vous asservir,
All myself I-wish to you to-enslave
pour vous enourer e servir;
for you to-honor and serve
s'ous me voulez riens comander,
if-you me wish anything to-command
ou senz comandement mander,
or without command to-send-word
ou s'autrement le puis saveir,
or if-otherwise it I-can know
j'i metrai le cors e l'aveir,
I-there will-put the body and the-wealth
veire certes l'ame en balance,
truly certainly the-soul in balance
senz nul remors de conscience.
without any remorse of conscience

E, que plus certains en seiez,
And that more certain thereof you-be
je vous pri que vous l'essaiez,
I you pray that you it-test
e, se j'en fail, jamais ne joie
and if I-therein fail ever not I-may-enjoy
de cors ne de chose que j'aie.
of body nor of thing that I-have
— Vostre merci», fait il, «beaus sire.
Your mercy says he fair lord
Je vous revueil bien ausinc dire
I to-you wish-in-turn well likewise to-say
que, se j'ai chose qui vous plaise,
that if I-have thing which you may-please
bien vueil que vous en aiez aise:
well I-wish that you thereof have ease
prenez en neïs senz congié,
take thereof even without leave
par bien e par eneur, con gié.
by good and by honor as I
— Sire», fis je, «vostre merci,
Lord said I your mercy
cent mile feiz vous en merci:
a-hundred thousand times you thereof I-thank
quant ainsinc puis voz choses prendre,
since thus I-can your things take
donc n'i quier je ja plus atendre,
then not-there seek I ever more to-wait

quant avez ci la chose preste
since you-have here the thing ready
don mes cueurs fera graigneur feste
whereof my heart will-make greater feast
que de trestout l'or d'Alixandre.»
than of all the-gold of-Alexander
Lors m'avançai pour les mains tendre
Then myself-I-advanced for the hands to-stretch
a la rose que tant desir,
to the rose which so-much I-desire
pour acomplir tout mon desir;
for to-accomplish all my desire
si cuidai bien a noz paroles,
so I-thought well by our words
qui tant ierent douces e moles,
which so-much were sweet and soft
e a noz plaisanz acointances,
and by our pleasing acquaintances
pleines de beles contenances,
full of fair demeanors
que trop fust fait legierement,
that exceedingly were done easily
mais il m'avint tout autrement.
but it to-me-happened all otherwise
Mout remaint de ce que fos pense.
Much remains of this that fool thinks
Trop i trouvai cruel defense,
Exceedingly there I-found cruel defense
car, si con cele part tendi,
for so as that way I-reached

Dangiers le pas me defendi,
Danger the passage to-me forbade
li vilains, que maus lous estrangle!
the churl whom evil wolf strangle
Il s'estait repoz en un angle,
He himself-was hidden in a corner
par darriers, e nous aguetait,
by behind and us watched
e mot a mot toutes metait
and word for word all put
noz paroles en son escrit.
our words in his writing
Lors n'atent plus qu'il ne m'escrit:
Then not-he-waits more that-he — me-cries-out
«Fuiez, vassaus, fuiez, fuiez,
Flee vassal flee flee
fuiez», dist il, «trop m'enuiez.
flee said he exceedingly me-you-annoy
Deable vous ont ramené,
Devils you have brought-back
li maloeit, li forsené,
the accursed the maddened
qui a cet bel servise partent,
who in this fair service share
ou tout preignent ainz qu'il s'en partent!
or all they-take before that-they themselves-thence part
Ja n'i viegne il sainte ne saint!
Ever not-there may-come it saint-woman nor saint
Vassaus, vassaus, si Deus me saint,
Vassal vassal so God me may-bless

a po que je ne vous effronte!»
by little that I — you smash
Lors saut Peeur, lors acueurt Honte,
Then leaps Fear then runs-up Shame
quant oïrent le païsant
when they-heard the peasant
«fuiez, fuiez, fuiez» disant
flee flee flee saying
n'encor pas atant ne s'en tut,
nor-yet at-all thereupon not himself-thereof fell-silent
mais deables i amentut,
but devils there he-mentioned
e sainz e saintes en osta.
and saints and saint-women thence he-removed
Hé! Deus! con ci felon oste a!
Ah God how here wicked host there-is
Si s'en courroucent e forsennent,
So themselves-thereof grow-angry and rage
tuit trei par un acort me prennent,
all three by one accord me take
si me boutent arriers mes mains:
so to-me they-push back my hands
«Ja n'en avreiz», font il, «mais meins
Ever not-thereof you-will-have say they henceforth less
ne plus que vous eü avez.
nor more than you had have
Malement entendre savez
Evilly to-understand you-know
ce que Bel Acueil vous ofri,
this that Fair Welcome to-you offered

quant parler a lui vous sofri.
when speak to him you he-allowed
Ses biens vous ofrait lieement,
His goods to-you he-offered gladly
mais que ce fust onestement:
provided that this were honestly
d'onesteté cure n'eüstes,
of-honesty care not-you-had
mais l'ofre simple receüstes,
but the-offer simple you-received
non pas ou sen qu'en la deit prendre,
not at-all in-the sense that-one it ought take
car, senz dire, est il a entendre,
for without saying is it to understand
quant preudon ofre son servise,
when worthy-man offers his service
que ce n'est fors en bone guise,
that this not-is except in good fashion
qu'ainsinc l'entent li prometierres.
for-thus it-means the promiser
Mais or nous dites, dans trichierres:
But now to-us say sir cheat
quant ses paroles apreïstes,
when his words you-learned
ou dreit sen pour quei nes preïstes?
in-the right sense for what not-them you-took
Prendre les si vilainement
To-take them so churlishly
vous mut de rude entendement,
you moved of rude understanding

ou vous avez apris d'usage
or you have learned by-habit
a contrefaire le fol sage.
to counterfeit the fool wise
Ja ne vous ofre il pas la rose,
Ever not to-you offers he at-all the rose
car ce n'est mie oneste chose
for this not-is at-all honest thing
ne que requerre la deiez
nor that ask it you-ought
ne que senz requeste l'aiez.
nor that without request it-you-have
E quant voz choses li ofristes,
And when your things to-him you-offered
cele ofre, coment l'entendistes?
that offer how it-you-understood
Fu ce de venir le lober
Was this of coming him to-cheat
pour lui de sa rose rober?
for him of his rose to-rob
Bien le traïssiez e boulez,
Well him you-betray and trick
qui servir ainsinc le voulez,
who to-serve thus him wish
pour estre privez anemis.
for to-be intimate enemy
Ja n'est il riens en livre mis
Ever not-is it anything in book put
qui tant puist nuire ne grever;
which so-much may harm nor grieve

se de deul deviez crever,
if of grief you-should burst
si nou devons nous pas cuidier:
yet not-it ought we at-all think
cest pourpris vous couvient vuidier.
this enclosure you it-behooves to-empty
Maufé vous i font revenir,
Devils you there make come-back
car bien vous deüst souvenir
for well to-you ought come-to-mind
qu'autre feiz en fustes chaciez:
that-other time thence you-were chased
or hors, ailleurs vous pourchaciez.
now out elsewhere yourself provide
Sachiez cele ne fu pas sage
Know she not was at-all wise
qui quist a tel musart passage;
who sought for such fool passage
mais ne sot ne vostre pensee,
but not she-knew neither your thought
ne la traïson pourpensee,
nor the treason premeditated
car ja quis ne le vous eüst,
for ever sought not it for-you she-would-have
se tel desleiauté seüst.
if such disloyalty she-had-known
Mout refu certes deceüz
Much in-turn-was certainly deceived
Bel Acueil, li despourveüz,
Fair Welcome the unwary

quant vous reçut en sa pourprise:
when you received in his enclosure
il vous cuidait faire servise,
he to-you thought to-do service
e vous tendez a son domage.
and you aim at his harm
Par fei! tant en a qui chien nage:
By faith so-much thereof has who dog ferry
quant est arivez, si l'abaie.
when it-is arrived so him-barks-at
Or querez ailleurs vostre preie,
Now seek elsewhere your prey
e hors de cet pourpris alez;
and out of this enclosure go
noz degrez tantost devalez
our steps at-once descend
debonairement e de gré,
graciously and of will
ou ja n'i contereiz degré,
or ever not-there you-will-count step
car teus pourrait tost ci venir,
for such-a-one could soon here come
s'il vous peut baillier ne tenir,
if-he you can seize or hold
qui les vous ferait mesconter,
who them to-you would-make miscount
s'il vous i devait effronter.
if-he you there should smash

The Porters Rebuke the Lover

IV

The porters call the lover a presumptuous fool and swear that Fair Welcome will be shut up so that the lover will never again see him abroad. They beat Fair Welcome into the tower and shut him in under three locks, then turn on the lover. He begs to be imprisoned with Fair Welcome, promising to serve them loyally and to be judged by them and Fair Welcome alone.

Sire fos, sire outrecuidiez,
Lord fool lord presumptuous
de toutes leiautez vuidiez, 14910
of all loyalties emptied
Bel Acueil que vous a forfait?
Fair Welcome what to-you has wronged
Pour quel pechié, pour quel forfait
For what sin for what misdeed
l'avez si tost pris a haïr,
him-you-have so soon taken to hate
qui le voulez ici traïr,
who him wish here to-betray
e maintenant li ofriez 14915
and at-once to-him you-offered
trestout quanque vous aviez?
all whatever you had
Est ce pour ce qu'il vous reçut,
Is this for this that-he you received
e nous e lui pour vous deçut,
and us and him for you deceived

e vous ofri li damoiseaus
and to-you offered the young-lord
tantost ses chiens e ses oiseaus?
at-once his dogs and his birds
Sache il folement se mena;
Let-know he foolishly himself conducted
e de tant con ci fait en a,
and of so-much as here done thereof he-has
e pour ore e pour autre feiz,
and for now and for other time
si nous gart Deus e sainte Feiz,
so us keep God and saint Faith
ja sera mis en tel prison
now he-will-be put in such prison
qu'onc en si fort n'entra pris on:
that-ever into so strong not-entered taken one
en teus aneaus sera rivez
in such rings he-will-be riveted
que jamais jour que vous vivez
that ever day that you live
ne le verreiz aler par veie,
not him you-will-see go by road
quant ainsinc nous trouble e desveie.
since thus us he-troubles and leads-astray
Mar l'eüssiez vous tant veü!
To-ill him-had you so-much seen
Par lui somes tuit deceü.»
By him we-are all deceived

Lors le prennent e tant le batent
Then him they-take and so-much him beat
que fuiant en la tour l'embatent.
that fleeing into the tower him-they-drive
E l'ont, emprès tant de laidures,
And him-have after so-much of insults
a treis paire de serreüres,
with three pair of locks
senz plus metre en fers ne en clos,
without more to-put in irons or in enclosure
souz treis paire de clés enclos.
under three pair of keys shut-in
A cele feiz plus nou greverent,
At that time more not-him they-harmed
mais c'iert pour ce qu'il se hasterent;
but this-was for this that-they themselves hastened
si li prometent a pis faire
so to-him they-promise to worse do
quant se seront mis au repaire.
when themselves will-be put to-the return
Ne se sont pas a tant tenu:
Not themselves are at-all at so-much held
seur mei sont tuit trei revenu,
upon me are all three come-back
qui dehors iere demourez,
who outside was remained
tristes, dolenz, maz, emplourez;
sad grieving dejected tearful
si me rassaillent e tourmentent.
so me they-assail-again and torment

Or doint Deus qu'encor s'en repentent!
Now grant God that-yet themselves-thereof they-repent
Dou grant outrage qu'il me font
Of-the great outrage that-they to-me do
près que mes cueurs de deul ne font;
near that my heart of grief — melts
car je me voulaie bien rendre,
for I myself wished well to-surrender
mais vif ne me voulaient prendre.
but alive not me they-wished to-take
D'aveir leur pais mout m'entremis,
Of-having their peace much myself-I-busied
e vousisse bien estre mis
and I-would-have-wished well to-be put
avec Bel Acueil en prison.
with Fair Welcome in prison
«Dangiers», fis je, «beaus gentis on,
Danger said I fair noble man
frans de cueur e vaillanz de cors,
free of heart and valiant of body
piteus plus que je ne recors,
merciful more than I — recall
e vous, Honte e Peeur les beles,
and you Shame and Fear the fair
sages, franches, nobles puceles,
wise free noble maidens
en faiz, en diz bien ordenees,
in deeds in words well ordered
e dou lignage Raison nees,
and of-the lineage (of-)Reason born

sofrez que vostres sers devieigne
allow that your serf I-may-become
par tel couvent que prison tieigne
by such covenant that prison I-may-hold
aveques Bel Acueil laienz,
with Fair Welcome within
senz estre nul jour mais raienz,
without being any day more ransomed
e leiaument vous vueil prometre,
and loyally to-you I-wish to-promise
se m'i voulez en prison metre,
if me-there you-wish in prison to-put
que je vous i ferai servise
that I to-you there will-do service
qui vous plaira bien a devise.
which you will-please well at wish
Par fei, se j'estoie ore lierres,
By faith if I-were now thief
ou traïtres, ou ravissierres,
or traitor or ravisher
ou d'aucun murtre achaisonez,
or of-some murder accused
e vousisse estre emprisonez,
and I-wished to-be imprisoned
pour quei la prison requeïsse,
for which the prison I-requested
ne cuit je pas que j'i fausisse;
not think I at-all that I-there would-fail

veire, par Deu, tout senz requerre
truly by God all without asking
m'i metrait l'en en quelque terre,
me-there would-put one in some land
pour quei l'en me peüst baillier;
for which one me could seize
s'en me devait tout detaillier,
if-one me should all cut-to-pieces
ne me lairait l'en eschaper,
not me would-let one escape
se l'en me poait atraper.
if one me could catch
La prison pour Deu vous demant
The prison for God of-you I-ask
avec lui pardurablement;
with him everlastingly
e se teus puis estre trouvez,
and if such I-can be found
bien seit senz preuve, ou pris prouvez,
well be-it without proof or taken proved
que de bien servir i defaille,
that of well serving there I-fail
hors de prison a toujourz aille.
out of prison for always I-may-go
Si n'est il pas on qui ne faut.
Yet not-is it at-all man who not fails
Mais, s'il i a par mei defaut,
But if-it there is through me failing
faites mei trousser mes paneaus,
make me pack my bundles

e saillir hors de voz aneaus;
and leap out of your rings
car, se je jamais vous courrouz,
for if I ever you anger
puniz vueil estre dou courrouz;
punished I-wish to-be for-the anger
vous meïsmes en seiez juige,
you yourselves thereof be judge
mais que nus fors vous ne me juige.
provided that any except you not me judge
Haut e bas seur vous m'en metrai,
High and low upon you myself-thereof I-will-put
mais que vous n'i seiez que trei,
provided that you not-there be but three
e seit avec vous Bel Acueil,
and be with you Fair Welcome
car celui pour le quart acueil.
for him for the fourth I-welcome
Le fait li pourrons recorder,
The deed to-him we-shall-be-able recount
e s'ous ne poez acorder
and if-you not can agree
a mei sofrir, qu'il vous acort,
to me suffer that-he you may-reconcile
e vous tenez a son acort;
and yourselves hold to his accord
car, pour batre ne pour tuer,
for for beating nor for killing
ne m'en voudraie remuer.»
not myself-thence I-would-wish to-move

Fair Welcome Imprisoned, and the Host to Arms

V

Danger mocks the request and swears that Fair Welcome will never leave the tower. When the lover pleads for his release, the porters set on him again, and he cries for help in a low voice until the watchmen hear him and rouse Love's barons, who arm themselves. The porters swear to stand together, and the barons swear to fight until they die or win.

Tantost Dangiers se rescria:
At-once Danger himself cried-out
«Hé! Deus! quel requeste ci a!
Ah God what request here there-is
Metre vous en prison o li,
To-put you in prison with him
qui tant avez le cueur joli,
who so-much have the heart merry
e il le ra tant debonaire,
and he it in-turn-has so gracious
ne serait autre chose faire
not would-be other thing to-do
fors que par amouretes fines
except that by love-affairs refined
metre Renart o les gelines.
to-put Reynard with the hens
Quel servise vous i faciez,
Whatever service you there may-do
bien savons que vous ne traciez
well we-know that you not seek
fors nous faire honte e laidure:
except to-us to-do shame and insult

n'avons de tel servise cure.
not-we-have of such service care
Si restes bien de sen vuidiez
So in-turn-you-are well of sense emptied
quant juige faire le cuidiez.
when judge to-make him you-think
Juige! Pour le beau rei celestre!
Judge For the fair king celestial
Coment peut jamais juiges estre,
How can ever judge be
ne prendre seur sei nule mise,
nor take upon himself any arbitration
persone ja juigiee e prise?
person already judged and taken
Bel Acueil est pris e juigiez,
Fair Welcome is taken and judged
e tel digneté li juigiez
and such dignity to-him you-adjudge
qu'il puist estre arbitres ou juiges!
that-he may be arbiter or judge
Ainz sera venuz li deluiges
Sooner will-be come the deluge
qu'il isse mais de nostre tour;
than-he go-out ever from our tower
e sera destruiz au retour,
and he-will-be destroyed at-the return
car il l'a mout bien deservi,
for he it-has very well deserved

pour ce, senz plus, qu'il s'asservi
for this without more that-he himself-enslaved
de tant qu'il vous ofri ses choses.
by so-much that-he to-you offered his things
Par lui pert l'en toutes les roses;
By him loses one all the roses
chascuns musarz les veaut cuillir
each fool them wishes to-gather
quant il se veit bel acuillir;
when he himself sees fair welcome
mais qui bien le tendrait en cage,
but who well him would-hold in cage
nus n'i ferait jamais domage,
any not-there would-do ever harm
ne n'en porterait on vivanz
nor not-thence would-carry one living
pas tant come en porte li venz,
at-all so-much as thence carries the wind
s'il n'iert teus que tant mespreïst
if-he not-were such that so-much he-erred
que vilaine force i feïst;
that churlish force there he-did
si pourrait il bien tant mesprendre
yet could he well so-much err
qu'il s'en ferait banir ou pendre.
that-he himself-thereby would-make banish or hang
— Certes», fis je, «mout se mesfait
Certainly said I much himself does-wrong
qui destruit ome senz mesfait,
who destroys man without misdeed

e qui senz raison l'emprisone;
and who without reason him-imprisons
e quant vous si vaillant persone
and when you so worthy person
com Bel Acueil, e si oneste
as Fair Welcome and so honest
qu'il fait a tout le monde feste,
that-he makes to all the world feast
pour ce qu'il me fist bele chiere,
for this that-he to-me made fair face
e qu'il ot m'acointance chiere,
and that-he had my-acquaintance dear
senz autre achaison pris tenez,
without other cause taken you-hold
malement vers lui mesprenez;
evilly toward him you-err
car par raison estre deüst
for by reason be he-ought
hors de prison, s'il vous pleüst:
out of prison if-it you pleased
si vous pri donques qu'il en isse,
so you I-pray then that-he thence go-out
e de la besoigne chevisse.
and of the business he-be-quit
Trop avez vers lui ja mespris:
Too-much you-have toward him already erred
gardez qu'il n'i seit jamais pris.
take-care that-he not-there be ever taken
— Par fei», font il, «cist fos nous trufle,
By faith say they this fool us mocks

bien nous vait or paissant de trufle
well us goes now feeding with nonsense
quant si le veaut desprisoner,
when so him he-wishes to-release
e nous traïr par sarmoner.
and us to-betray by preaching
Il requiert ce qui ne peut estre:
He asks this which not can be
jamais par uis ne par fenestre
ever by door nor by window
ne metra hors neïs le chief.»
not he-will-put out even the head
Lors m'assaillent tuit de rechief;
Then me-assail all once again
chascuns a hors bouter me tent:
each at out to-push me aims
il ne me grevast mie tant
it not me would-have-grieved at-all so-much
qui me vousist crucefier.
who me had-wished to-crucify
Je, qui leur comenz a crier
I who to-them begin to cry
merci, non pas a trop haut cri,
mercy not at-all at too loud cry
a ma voiz basse a l'assaut cri
with my voice low to the-assault I-cry
vers ceus qui secourre me durent,
toward those who succor me ought
tant que les guietes m'aperçurent,
until that the watchmen me-perceived

qui l'ost durent eschaugaitier.
who the-host ought watch-over
Quant m'oïrent si mal traitier:
When me-they-heard so badly treat
«Or sus! or sus!» font il, «baron:
Now up now up say they barons
se tantost armé n'aparon,
if at-once armed not-we-appear
pour secourre ce fin amant,
for to-succor this true lover
perduz est, si Deus nous ament.
lost he-is so God us may-amend
Li portier le tuent ou lient,
The porters him kill or bind
batent, fustent ou crucefient.
beat cudgel or crucify
Devant aus brait a voiz serie,
Before them he-cries with voice soft
a si bas cri merci leur crie
with so low cry mercy to-them he-cries
qu'enviz peut l'en oïr le brait;
that-hardly can one hear the cry
car si bassement crie e brait
for so lowly he-cries and wails
qu'avis vous iert, se vous l'oez,
that-seeming to-you will-be if you him-hear
ou que de braire est enroez,
either that from crying he-is hoarse

ou que la gorge li estreignent
or that the throat to-him they-squeeze
si qu'il l'estranglent ou esteignent.
so that-they him-strangle or extinguish
Ja li ont si la voiz enclose
Already to-him they-have so the voice shut-in
que haut crier ne peut ou n'ose;
that loud cry not he-can or not-dares
ne savons qu'il beent a faire,
not we-know what-they aim to do
mais il li font trop de contraire.
but they to-him do too-much of opposition
Morz est se tantost n'a secours.
Dead he-is if at-once not-he-has succor
Foïz s'en est trestout le cours
Fled himself-thence is all the course
Bel Acueil, qui le confortait;
Fair Welcome who him comforted
or couvient qu'autre confort ait
now it-behooves that-other comfort he-have
tant qu'il puist celui recouvrer:
until that-he may that-one recover
des ore esteut d'armes ouvrer.»
from now it-is-needful of-arms to-work
E cil senz faille mort m'eüssent,
And those without fail dead me-would-have
se cil de l'ost venu n'i fussent.
if those of the-host come not-there were

Li baron aus armes saillirent
The barons to-the arms leapt
quant oïrent, sorent e virent
when they-heard knew and saw
que j'oi perdu joie e soulaz.
that I-had lost joy and solace
Je, qui estaie pris ou laz
I who was taken in-the snare
ou Amours les autres enlace,
in-which Love the others ensnares
senz mei remuer de la place,
without me moving from the place
regardai le tourneiement
I-watched the tournament
qui comença trop asprement;
which began exceedingly fiercely
car, si tost con li portier sorent
for so soon as the porters knew
que si grant ost encontre aus orent,
that so great host against them they-had
ensemble trestuit trei s'alient,
together all three themselves-ally
si s'entrejurent e afient
so to-each-other-swear and pledge
qu'a leur poeir s'entraideront,
that-to their power each-other-they-will-aid
ne ja ne s'entrelaisseront
nor ever not each-other-they-will-abandon
jour de leur vie en nule fin.
day of their life in any end

E je, qui d'esgarder ne fin
And I who of-watching not cease
leur semblant e leur contenance,
their seeming and their bearing
sui mout dolenz de l'aliance.
am very grieving of the-alliance
E cil de l'ost, quant il revirent
And those of the-host when they in-turn-saw
que cil tel aliance firent,
that those such alliance made
si s'assemblent e s'entrejoignent;
so themselves-assemble and join-together
n'ont mais talent qu'il s'entresloignent,
not-have more desire that-they draw-apart
ainz jurent que tant i ferront
rather swear that so-much there they-will-strike
que mort en la place gerront,
that dead in the place they-will-lie
ou desconfit seront e pris,
or defeated they-will-be and taken
ou de l'estour avront le pris,
or of the-fight they-will-have the prize
tant sont enragié de combatre
so-much are enraged of fighting
pour l'orgueil des portiers abatre.
for the-pride of-the porters to-cast-down
Des or vendrons a la bataille,
From now we-will-come to the battle
s'orreiz coment chascuns bataille.
so-you-will-hear how each battles

The Poet's Apology

VI

Before the battle the poet addresses true lovers: he will expound the dream later, and he asks them to defend him against slanderers. He tells the ladies that he has written nothing against women but what the ancient authors wrote, and those angered by False Seeming's chapter that he aimed only at hypocrites, never at the truly religious. Whatever Holy Church finds foolish, he is ready to amend.

Or entendez, leial amant,
Now hear loyal lovers
que li deus d'Amours vous ament,
that the god of-Love you may-amend
e doint de voz amours joïr!
and grant of your loves to-enjoy
En ce bois ci poez oïr
In this wood here you-can hear
les chiens glatir, s'ous m'entendez,
the dogs bay if-you me-understand
au conin prendre ou vous tendez,
at-the rabbit taking at-which you aim
e le fuiret, qui, senz faillir,
and the ferret which without failing
le deit faire es reiseaus saillir.
it ought make into-the nets leap
Notez ce que ci vois disant:
Note this that here I-go saying
d'Amours avreiz art soufisant;
of-Love you-will-have art sufficient
e se vous i trouvez riens trouble,
and if you there find anything troubled

j'esclarcirai ce qui vous trouble,
I-will-clarify this which you troubles
quant le songe m'orreiz espondre;
when the dream me-you-will-hear expound
bien savreiz lors d'amours respondre,
well you-will-know then of-love to-answer
s'il est qui en sache oposer,
if-it is who thereof may-know to-object
quant le texte m'orreiz gloser;
when the text me-you-will-hear gloss
e savreiz lors par cel escrit
and you-will-know then by that writing
quanque j'avrai devant escrit,
whatever I-will-have before written
e quanque je bé a escrire.
and whatever I aim to write
Mais, ainz que plus m'en oiez dire,
But before that more me-thereof you-hear say
ailleurs vueil un petit entendre,
elsewhere I-wish a little to-attend
pour mei de males genz defendre;
for myself from evil folk to-defend
non pas pour vous faire muser,
not at-all for you to-make muse
mais pour mei contre aus escuser.
but for myself against them to-excuse
Si vous pri, seigneur amoureus,
So you I-pray lords amorous
par les jeus d'Amours savoureus,
by the games of-Love savory

que, se vous i trouvez paroles
that if you there find words
semblanz trop baudes ou trop foles,
seeming too bold or too foolish
par quei saillent li mesdisant,
by which leap-up the slanderers
qui de nous aillent mesdisant,
who of us may-go slandering
des choses a dire ou des dites,
of-the things to say or of-the said
que courteisement les desdites;
that courteously them you-deny
e quant vous les avreiz des diz
and when you them will-have of-the words
repris, retardez ou desdiz,
rebuked delayed or denied
se mi dit sont de tel maniere
if my words are of such manner
qu'il seit dreiz que pardon en quiere,
that-it be right that pardon thereof I-seek
pri vous que le me pardoigniez,
I-pray you that it to-me you-pardon
e de par mei leur respoigniez
and on behalf-of me to-them you-answer
que ce requerait la matire,
that this required the matter
qui vers teus paroles me tire
which toward such words me draws
par les proprietez de sei;
by the properties of itself

e pour ce teus paroles ai;
and for this such words I-have
car chose est dreituriere e juste,
for thing is righteous and just
selonc l'auctorité Saluste,
according-to the-authority (of-)Sallust
qui nous dit par sentence voire:
who to-us says by sentence true
«Tout ne seit il semblable gloire
Although not be it like glory
de celui qui la chose fait
of him who the thing does
e de l'escrivain qui le fait
and of the-writer who the deed
veaut metre proprement en livre,
wishes to-put properly in book
pour meauz la verité descrivre,
for better the truth to-describe
si n'est ce pas chose legiere,
yet not-is this at-all thing light
ainz est mout fort de grant maniere,
rather is very hard of great manner
metre bien les faiz en escrit;
to-put well the deeds in writing
car, quiconques la chose escrit,
for whoever the thing writes
se dou veir ne vous veaut embler,
if of-the truth not from-you he-wishes to-steal
li diz deit le fait resembler;
the word ought the deed resemble

car les voiz aus choses veisines
for the words to-the things neighboring
deivent estre a leur faiz cousines.»
ought be to their deeds cousins
Si me couvient ainsinc paler,
So me it-behooves thus to-speak
se par le dreit m'en vueil aler.
if by the right myself-thence I-wish to-go
Si vous pri toutes, vaillanz fames,
So you I-pray all worthy women
seiez dameiseles ou dames,
be damsels or ladies
amoureuses ou senz amis,
amorous or without friends
que, se moz i trouvez ja mis
that if words there you-find ever put
qui semblent mordanz e chenins
which seem biting and doggish
encontre les meurs femenins,
against the ways feminine
que ne m'en voilliez pas blasmer,
that not me-for-it you-may-wish at-all to-blame
ne m'escriture diffamer,
nor my-writing to-defame
qui toute est pour enseignement;
which all is for teaching
qu'onc n'i dis riens certainement,
for-ever not-there I-said anything certainly
ne volenté n'ai pas de dire,
nor will not-I-have at-all of saying

ne par ivrece ne par ire,
neither by drunkenness nor by wrath
par haïne ne par envie,
by hatred nor by envy
contre fame qui seit en vie;
against woman who be in life
car nus ne deit fame despire,
for any not ought woman despise
s'il n'a cueur des mauvais le pire.
if-he not-has heart of-the wicked the worst
Mais pour c'en escrit les meïsmes
But for this-in writing them we-put
que nous e vous de vous meïsmes
that we and you of you yourselves
poïssons quenoissance aveir;
might knowledge have
car il fait bon de tout saveir.
for it makes good of all knowing
D'autre part, dames enourables,
Of-other part ladies honorable
s'il vous semble que je di fables,
if-it to-you seems that I tell fables
pour menteeur ne m'en tenez,
for liar not me-for-it hold
mais aus aucteurs vous en prenez
but to-the authors yourselves thereof take
qui en leur livres ont escrites
who in their books have written
les paroles que j'en ai dites,
the words that I-thereof have said

e ceus avec que j'en dirai;
and those with that I-thereof will-say
ne ja de riens n'en mentirai,
nor ever of anything not-thereof I-will-lie
se li preudome n'en mentirent
if the worthy-men not-thereof lied
qui les anciens livres firent.
who the ancient books made
E tuit a ma raison s'acordent 15225
And all to my account themselves-agree
quant les meurs femenins recordent,
when the ways feminine they-record
ne ne furent ne fos ne ivres
nor not they-were either foolish nor drunk
quant il les mistrent en leur livres.
when they them put in their books
Cil les meurs femenins savaient,
Those the ways feminine knew
car touz esprouvez les avaient, 15230
for all proved them they-had
e teus es fames les trouverent
and such in-the women them they-found
que par divers tens esprouverent;
as by diverse times they-proved
par quei meauz m'en devez quiter:
by which better me-thereof you-ought acquit
je n'i faz riens fors reciter,
I not-there do anything except recite
se par mon jeu, qui po vous couste, 15235
if by my game which little you costs

quelque parole n'i ajouste,
some word not-there I-add
si con font entr'aus li poete,
so as do among-themselves the poets
quant chascuns la matire traite
when each the matter treats
don il li plaist a entremetre;
whereof it to-him pleases to engage
car, si con tesmoigne la letre,
for so as witnesses the letter
profiz e delectacion,
profit and delight
c'est toute leur entencion.
this-is all their intention
E se genz encontre mei groucent,
And if folk against me grumble
qui se troublent e se courroucent,
who themselves trouble and themselves anger
qu'il sentent que je les remorde
for-they feel that I them bite
par ce chapitre ou je recorde
by this chapter where I record
les paroles de Faus Semblant,
the words of False Seeming
e pour ce s'aillent assemblant
and for this themselves-go assembling
que blasmer ou punir me vueillent,
that to-blame or punish me they-wish
pour ce que de mon dit se dueillent,
for this that of my saying themselves they-grieve

je faz bien protestacion
I make well protestation
qu'onques ne fu m'entencion
that-ever not was my-intention
de paler contre ome vivant
of speaking against man living
sainte religion sivant,
holy religion following
ne qui sa vie use en bone euvre,
nor who his life spends in good work
de quelque robe qu'il se cueuvre,
of whatever robe that-he himself covers
ainz pris mon arc e l'entesaie,
rather I-took my bow and it-I-drew
queusque pechierres que je seie,
whatever sinner that I be
si fis ma saiete voler
so I-made my arrow fly
generaument pour afoler.
generally for to-wound
Pour afoler! Mais pour quenoistre,
For to-wound But for to-know
fussent seculer ou de cloistre,
they-were secular or of cloister
les desleiaus genz, les maudites,
the disloyal folk the cursed
que Jesus apele ypocrites,
whom Jesus calls hypocrites
don maint, pour sembler plus onestes,
whereof many for to-seem more honest

laissent a mangier chars de bestes
leave to eat flesh of beasts
touz tens, en non de penitence,
all time in name of penance
e font ainsinc leur astenance
and make thus their abstinence
si con nous en caresme fomes,
so as we in Lent do
mais touz vis manjuent les omes
but all alive eat the men
o les denz de detraccion,
with the teeth of detraction
par venimeuse entencion.
by venomous intention
Onc d'autre seing ne fis bersaut,
Ever of-other sign not I-made target
la vos e vueil que mes fers aut.
there I-wished and wish that my iron go
Si trai seur aus a la volee,
So I-shoot upon them at the volley
e se, pour aveir la colee,
and if for to-have the blow
avient que desouz la saiete
it-happens that beneath the arrow
aucuns on de son gré se mete,
some man of his will himself put
qui par orgueil si se deceive
who by pride so himself deceives
que deseur sei le cop receive,
that upon himself the blow he-receives

puis se plaint que je l'ai navré,
then himself complains that I him-have wounded
courpe n'en ai ne ja n'avrai,
fault not-thereof I-have nor ever not-I-will-have
neïs s'il en devait perir;
even if-he thereof should perish
car je ne puis nului ferir
for I not can anyone strike
qui dou cop se vueille garder,
who from-the blow himself may-wish to-guard
s'il set son estat regarder.
if-he knows his state to-regard
Neïs cil qui navré se sent
Even he who wounded himself feels
par le fer que je li present,
by the iron that I to-him present
gart que plus ne seit ypocrites,
let-him-see that more not he-be hypocrite
si sera de la plaie quites.
so he-will-be of the wound quit
E nepourquant, qui que s'en plaigne,
And nevertheless whoever that himself-thereof complain
combien que preudome se feigne,
however-much that worthy-man himself he-feign
onc riens n'en dis, mien escient,
ever anything not-thereof I-said my knowledge
coment qu'il m'aut contrariant,
however that-he me-go opposing

qui ne seit en escrit trouvé
which not be in writing found
e par esperiment prouvé,
and by experiment proved
ou par raison au meins prouvable,
or by reason at-the least provable
a cui qu'el seit desagreable.
to whomever that-it be disagreeable
E s'il i a nule parole
And if-it there has any word
que sainte iglise tiegne a fole,
which holy church may-hold for foolish
prez sui qu'a son vouleir l'amende,
ready I-am that-to its will it-I-amend
se je puis soufire a l'amende.
if I can suffice to the-amends

Franchise and Pity Against Danger

VII

Franchise attacks Danger with a lance of sweet prayer, but he breaks it with his mace and beats her down, cursing her for the kiss he once allowed. Pity comes to her aid with a misericord running with tears and soaks him until he softens and staggers. Shame warns Danger that if Fair Welcome escapes, the rose may be spoiled and Jealousy will have them killed.

Franchise vint prumierement
Franchise came first
contre Dangier mout umblement,
against Danger very humbly
qui trop ert fiers e courageus,
who exceedingly was fierce and spirited
par semblant fel e outrageus;
by seeming cruel and outrageous
en son poing tint une maçue,
in his fist he-held a mace
fierement la paumeie, e rue
fiercely it he-brandishes and hurls
entour sei cos si perilleus
around himself blows so perilous
qu'escuz, s'il n'est trop mervilleus,
that-shield if-it not-is exceedingly marvelous
nou peut tenir qu'il nou pourfende,
not-it can hold that-he it cleave
e que cil vaincuz ne se rende
and that he vanquished — himself render
qui contre lui se met en place,
who against him himself puts in place

s'il est bien atainz de la mace;
if-he is well struck by the mace
ou qu'il nou confonde e escache,
or that-he it confound and crush
s'il n'est teus que trop d'armes sache.
if-he not-is such that exceedingly of-arms he-know
Il la prist ou bois de Refus,
He it took in-the wood of Refusal
li laiz vilains, que je refus;
the ugly churl whom I refuse
sa targe fu d'estouteier,
his shield was of-insolence
bordee de genz viteier.
bordered with folk insulting
Franchise refu bien armee;
Franchise in-turn-was well armed
mout serait enviz entamee,
much she-would-be hardly pierced
pour qu'el se seüst bien couvrir.
provided that-she herself knew well to-cover
Franchise, pour la porte ouvrir,
Franchise for the gate to-open
contre Dangier avant se lance;
against Danger forward herself launches
en sa main tint une fort lance,
in her hand she-held a strong lance
qu'ele aporta, bele e polie,
which-she brought fair and polished
de la forest de Chuerie.
from the forest of Cajolery

N'en creist nule tel en Biere:
Not-thereof grows any such in Bière
li fers fu de douce priere;
the head was of sweet prayer
si rot, par grant devocion,
so in-turn-she-had by great devotion
de toute suplicacion
of all supplication
escu, qu'onques ne fu de meins,
shield which-ever not was of less
bordé de jointures de mains,
bordered with joinings of hands
de promesses, de couvenances,
with promises with covenants
par sairemenz e par fiances
by oaths and by pledges
coulouré trop mignotement:
colored exceedingly daintily
vous deïssiez certainement
you would-have-said certainly
que Largece le li bailla,
that Largesse it to-her gave
e qu'el le peinst e entailla,
and that-she it painted and carved
tant semblait bien estre de s'euvre.
so-much it-seemed well to-be of her-work
E Franchise, qui bien s'en cueuvre,
And Franchise who well herself-therewith covers
brandist la hante de la lance,
brandishes the shaft of the lance

e contre le vilain la lance,
and against the churl it launches
qui n'avait pas cueur de coart,
who not-had at-all heart of coward
ainz semblast estre Renoart
rather he-would-seem to-be Rainouart
au tinel, s'il fust revescuz.
with-the club if-he were revived
Touz fust pourfenduz li escuz,
All were cloven the shield
mais tant iert forz a desmesure
but so-much was strong to measurelessness
qu'il ne cremait nule armeüre,
that-it not feared any weapon
si que dou cop si se couvri
so that from-the blow so himself he-covered
qu'onques sa pance n'en ouvri.
that-ever his belly not-thereby opened
Li fers de la lance brisa,
The head of the lance broke
par quei le cop meins en prisa.
by which the blow less thereof he-prized
Si riert mout d'armes engoursez
So in-turn-was very of-arms eager
li vilains fel e aoursez;
the churl cruel and enraged
la lance prent, si la depiece
the lance he-takes so it breaks-to-pieces
a sa maçue, piece a piece,
with his mace piece by piece

e puis esme un cop grant e fier:
and then aims a blow great and fierce
«Qui me tient que je ne te fier», 15360
Who me holds that I — thee strike
dist il, «orde garce ribaude?
said he filthy wench wanton
Coment as ore esté si baude
How thou-hast now been so bold
qu'un preudome osas assaillir?»
that-a worthy-man thou-daredst to-assail
Seur son escu fiert senz faillir
Upon her shield he-strikes without failing
la preu, la bele, la courteise: 15365
the worthy the fair the courteous
bien la fait saillir une teise
well her makes leap a fathom
d'angoisse, e a genouz l'abat;
from-anguish and to knees her-strikes-down
mout la laidenge, mout la bat,
much her insults much her beats
e crei qu'a ce cop morte fust
and I-believe that-at this blow dead she-would-be
s'ele eüst fait escu de fust: 15370
if-she had made shield of wood
«Autre feiz vous ai je creüe,
Other time you have I believed
dame orde, garce recreüe»,
lady filthy wench craven
dist il, «n'onc bien ne m'en chaï.
said he nor-ever good not to-me-thereof befell

Vostre losenge m'a traï,
Your flattery me-has betrayed
par vous sofri je le baisier,
by you suffered I the kiss
pour le ribaudel aaisier;
for the young-rascal to-ease
bien me trouva fol debonaire;
well me found fool gracious
deable le me firent faire.
devils it me made do
Par la char Deu, mar i venistes,
By the flesh (of-)God to-ill there you-came
qui nostre chastel assaillistes!
who our castle assailed
Ci vous esteut perdre la vie.»
Here you it-is-needful to-lose the life
E la bele merci li crie
And the fair mercy to-him cries
pour Deu, que pas ne la cravant,
for God that at-all not her be-crush
quant ele ne peut en avant.
since she not can in forward
E li vilains crole sa hure,
And the churl shakes his head
e se forsenne, e seur sainz jure
and himself enrages and upon saints swears
qu'il l'ocierra senz nul respit.
that-he her-will-kill without any respite
Mout en ot Pitié grant despit,
Much thereof had Pity great scorn

qui, pour sa compaigne rescourre,
who for her companion to-rescue
au vilain se hastait de courre.
to-the churl herself hastened of running
Pitié, qui a touz biens s'acorde,
Pity who to all goods herself-accords
tenait une misericorde
held a misericord
en leu d'espee, en trestouz termes
in place of-sword in all times
decourant de pleurs e de lermes.
running with weeping and with tears
Cete, se li aucteurs n'i ment,
This if the author not-there lies
percerait pierre d'aïmant,
would-pierce stone of-adamant
pour qu'ele fust bien de li pointe,
provided that-it were well by her thrust
qu'ele a trop agüe la pointe.
for-it has exceedingly sharp the point
Ses escuz iert d'alegement,
Her shield was of-relief
touz bordez de gemissement,
all bordered with groaning
pleins de soupirs e de complaintes.
full of sighs and of complaints
Pitié, qui plourait lermes maintes,
Pity who wept tears many
point le vilain de toutes parz,
pricks the churl from all sides

qui se defent come uns leparz;
who himself defends like a leopard
mais, quant ele ot bien arousé
but when she had well watered
de lermes l'ort vilain housé,
with tears the-filthy churl booted
si le couvint amoleier.
so him it-behooved to-soften
Vis li fu qu'il deüst neier
Seeming to-him was that-he should drown
en un fleuve, touz estourdiz:
in a river all stunned
onques mais, pour faiz ne pour diz,
ever more for deeds nor for words
ne fu si durement hurtez.
not he-was so hard struck
Dou tout defaillait sa durtez;
Of-the all failed his hardness
feibles e vains branle e chancele,
feeble and weak he-totters and staggers
foïr s'en veaut, Honte l'apele:
to-flee himself-thence he-wishes Shame him-calls
«Dangiers, Dangiers, vilains prouvez,
Danger Danger churl proved
se recreanz estes trouvez,
if craven you-are found
que Bel Acueil puisse eschaper,
that Fair Welcome may escape
vous nous fereiz touz atraper;
you us will-make all catch

qu'il baillera tantost la rose
for-he will-give at-once the rose
que nous tenons çaienz enclose;
which we hold in-here shut-in
e tant vous di je bien senz faille,
and so-much to-you say I well without fail
s'il aus gloutons la rose baille,
if-he to-the gluttons the rose gives
sachiez qu'ele en pourra tost estre
know that-it thereby will-be-able soon be
blesmie ou pale ou mole ou flestre.
wan or pale or soft or withered
E si me repuis bien vanter:
And so myself I-can-in-turn well boast
teus venz pourrait çaienz venter,
such wind could in-here blow
se l'entree trouvait ouverte,
if the-entrance it-found open
don avrions domage e perte:
whereof we-would-have harm and loss
ou que trop la graine esmouvrait,
either that too-much the seed it-would-stir
ou qu'autre graine i aplouvrait
or that-other seed there would-rain
don la rose serait charchiee.
wherewith the rose would-be laden
Deus doint que tel graine n'i chiee!
God grant that such seed not-there fall
Trop nous en pourrait meschoeir;
Exceedingly to-us thereof could befall-ill

car, ainz qu'ele en peüst choeir,
for before that-it thence could fall
tost en pourrait, senz resortir,
soon thereby could without recourse
la rose dou tout amortir;
the rose of-the all die
ou se d'amortir eschapait,
or if from-dying it-escaped
e li venz teus cos i frapait
and the wind such blows there struck
que les graines s'entremellassent,
that the seeds themselves-intermingled
que de leur fais la fleur grevassent,
that with their burden the flower they-burdened
que des fueilles en son descendre
that of-the leaves in its descending
feïst aucune ou que seit fendre,
it-made some-one wherever that be split
e par la fente de la fueille,
and by the split of the leaf
la quel chose ja Deus ne vueille!
the which thing ever God not may-will
Parust desouz li verz boutons,
Appeared beneath the green bud
l'en dirait par tout que gloutons
one would-say through all that gluttons
l'avraient tenue en saisine:
it-would-have held in possession

nous en avrions la haïne
we thereof would-have the hatred
Jalousie, qui le savrait,
(of-)Jealousy who it would-know
qui dou saveir tel deul avrait
who of-the knowing such grief would-have
qu'a mort en serions livré.
that-to death thereby we-would-be delivered
Maufé vous ont si enivré.»
Devils you have so made-drunk

Shame, Delight, and Well Concealing

VIII

Danger cries for help, and Shame runs up and strikes Pity hard. Delight attacks Shame, who beats him down. Well Concealing, whose sword makes no sound, nearly fells Shame and tells her Jealousy will never know. Fear strikes Well Concealing with her sword Suspicion of Tattling and then fells Boldness, and Security mocks her as a coward who once fled with Cacus before Hercules.

Dangiers crie: «Secours, secours!»
Danger cries Help help
Atant es vous Honte le cours,
Thereupon behold you Shame the run
vient a Pitié, si la menace,
comes to Pity so her threatens
qui trop redoute sa menace:
who exceedingly fears her threat
«Trop avez», dist ele, «vescu;
Too-much you-have said she lived

je vous froisserai cel escu;
I to-you will-shatter that shield
vous en gerreiz encui par terre.
you thereof will-lie today on ground
Mar empreïstes cete guerre!»
To-ill you-undertook this war
Honte porte une grant espee,
Shame carries a great sword
bele e bien faite e bien trempee,
fair and well made and well tempered
qu'ele forja douteusement
which-she forged fearfully
de soussi d'aperceivement;
of care of-being-perceived
fort targe avait, qui fu nomee
strong shield she-had which was named
Doutes de male renomee:
Fear of evil renown
de tel fust l'avait ele faite.
of such wood it-had she made
Mainte langue ot ou bort pourtraite.
Many-a tongue it-had on-the border portrayed
Pitié fiert si que trop la ruse;
Pity she-strikes so that exceedingly her drives-back
près qu'el ne la rendi concluse.
near that-she — her rendered defeated
Atant i est venuz Deliz,
Thereupon there is come Delight
beaus bachelers, forz e esliz.
fair bachelor strong and chosen

Cil fist a Honte une envaïe.
He made at Shame an assault
Espee avait de plaisant vie,
Sword he-had of pleasing life
escu d'aise, don point n'avoie,
shield of-ease whereof at-all not-I-had
bordé de soulaz e de joie.
bordered with solace and with joy
Honte fiert, mais ele se targe
Shame he-strikes but she herself shields
si raisnablement de sa targe
so reasonably with her shield
qu'onques li cos ne li greva.
that-ever the blow not to-her harmed
E Honte requerre le va,
And Shame to-attack him goes
si fiert Delit par tel angoisse
so strikes Delight with such anguish
que seur le chief l'escu li froisse
that upon the head the-shield to-him she-shatters
e l'abat jus tout estendu.
and him-strikes down all stretched-out
Jusqu'es denz l'eüst pourfendu,
Until-to-the teeth him-she-would-have cloven
quant Deus ameine un bacheler
when God brings a bachelor
que l'en apele Bien Celer.
whom one calls Well Concealing

Bien Celer fu mout bons guerriers,
Well Concealing was very good warrior
sages e veziez terriers;
wise and cunning landsman
en sa main une queie espee,
in his hand a quiet sword
ausinc con de langue copee;
just as of tongue cut-off
si la brandist senz faire noise,
so it he-brandished without making noise
qu'en ne l'oïst pas d'une toise;
that-one not it-would-hear at-all from-a fathom
qu'el ne rent son ne rebondie,
for-it not renders sound nor echo
ja si fort ne sera brandie.
ever so hard not it-will-be brandished
Ses escuz iert de leu repost,
His shield was of place hidden
onques geline en tel ne post,
ever hen in such not laid
bordez de seüres alees
bordered with safe goings
e de revenues celees.
and with returns concealed
Hauce l'espee e puis fiert Honte
Raises the-sword and then strikes Shame
tel cop qu'a po qu'il ne l'effronte.
such blow that-by little that-he — her-smashes
Honte en fu trestoute estourdie:
Shame thereby was all stunned

«Honte», dist il, «ja Jalousie
Shame said he ever Jealousy
la doulereuse, la chaitive,
the sorrowful the wretched
ne le savra jour qu'ele vive;
not it will-know day that-she live
bien vous en asseüreraie,
well you thereof I-would-assure
de ma main le fianceraie,
by my hand it I-would-pledge
s'en feraie cent sairemenz.
so-thereof I-would-make a-hundred oaths
N'est ce granz asseüremenz?
Not-is this great assurance
Puis que Male Bouche est tuez,
Since that Wicked Tongue is killed
prise estes, ne vous remuez.»
taken you-are not yourself move
Honte ne set a ce que dire.
Shame not knows to this what to-say
Peeur saut toute pleine d'ire,
Fear leaps all full of-wrath
qui trop soulait estre coarde;
who exceedingly was-wont to-be cowardly
Honte sa cousine regarde,
Shame her cousin she-looks-at
e quant si la vit entreprise,
and when so her she-saw beset
s'a la main a l'espee mise,
so-has the hand to the-sword put

qui trop iert trenchanz malement.
which exceedingly was cutting evilly
Soupeçons d'emboufissement
Suspicion of-tattling
ot non, car de ce l'avait faite;
had name for of this it-she-had made
e quant el l'ot dou feurre traite,
and when she it-had from-the sheath drawn
plus fu clere que nul berill;
more was clear than any beryl
escu de doute de perill,
shield of fear of peril
bordé de travail et de peine,
bordered with toil and with pain
ot Peeur, qui forment se peine
had Fear who greatly herself pains
de Bien Celer tout detrenchier.
of Well Concealing all to-cut-up
Pour sa cousine revenchier,
For her cousin to-avenge
le va seur son escu ferir
him goes upon his shield to-strike
tel cop qu'il ne le peut guerir.
such blow that-he not it can ward-off
Trestouz estourdiz chancela,
All stunned he-staggered
adonc Hardement apela;
then Boldness he-called

cil saut, car, s'ele recouvrast
he leaps for if-she repeated
l'autre cop, malement ouvrast:
the-other blow evilly it-would-have-gone
morz fust Bien Celer senz retour,
dead were Well Concealing without return
s'el li donast un autre tour.
if-she to-him gave an other turn
Hardemenz fu preuz e hardiz
Boldness was worthy and bold
e esperz par faiz e par diz.
and expert by deeds and by words
Espee ot bone e bien fourbie,
Sword he-had good and well furbished
de l'acier de forsenerie;
of the-steel of madness
ses escuz iert mout renomez;
his shield was very renowned
Despiz de mort estait nomez;
Scorn of death was named
bordez fu d'abandonement
bordered was with-abandonment
a touz periz trop folement.
to all perils exceedingly foolishly
Vient a Peeur e si aesme,
Comes to Fear and so aims
pour li ferir, grant cop e pesme:
for her to-strike great blow and terrible
le cop lait courre e el se cueuvre,
the blow he-lets run and she herself covers

car el savait assez de l'euvre
for she knew much of the-work
qui afiert a cete escremie.
which belongs to this fencing
Bien s'est de son cop escremie;
Well herself-is from his blow fenced
puis le fiert un cop si pesant
then him strikes a blow so heavy
15550 qu'el l'abat par terre gesant,
that-she him-strikes-down on ground lying
qu'onques escuz nou garanti.
that-ever shield not-him protected
Quant Hardemenz jus se senti,
When Boldness down himself felt
jointes mains li requiert e prie
joined hands her he-asks and prays
pour Deu merci qu'el ne l'ocie;
for God mercy that-she not him-kill
15555 e Peeur dit que si fera.
and Fear says that so she-will-do
Dit Seürtez: «Ce que sera?
Says Security This what will-be
Par Deu, Peeur, ici mourreiz:
By God Fear here you-will-die
faites au pis que vous pourreiz.
do at-the worst that you will-be-able
Vous souliez aveir les fievres,
You were-wont to-have the fevers
15560 cent tanz plus coarde que lievres;
a-hundred times more cowardly than hares

or estes desacoardie.
now you-are uncowarded
Deable vous font si hardie
Devils you make so bold
que vous prenez a Hardement,
that you take to Boldness
qui tant aime tourneiement,
who so-much loves tourney
e tant en set, s'il i pensot,
and so-much thereof knows if-he there thought
qu'onques nus plus de lui n'en sot.
that-ever any more than him not-thereof knew
N'onc mais, puis que terre marchastes.
Nor-ever more since that ground you-trod
Fors en cet cas, ne tourneiastes;
Except in this case not you-tourneyed
n'en savez faire ailleurs les tourz,
not-thereof you-know do elsewhere the turns
ailleurs, en touz autres estourz,
elsewhere in all other fights
vous fuiez ou vous vous rendez,
you flee or you yourself surrender
vous qui or ci vous defendez.
you who now here yourself defend
Avec Chacus vous en foïstes,
With Cacus you thence fled
quant Herculès venir veïstes
when Hercules come you-saw
le cours, a son col sa maçue;
the run at his neck his club

vous fustes lors toute esperdue,
you were then all distraught
e li meïstes es piez eles,
and to-him you-put on-the feet wings
qu'il n'avait onques eü teles,
for-he not-had ever had such
pour ce que Chacus ot emblez
for this that Cacus had stolen
ses beus, e les ot assemblez
his oxen and them had assembled
en son recet, qui mout fu lons,
in his den which very was long
par les queues a reculons,
by the tails in reverse
que la trace n'en fust trouvee.
that the track not-thereof were found
La fu vostre force esprouvee,
There was your strength proved
la montrastes vous bien senz faille
there showed you well without fail
que riens ne valez en bataille.
that anything not you-are-worth in battle
E puis que hanté ne l'avez,
And since that practiced not it-you-have
petit ou neient en savez;
little or nothing thereof you-know
si vous esteut, non pas defendre,
so you it-is-needful not at-all to-defend
mais foïr ou ces armes rendre,
but to-flee or these arms surrender

ou chier vous esteut comparer
or dear you it-is-needful to-pay-for
qu'a lui vous osez comparer.»
that-to him yourself you-dare compare

Security Against Fear, and the Truce

IX

Security attacks Fear, the two seize each other by the temples, and all the others pair off in a great melee. Love's host has the worse of it, so Love sends Franchise and Sweet Looks to fetch his mother and takes a truce of ten or twelve days.

Seürtez ot espee dure,
Security had sword hard
de fuite de trestoute cure,
of flight from all care
escu de pais, bon senz doutance,
shield of peace good without doubt
trestout bordé de concordance.
all bordered with concord
Peeur fiert, ocierre la cuide.
Fear she-strikes to-kill her she-thinks
En sei couvrir met son estuide
In herself covering puts her study
Peeur, e l'escu giete encontre,
Fear and the-shield throws against
qui sainement le cop encontre,
which soundly the blow meets
si ne li greva de neient.
so not to-her it-harmed of anything

Li cos chiét jus en glaceiant.
The blow falls down in glancing
E Peeur tel cop li redone
And Fear such blow to-her gives-back
seur l'escu que toute l'estone.
upon the-shield that all her-stuns
Mout s'en faut po que ne l'afole.
Much itself-thereof lacks little that — her-she-wounds
S'espee e ses escuz li vole
Her-sword and her shield from-her fly
des poinz, tant fort i a hurté.
from-the fists so hard there she-has struck
Savez que fist lors Seürté?
Know-you what did then Security
Pour doner aus autres essemples,
For to-give to-the others examples
Peeur saisist par mi les temples,
Fear she-seizes by mid the temples
e Peeur li, si s'entretienent.
and Fear her so each-other-hold
Trestuit li autre s'entrevienent;
All the others each-other-come-at
li uns se lie a l'autre e couple;
the one himself binds to the-other and couples
onc en estour ne vi tel couple.
ever in fight not I-saw such couple
Si renforça li chapleïz,
So grew-stronger the slaughter

la rot si fort tupineïz
there in-turn-was so hard pummeling
qu'onques en nul tourneiement
that-ever in any tourney
n'ot de cos autel paiement.
not-was-there of blows such payment
Tournent de ça, tournent de la;
They-turn of here they-turn of there
chascuns sa maisnie apela:
each his household called
tuit i acueurent pelle melle.
all there run-up pell mell
Onc plus espès ne neif ne grelle
Ever more thick neither snow nor hail
ne vi voler que li cop volent.
not I-saw fly than the blows fly
Tuit se derompent, tuit s'afolent,
All themselves break all themselves-wound
onc ne veïstes teus mellees
ever not you-saw such melees
de tant de genz ainsinc mellees.
of so-many of folk thus mingled
Mais, ne vous en mentirai ja,
But not to-you thereof I-will-lie ever
l'oz qui le chastel asseja
the-host which the castle besieged
en avait adès le peeur.
thereof had always the worse

Li deus d'Amours ot grant peeur
The god of-Love had great fear
que sa gent n'i fust toute ocise.
that his folk there were all slain
Sa mere mande par Franchise
His mother he-summons by Franchise
e par Douz Regart qu'ele viegne,
and by Sweet Looks that-she come
que nule essoine ne la tiegne;
that any excuse not her hold
e prist trives endementiers
and he-took truce meanwhile
entre dis jourz ou doze entiers,
between ten days or twelve whole
ou plus ou meins, ja recité
or more or less ever recited
ne vous en iert certainité;
not to-you thereof will-be certainty
veire a toujourz fussent eus prises
indeed for always would-be they taken
s'a toujourz les eüst requises,
if-for always them he-had requested
coment qu'il fust d'eles casser,
however that-it were of-them breaking
qui que les deüst trespasser.
whoever that them should transgress
Mais, se son meilleur i seüst,
But if his best there he-had-known
ja trives prises n'i eüst;
ever truce taken not-there had

e, se li portier ne cuidassent
and if the porters not had-thought
que li autre ne les cassassent,
that the others not them would-break
puis qu'eus fussent abandonees,
since that-they were abandoned
ja ne fussent espeir donees
ever not they-would-be perhaps given
de bon cueur, ainz s'en courrouçassent,
of good heart rather themselves-thereof would-be-angered
quelque semblant qu'il en montrassent.
whatever seeming that-they thereof showed
Ne ja trive ni eüst prise,
Nor ever truce not-there had taken
se Venus s'en fust entremise.
if Venus herself-therein were engaged
Mais senz faille il le couvint faire:
But without fail it it behooved to-do
un po s'esteut arriere traire,
a little one-must back draw
ou par trive ou par quelque fuite,
either by truce or by some flight
trestoutes les feiz que l'en luite
all the times that one wrestles
a tel qu'en ne peut seurmonter,
with such that-one not can overcome
tant qu'en le puisse meauz donter.
until that-one him may better tame

Venus and Adonis

x

On Cithaeron, Venus is hunting with Adonis and teaches him to chase only beasts that flee and to shun those that fight back. Adonis ignores her and is killed by a boar. The poet tells lovers to believe their sweethearts as Adonis should have believed Venus, but never to believe Reason.

De l'ost se partent li message,
From the-host themselves depart the messengers
qui tant ont erré come sage
who so-much have traveled as wise
qu'il sont a Cytheron venu.
that-they are to Cithaeron come
La sont a grant eneur tenu.
There are with great honor held
Cytheron est une montaigne
Cithaeron is a mountain
dedenz un bois, en une plaigne,
within a wood in a plain
si haute que nule arbaleste,
so high that any crossbow
tant seit fort ne de traire preste,
however-much be strong or of shooting ready
n'i trairait ne bouzon ne vire.
not-there would-shoot neither bolt nor quarrel
Venus, qui les dames espire,
Venus who the ladies inspires
fist la son principal maneir;
made there her principal dwelling

principaument vost la maneir.
principally she-wished there to-dwell
Mais se tout l'estre descrivaie,
But if all the-place I-described
espeir trop vous enuieraie;
perhaps too-much you I-would-weary
e si m'i pourraie lasser,
and also myself-there I-could weary
pour ce m'en vueil briement passer.
for this myself-thence I-wish briefly to-pass
Venus s'iert ou bois devalee,
Venus herself-was into-the wood gone-down
pour chacier en une valee;
for to-hunt in a valley
li beaus Adonis iert o li,
the fair Adonis was with her
ses douz amis au cueur joli.
her sweet friend with-the heart merry
Un petitet iert enfantis,
A little-bit he-was childish
a chacier en bois ententis.
to hunting in wood intent
Enfes iert, jennes e venanz,
Child he-was young and growing
mais mout iert beaus e avenanz.
but very was fair and comely
Midis estait pieça passez,
Noon was long-since passed
chascuns iert de chacier lassez;
each was of hunting tired

souz un poplier en l'erbe estaient,
under a poplar in the-grass they-were
jouste un vivier, ou s'ombreiaient.
beside a pond where themselves-they-shaded
Leur chien, qui las de courre furent,
Their dogs who tired of running were
tagant ou ru dou vivier burent;
panting in-the stream of-the pond drank
leur ars, leur darz e leur cuiriees
their bows their darts and their quivers
rorent delez aus apuiees.
they-in-turn-had beside them leaned
Joliement se deduisaient,
Merrily themselves they-amused
e ces oisillons escoutaient
and these little-birds they-listened-to
par ces rainseaus tout environ.
through these branches all around
Après leur jeus, en son giron
After their games in her lap
Venus embracié le tenait,
Venus embraced him held
e en baisant li aprenait
and in kissing him she-taught
de chacier en bois la maniere,
of hunting in wood the manner
si come ele en iert coustumiere:
so as she thereof was accustomed

«Ami, quant vostre meute iert preste,
Friend when your pack will-be ready
e vous ireiz querant la beste,
and you will-go seeking the beast
se vous trouvez beste qui fuie,
if you find beast which flees
chaciez la, puis qu'el tourne en fuie.
chase it since that-it turns in flight
Courez après hardiement;
Run after boldly
mais contre ceus qui fierement
but against those who fiercely
metent a defense le cors
put to defense the body
ne seit ja cornez vostre cors.
not be ever sounded your horn
Coarz seiez e pareceus
Cowardly be and lazy
contre hardiz; car contre ceus
against bold-ones for against those
ou cueur hardi sont ahurté,
in-whom hearts bold are set
nus hardemenz n'a seürté;
any boldness not-has safety
ainz fait perilleuse bataille
rather makes perilous battle
hardiz quant a hardi bataille.
bold-man when with bold-man battles

Cers e biches, chevreaus e chievres,
Harts and hinds kids and goats
rengiers e dains, conins e lievres,
reindeer and fallow-deer rabbits and hares
ceus vueil je bien que vous chaciez;
those wish I well that you hunt
en tel chace vous soulaciez.
in such chase yourself solace
Ours, leus, lions, senglers defens:
Bears wolves lions boars I-forbid
n'i chaciez pas seur mon defens;
not-there hunt at-all upon my prohibition
car iteus bestes se defendent,
for such beasts themselves defend
les chiens ocient e pourfendent,
the dogs they-kill and cleave
e font les veneeurs meesmes
and make the hunters themselves
mout souvent faillir a leur esmes;
very often fail at their aims
maint en ont ocis e navré.
many thereof they-have killed and wounded
Jamais de vous joie n'avrai,
Ever of you joy not-I-will-have
ainz m'en pesera malement,
rather me-thereof it-will-weigh evilly
se vous le faites autrement.»
if you it do otherwise

Ainsinc Venus le chastiait,
Thus Venus him admonished
en chastiant mout li priait
in admonishing much him she-prayed
que dou chasti li souvenist,
that of-the admonition to-him it-came-to-mind
ou qu'il onques chacier venist.
wherever that-he ever to-hunt came
Adonis, qui petit prisait
Adonis who little prized
ce que s'amie li disait,
this that his-friend to-him said
fust a mençonge, fust a veir,
it-were for lie it-were for true
tout otreiait pour pais aveir,
all he-granted for peace to-have
qu'il ne prisait riens le chasti.
for-he not prized anything the admonition
Po vaut quanque cele a basti:
Little is-worth whatever she has built
chastit le tant con li serra,
let-her-admonish him so-long as with-her he-will-be
s'el s'en part, jamais nou verra.
if-she herself-thence parts ever not-him she-will-see
Ne la crut pas, puis en mourut,
Not her he-believed at-all then thereof he-died
qu'onc Venus ne l'en secourut,
for-ever Venus not him-thereof succored
qu'ele n'i estait pas presente.
for-she not-there was at-all present

Puis le ploura mout la dolente,
Then him wept much the grieving-one
qu'il chaça puis a un sengler
for-he hunted then after a boar
qu'il cuida prendre e estrangler,
which-he thought to-take and strangle
mais nou prist ne ne detrencha,
but not-it he-took nor not cut-up
car li senglers se revencha,
for the boar himself avenged
con fiere e orguilleuse beste:
as fierce and proud beast
contre Adonis escoust la teste,
against Adonis it-shook the head
ses denz en l'aine li flati,
its teeth into the-groin to-him it-drove
son groing estort, mort l'abati.
its snout it-twisted dead him-struck-down
Beau seigneur, que qu'il vous aviegne,
Fair lords whatever that-it to-you happen
de cete essemple vous souviegne.
of this example you it-may-remind
Vous qui ne creez voz amies,
You who not believe your friends
sachiez mout faites granz folies;
know very you-do great follies
bien les deüssiez toutes croire,
well them you-ought all believe
car leur dit sont veir come estoire.
for their words are true as history

S'eus jurent: «Toutes somes vostres»,
If-they swear All we-are yours
creez les come paternostres;
believe them as paternosters
ja d'aus creire ne recreez.
ever from-them believing not cease
Se Raison vient, point n'en creez. 15760
If Reason comes at-all not-thereof believe
S'el vous aportait crucefis,
If-she to-you brought crucifix
n'en creez point ne que je fis.
not-thereof believe at-all nor than I did
Se cist s'amie eüst creüe,
If this-one his-friend had believed
mout eüst sa vie creüe.
much would-have his life grown

Venus Comes to the Host

XI

The messengers tell Venus everything, and she swears to burn the porters unless they yield. Her chariot of six doves brings her to the host, where Love has broken the truce and the siege goes on. Venus swears to let no woman live chaste, and Love swears the same of men.

L'uns se jeue a l'autre e deduit 15765
The-one himself plays with the-other and amuses
quant leur plaist; emprès leur deduit,
when to-them it-pleases after their delight

a Cytheron sont retourné.
to Cithaeron they-are returned
Cil, qui n'ierent pas sejourné,
Those who not-were at-all rested
anceis que Venus se despueille,
before that Venus herself undresses
li content de fil en agueille
to-her tell from thread to needle
trestout quanque leur apartint:
all whatever to-them pertained
«Par fei», dist lors Venus, «mar tint
By faith said then Venus to-ill held
Jalousie chastel ne case
Jealousy castle or house
contre mon fill! Se je n'embrase
against my son If I not-set-on-fire
les portiers e tout leur atour,
the porters and all their equipment
ou les clés rendront de la tour,
or the keys they-will-surrender of the tower
je ne dei prisier un landon
I not ought prize a dog-clog
mei ne mon arc ne mon brandon.»
me nor my bow nor my brand
Lors fist sa maisnie apeler:
Then she-made her household call
son char comande a ateler,
her chariot she-commands to harness
qu'el ne veaut pas marchier les boes.
for-she not wishes at-all to-tread the muds

Beaus fu li chars, a quatre roes,
Fair was the chariot with four wheels
d'or e de pelles estelez.
with-gold and with pearls starred
En leu de chevaus atelez
In place of horses harnessed
ot aus limons sis coulombeaus,
it-had at-the shafts six doves
pris en son coulombier mont beaus.
taken in her dovecote very fair
Toute leur chose ont aprestee.
All their thing they-have prepared
Adonc est en son char montee
Then is into her chariot mounted
Venus, qui Chasteé guerreie.
Venus who Chastity wars-against
Nus des oiseaus ne se desreie;
Any of-the birds not himself breaks-rank
batent les eles, si s'en partent.
they-beat the wings so themselves-thence depart
L'air devant aus rompent e partent,
The-air before them they-break and part
vienent en l'ost; Venus venue,
they-come into the-host Venus come
tost est de son char descendue.
soon is from her chariot descended
Contre li saillent a grant feste,
Toward her leap with great feast

ses fiz prumiers, qui par sa heste
her son first who by his haste
avait ja les trives cassees,
had already the truces broken
anceis qu'eus fussent trespassees;
before that-they were expired
qu'onques n'i garda couvenance
that-ever not-there he-kept covenant
15800 de sairement ne de fiance.
of oath nor of pledge
Forment a guerreier entendent:
Strongly to warring they-attend
cist assaillent, cil se defendent;
these assail those themselves defend
cist drecent au chastel perrieres;
these raise at-the castle catapults
granz chaillous de pesanz prieres
great boulders of heavy prayers
15805 pour leur murs rompre leur enveient.
for their walls to-break to-them they-send
E li portier les murs hourdeient
And the porters the walls fortify
de forz claies refuseïces,
with strong hurdles of-refusal
tessues de verges pleïces,
woven of rods pliant
qu'il orent par granz estouties
which-they had by great insolences
15810 par la haie Dangier cuillies.
through the hedge (of-)Danger gathered

E cist saietes barbelees,
And these arrows barbed
de granz promesses empenees
with great promises feathered
que de servises, que de dons,
both of services and of gifts
pour tost aveir leur guerredons,
for soon to-have their recompenses
car il n'i entra onques fust
for it not-there entered ever wood
qui touz de promesses ne fust,
which all of promises not were
dou fer ferrees fermement
with-the iron shod firmly
de fiance e de sairement,
of pledge and of oath
traient seur aus; e cil se targent
shoot upon them and those themselves shield
qui de defendre ne se targent,
who from defending not themselves delay
car targes ont e forz e fieres,
for shields they-have both strong and fierce
ne trop pesanz ne trop legieres,
neither too heavy nor too light
d'autel fust come ierent les claies
of-such wood as were the hurdles
que Dangiers cuillait en ses haies,
which Danger gathered in his hedges
si que traire riens n'i valait.
so that shooting anything not-there was-worth

Si con la chose ainsinc alait,
So as the thing thus went
Amours vers sa mere se trait,
Love toward his mother himself draws
tout son estat li a retrait,
all his state to-her has related
si li prie qu'el le secueure.
so her prays that-she him succor
«Male mort», dist ele, «m'acueure,
Evil death said she me-may-run-upon
qui tantost me puisse acourer,
which at-once me may strike-down
se je jamais lais demourer
if I ever let remain
Chasteé en fame vivant,
Chastity in woman living
tant aut Jalousie estrivant!
however-much may-go Jealousy striving
Trop souvent en grant peine en somes.
Too often in great pain thereby we-are
Beaus fiz, jurez ausinc des omes
Fair son swear likewise of-the men
qu'il saudront tuit par voz sentiers.
that-they will-leap all by your paths
— Certes, ma dame, volentiers.
Certainly my lady willingly
N'en ierent mais nul respité;
Not-thereof will-be more any spared
jamais, au meins par verité,
ever at-the least by truth

ne seront preudome clamé
not they-will-be worthy-men called
s'il n'aiment ou s'il n'ont amé.
if-they not-love or if-they not-have loved
Grant douleur est quant teus genz vivent
Great grief it-is when such folk live
qui les deduiz d'Amours eschivent,
who the delights of-Love shun
pour qu'il les puissent maintenir.
provided that-they them can maintain
A mal chief puissent il venir!
To evil end may they come
Tant les hé que, se jes poïsse
So-much them I-hate that if I-them could
confondre, touz les confondisse.
confound all them I-would-confound
D'aus me plaing e toujourz plaindrai,
Of-them myself I-complain and always will-complain
ne dou plaindre ne me feindrai,
nor from-the complaining not myself I-will-hold-back
con cil qui nuire leur vourrai
as he who to-harm to-them will-wish
en touz les cas que je pourrai,
in all the cases that I will-be-able
tant que j'en seie si venchiez
until that I-thereof be so avenged
que leur orgueauz iert estanchiez,
that their pride will-be quenched
ou qu'il seront tuit condanné.
or that-they will-be all condemned

Mar fussent il onc d'Adan né,
To-ill were they ever of-Adam born
quant si pensent de mei grever!
when so they-think of me to-grieve
Es cors leur puist li cuers crever,
In-the bodies to-them may the heart burst
quant mes deduiz veulent abatre!
when my delights they-wish to-cast-down
Certes, qui bien me vourrait batre,
Certainly who well me would-wish to-beat
veire effronter a quatre pis,
indeed smash with four picks
ne me pourrait il faire pis.
not to-me could he do worse
Si ne sui je mie morteus;
Yet not am I at-all mortal
mais courrouz en receif or teus
but anger thereof I-receive now such
que, se morteus estre peüsse,
that if mortal be I-could
dou deul que j'ai la mort eüsse;
from-the grief that I-have the death I-would-have
car, se mi jeu vont defaillant,
for if my games go failing
j'ai perdu quanque j'ai vaillant,
I-have lost whatever I-have worth
fors mon cors e mes vesteüres,
except my body and my garments
mon chapel e mes armeüres.
my garland and my weapons

Au meins, s'il n'en ont la poissance,
At-the least if-they not-thereof have the power
deüssent il aveir pesance
ought they have sorrow
e leur cueurs en douleur plaissier
and their hearts in grief bend
s'il les leur couvenist laissier.
if-it them to-them behooved to-leave
Ou peut l'en querre meilleur vie
Where can one seek better life
que d'estre entre les braz s'amie?»
than of-being between the arms (of-)his-friend

The Oath, and Nature at Her Forge

XII

The host swears the oath on their quivers and arrows in place of relics. Meanwhile Nature works at her forge to keep the species alive; Death pursues every individual and men flee her in every way, but she can never destroy a kind while one member remains. The phoenix, reborn from its ashes, shows the kind surviving.

Lors font en l'ost le sairement;
Then they-make in the-host the oath
e, pour tenir le fermement,
and for to-hold it firmly
ont, en leu de reliques, traites
have in place of relics drawn
leur cuiriees e leur saietes,
their quivers and their arrows

leur ars, leur darz e leur brandons;
their bows their darts and their brands
e dient: «Nous n'i demandons
and they-say We not-there ask
meilleurs reliques a ce faire,
better relics to this do
ne qui tant nous peüssent plaire.
nor which so-much us could please
Se nous cetes parjurions,
If we these forswore
jamais creü ne serions.»
ever believed not we-would-be
Seur autre chose ne le jurent,
Upon other thing not it they-swear
e li baron seur ce les crurent
and the barons upon this them believed
autant con seur la Trinité,
as-much as upon the Trinity
pour ce qu'il jurent verité.
for this that-they swear truth
E quant ce sairement fait orent
And when this oath made they-had
si que tuit entendre le porent,
so that all hear it could
Nature, qui pensait des choses
Nature who thought of-the things
qui sont desouz le ciel encloses,
which are beneath the heaven enclosed
dedenz sa forge entree estait,
within her forge entered was

ou toute s'entente metait
where all her-attention she-put
en forgier singulieres pieces,
in forging singular pieces
pour continuer les espieces;
for to-continue the species
car les pieces tant les font vivre
for the pieces so-much them make live
que Mort ne les peut aconsivre,
that Death not them can overtake
ja tant ne savra courre après;
ever so-much not will-know to-run after
car Nature tant li va près
for Nature so-much to-her goes near
que quant la Mort o sa maçue
that when the Death with her club
des pieces singulieres tue
of-the pieces singular kills
ceus qu'el treuve a sei redevables;
those that-she finds to herself indebted
(qu'il en i a de corrompables
for-it thereof there has of corruptible
qui ne doutent la mort neant;
which not fear the death nothing
e touteveis vont decheant,
and nevertheless go decaying
e s'usent en tens e pourrissent,
and themselves-wear in time and rot
don autres choses se nourrissent,)
whereof other things themselves nourish

quant toutes les cuide estreper,
when all them she-thinks to-uproot
nes peut ensemble conceper;
not-them she-can together cut-down
car, quant l'une par deça hape,
for when the-one by here she-snatches
l'autre par dela li eschape;
the-other by there from-her escapes
car, quant ele a tué le pere,
for when she has killed the father
remaint il fiz ou fille ou mere,
remains it son or daughter or mother
qui s'en fuient devant la Mort
who themselves-thence flee before the Death
quant il veient celui ja mort;
when they see that-one already dead
puis recouvient il ceus mourir,
then in-turn-behooves it those to-die
ja si bien ne savront courir:
ever so well not they-will-know to-run
n'i vaut medecine ne veuz.
not-there avails medicine nor vows
Donc saillent nieces e neveuz,
Then leap-forth nieces and nephews
qui fuient pour aus deporter
who flee for themselves to-amuse
tant com pié les peuent porter;
as-much as feet them can carry
don l'uns s'en fuit a la querole,
whereof the-one himself-thence flees to the carol

l'autre au moustier, l'autre a l'escole,
the-other to-the church the-other to the-school
li autre a leur marcheandises,
the others to their merchandise
li autre aus arz qu'il ont aprises,
the others to-the arts that-they have learned
li autre a leur autres deliz
the others to their other delights
de vins, de viandes, de liz;
of wines of foods of beds
li autre, pour plus tost foïr,
the others for more soon to-flee
que Mort ne les face enfoïr,
that Death not them make bury
s'en montent seur les granz destriers,
themselves-thence mount upon the great chargers
a tout leur seurorez estriers;
with all their gilded stirrups
l'autre met en un fust sa vie,
the-other puts in a wood his life
e s'en fuit par mer a navie,
and himself-thence flees by sea with ship
e meine au regart des esteiles
and steers by-the sight of-the stars
sa nef, ses avirons, ses veiles;
his ship his oars his sails
l'autre, qui par veu s'umelie,
the-other who by vow himself-humbles
prent un mantel d'ypocrisie,
takes a mantle of-hypocrisy

don en fuiant son penser cueuvre,
wherewith in fleeing his thought he-covers
tant qu'il pere dehors par euvre.
until that-it appears outside by work
Ainsinc fuient tuit cil qui vivent,
Thus flee all those who live
qui volentiers la mort eschivent.
who willingly the death shun
Mort, qui de neir le vis a teint,
Death who with black the face has dyed
cueurt après tant qu'el les ataint;
runs after until that-she them overtakes
si qu'il i a trop fiere chace:
so that-it there has exceedingly fierce chase
cil s'en fuient e Mort les chace
those themselves-thence flee and Death them chases
dis anz ou vint, trente ou quarante,
ten years or twenty thirty or forty
cinquante, seissante, setante,
fifty sixty seventy
veire octante, nonante, cent;
indeed eighty ninety a-hundred
lors va quanqu'el tient depeçant.
then goes whatever-she holds tearing-apart
E s'il peuent outre passer,
And if-they can beyond pass
cueurt ele après senz sei lasser,
runs she after without herself tiring
tant qu'el les tient en ses liens,
until that-she them holds in her bonds

maugré touz les fisiciens.
in-spite-of all the physicians
E les fisiciens meïsmes,
And the physicians themselves
onc nul eschaper n'en veïsmes:
ever any escape not-thereof we-saw
pas Ypocras ne Galien,
not Hippocrates nor Galen
tout fussent bon fisicien;
although they-were good physicians
Rasis, Constantins, Avicenne
Rhazes Constantine Avicenna
li ront laissiee la coënne;
to-her in-turn-have left the hide
e ceus qui ne peuent tant courre,
and those who not can so-much run
nes repeut riens de Mort rescourre.
not-them can-in-turn anything from Death rescue
Ainsinc Mort, qui ja n'iert saoule,
Thus Death who ever not-will-be sated
gloutement les pieces engoule;
gluttonously the pieces gulps
tant les suit par mer e par terre
so-much them she-follows by sea and by land
qu'en la fin toutes les enterre.
that-in the end all them she-buries
Mais nes peut ensemble tenir,
But not-them she-can together hold

si qu'el ne peut a chief venir
so that-she not can to end come
des espieces dou tout destruire,
of-the species of-the all destroying
tant sevent bien les pieces fuire;
so-much know well the pieces to-flee
car, s'il n'en demourait que une,
for if-it not-thereof remained but one
si vivrait la fourme comune;
yet would-live the form common
e par le fenis bien le semble,
and by the phoenix well it seems
qu'il n'en peut estre deus ensemble.
for-it not-thereof can be two together
Toujourz est il un seus fenis,
Always is it one sole phoenix
e vit, anceis qu'il seit fenis,
and lives before that-he be finished
par cinc cenz anz; au darrenier
for five hundred years at-the last
si fait un feu grant e plenier
so makes a fire great and full
d'espices e s'i boute e s'art.
of-spices and himself-there thrusts and himself-burns
Ainsinc fait de son cors essart.
Thus makes of his body clearing
Mais, pour ce qu'il sa fourme garde,
But for this that-he his form keeps
de sa poudre, coment qu'il s'arde,
from his dust however that-he himself-burn

uns autres fenis en revient,
an other phoenix thence comes-again
ou cil meïsmes, se devient,
or that-one same if it-comes-about
que Nature ainsinc resoucite,
whom Nature thus revives
qui tant a s'espiece profite
who so-much to its-species profits
qu'ele perdrait dou tout son estre
that-it would-lose of-the all its being
s'el ne faisait cetui renaistre;
if-she not made this-one be-reborn
si que, se Mort fenis deveure,
so that if Death phoenix devours
fenis touteveis vis demeure;
phoenix nevertheless alive remains
s'el en avait mil devourez,
if-she thereof had thousand devoured
si serait fenis demourez.
yet would-be phoenix remained
C'est fenis la comune fourme
This-is phoenix the common form
que Nature es pieces refourme,
which Nature in-the pieces re-forms
qui dou tout perdue serait,
which of-the all lost would-be
qui l'autre vivre ne lairait.
who the-other live not would-let

Cete maniere neïs ont
This manner even have
trestoutes les choses qui sont
all the things which are
desouz le cercle de la lune
beneath the circle of the moon
que, s'il en peut demourer l'une,
that if-it thereof can remain the-one
s'espiece tant en li vivra
its-species so-much in it will-live
que ja Mort ne l'aconsivra.
that ever Death not it-will-overtake

Art and Alchemy

XIII

Nature keeps forging new individuals while Death and Corruption destroy them. Art kneels before her and copies her like an ape, but cannot make anything alive, however well she paints or carves. Alchemy, though, is a true art: those who master it can change one metal into another, though the sophists cannot.

Mais Nature douce e piteuse,
But Nature sweet and merciful
quant el veit que Mort l'envieuse,
when she sees that Death the-envious
entre li e Corrupcion,
between her and Corruption

vienent metre a destruccion
come to-put to destruction
quanqu'eus treuvent dedenz sa forge,
whatever-they find within her forge
toujourz martele, toujourz forge,
always hammers always forges
toujourz ses pieces renouvele
always her pieces renews
par generacion nouvele;
by generation new
quant autre conseil n'i peut metre,
when other counsel not-there she-can put
si taille empreintes de tel letre
so she-cuts stamps of such letter
qu'el leur done fourmes veraies,
that-she to-them gives forms true
en coinz de diverses moneies,
in dies of divers coins
don Art faisait ses essemplaires,
whereof Art made her models
qui ne fait pas fourmes si veires;
who not makes at-all forms so true
mais par mout ententive cure
but by very attentive care
a genouz est devant Nature,
on knees is before Nature
si prie e requiert e demande,
so prays and asks and demands
come mendiant e truande,
as beggar and vagabond

povre de science e de force,
poor of knowledge and of strength
qui d'ensivre la mout s'esforce,
who of-following her much herself-strives
que Nature li vueille aprendre
that Nature her may-wish to-teach
coment ele puisse comprendre,
how she may comprehend
par son engin, en ses figures,
by her skill in her figures
proprement toutes creatures.
properly all creatures
Si garde coment Nature euvre,
So she-watches how Nature works
car mout voudrait faire autel euvre,
for much she-would-wish to-make such work
e la contrefait come singes;
and her counterfeits like ape
mais tant est ses sens nuz e linges
but so-much is her sense bare and thin
qu'el ne peut faire choses vives,
that-she not can make things living
ja si ne sembleront naïves.
ever so not they-will-seem natural
Car Art, combien qu'ele se peine
For Art however-much that-she herself pains
par grant estuide e par grant peine
by great study and by great pain
de faire choses queus qu'eus seient,
of making things whatever that-they be

queusque figures qu'eles aient,
whatever figures that-they have
peigne, teigne, forge ou entaille
may-paint may-dye may-forge or may-carve
chevaliers armez en bataille,
knights armed in battle
seur beaus destriers, trestouz couverz
upon fair chargers all covered
d'armes indes, jaunes ou verz,
with-arms blue yellow or green
ou d'autres couleurs piolez,
or with-other colors speckled
se plus pioler les volez,
if more to-speckle them you-wish
beaus oisillons en verz boissons,
fair little-birds in green bushes
de toutes eves les poissons,
of all waters the fishes
trestoutes les bestes sauvages
all the beasts wild
qui pasturent par leur boschages,
which graze through their groves
toutes erbes, toutes floretes
all grasses all little-flowers
que valleton e puceletes
which young-lads and little-maidens
vont en printens es gauz coillir,
go in springtime in-the woods to-gather
que flourir veient e foillir,
which flower they-see and leaf

oiseaus privez, bestes domesches,
birds tame beasts domestic
baleries, dances e tresches
dancings dances and round-dances
de beles dames bien parees,
of fair ladies well adorned
bien pourtraites, bien figurees,
well portrayed well figured
seit en metail, en fust, en cire,
be-it in metal in wood in wax
seit en quelconque autre matire,
be-it in whatever other matter
seit en tableaus, seit en pareiz,
be-it in panels be-it on walls
tenanz beaus bachelers a reiz,
holding fair bachelors in nets
bien figurez e bien pourtraiz;
well figured and well portrayed
ja pour figures ne pour traiz
ever for figures nor for strokes
ne les fera par aus aler,
not them she-will-make by themselves go
vivre, mouveir, sentir, paler.
live move feel speak
Ou d'alkimie tant apreigne
Or of-alchemy so-much she-may-learn
que touz metauz en couleur teigne,
that all metals in color she-dye

qu'el se pourrait anceis tuer
that-she herself could sooner kill
que les espieces transmuer,
than the species transmute
se tant ne fait qu'el les rameine
if so-much not she-does that-she them brings-back
a leur matire prumeraine;
to their matter first
euvre tant come ele vivra,
let-her-work as-long as she will-live
ja Nature n'aconsivra.
ever Nature not-she-will-overtake
E se tant se voulait pener
And if so-much herself she-wished to-pain
qu'el les i seüst ramener,
that-she them there knew-how to-bring-back
si li faudrait espeir science
yet to-her would-fail perhaps knowledge
de venir a cele atrempance,
of coming to that tempering
quant el ferait son elissir,
when she would-make her elixir
don la fourme devrait issir,
whence the form ought come-out
qui devise entr'aus leur sustances
which divides among-them their substances
par especiaus diferences,
by special differences

si come il pert au defenir,
so as it appears at-the defining
qui bien en set a chief venir.
who well thereof knows to end come
Nepourquant, c'est chose notable,
Nevertheless this-is thing notable
alkimie est art veritable:
alchemy is art true
qui sagement en ouverrait
who wisely therein would-work
granz merveilles i trouverrait;
great marvels there would-find
car, coment qu'il aut des espieces,
for however that-it go with-the species
au meins les singulieres pieces,
at-the least the singular pieces
en sensibles euvres soumises,
in sensible works subjected
sont muables en tant de guises
are changeable in so-many of ways
qu'eus peuent leur complexions
that-they can their complexions
par diverses digestions
by divers digestions
si changier entr'aus que cist changes
so change among-them that this change
les met souz espieces estranges,
them puts under species strange
e leur tost l'espiece prumiere.
and from-them takes-away the-species first

Ne veit l'en coment de fouchiere
Not sees one how from fern
font cil e cendre e veirre naistre
make those both ash and glass be-born
qui de veirrerie sont maistre,
who of glassmaking are masters
par depuracion legiere?
by purification light
Si n'est pas li veirres fouchiere,
Yet not-is at-all the glass fern
ne fouchiere ne rest pas veirres.
nor fern not is-in-turn at-all glass
E quant esparz vient e toneirres,
And when lightning comes and thunder
si repeut l'en souvent voeir
so can-in-turn one often see
des vapeurs les pierres choeir,
from-the vapors the stones fall
qui ne monterent mie pierres.
which not rose at-all stones
Ce peut saveir li quenoissierres
This can know the knower
de la cause qui tel matire
of the cause which such matter
a cete estrange espiece tire.
to this strange species draws
Ci sont espieces treschangiees,
Here are species transformed

ou leur pieces d'aus estrangiees
or their pieces from-them estranged
e en sustance e en figure,
both in substance and in figure
ceus par Art, cete par Nature.
those by Art this by Nature
Ainsinc pourrait des metauz faire
Thus could of-the metals do
qui bien en savrait a chief traire,
who well thereof would-know to end draw
e tolir aus orz leur ordures
and take-from the foul-ones their filth
e metre les en fourmes pures
and put them in forms pure
par leur complexions veisines,
by their complexions neighboring
l'une vers l'autre assez enclines;
the-one toward the-other quite inclined
qu'il sont trestuit d'une matire,
for-they are all of-one matter
coment que Nature l'atire;
however that Nature it-arranges
car tuit par diverses manieres,
for all by divers manners
dedenz leur terrestres minieres,
within their earthly mines
de soufre e de vif argent naissent,
of sulfur and of quick silver are-born
si con li livre le confessent.
so as the books it confess

Qui se savrait donc soutillier
Who himself would-know then to-use-subtlety
aus esperiz aparillier
to-the spirits to-prepare
si que force d'entrer eüssent,
so that force of-entering they-had
e que voler ne s'en peüssent
and that fly not themselves-thence they-could
quant il dedenz les cors entrassent,
when they within the bodies entered
mais que bien purgiez les trouvassent,
provided that well purged them they-found
e fust li soufres senz ardure,
and were the sulfur without burning
pour blanche ou pour rouge teinture,
for white or for red tincture
son vouleir des metauz avrait,
his will of-the metals would-have
quant ainsinc faire le savrait;
when thus do it he-would-know
car d'argent fin fin or font naistre
for from-silver fine fine gold make be-born
cil qui d'alkimie sont maistre;
those who of-alchemy are masters
e pois e couleur li ajoustent
and weight and color to-it they-add
par choses qui guieres ne coustent;
by things which much not cost

e d'or fin pierres precieuses
and from-gold fine stones precious
font il, cleres e envieuses;
make they clear and desirable
e les autres metauz desnuent
and the other metals they-strip
de leur fourmes, si qu'il les muent
of their forms so that-they them change
en fin argent, par medecines
into fine silver by medicines
blanches e tresperçanz e fines.
white and piercing and fine
Mais ce ne feraient cil mie
But this not would-do those at-all
qui euvrent de sofisterie:
who work with sophistry
travaillent tant come il vivront,
let-them-labor as-long as they will-live
ja Nature n'aconsivront.
ever Nature not-they-will-overtake

Nature's Grief

XIV

Nature weeps for a deed she repents and would leave her works if her master gave her leave; no painter, not Zeuxis, could describe her beauty. Hearing the host's oath she takes comfort, calls herself a fool for one fault, and turns to the priest of her chapel.

Nature, qui tant est soutive,
Nature who so-much is subtle
combien qu'ele fust ententive
however-much that-she were intent
a ses euvres que mout amait,
to her works which much she-loved
lasse, dolente se clamait,
weary grieving herself called
e si parfondement plourait
and so deeply wept
qu'il n'est cueurs, qui point d'amour ait
that-it not-is heart which at-all of-love have
ne de pitié, qui l'esgardast
nor of pity which her-looked-at
qui de plourer se retardast;
which from weeping itself held-back

car tel douleur au cueur sentait
for such grief at-the heart she-felt
d'un fait don el se repentait
of-a deed whereof she herself repented
que ses euvres voulait laissier
that her works she-wished to-leave
e de tout son penser cessier;
and of all her thinking to-cease
mais que tant seulement seüst
provided that so only she-knew
que congié de son maistre eüst;
that leave of her master she-had
si l'en voulait aler requerre,
so him-thereof she-wished to-go to-ask
tant li destreint li cueurs e serre.
so-much to-her constricts the heart and tightens
Bien la vous vousisse descrire,
Well her to-you I-would-wish to-describe
mais mes sens n'i pourrait soufire.
but my sense not-there could suffice
Mes sens! Qu'ai je dit? c'est du meins.
My sense What-have I said this-is of-the least
Non ferait veir nus sens humains,
Not would-do indeed any sense human
ne par voiz vive ne par notes;
neither by voice living nor by notes
e fust Platons ou Aristotes,
and it-were Plato or Aristotle
Algus, Euclidès, Tholomees,
Algus Euclid Ptolemy

qui tant ont or granz renomees
who so-much have now great renowns
d'aveir esté bon escrivain,
of-having been good writers
leur engin seraient si vain,
their wits would-be so vain
s'il osaient la chose emprendre,
if-they dared the thing to-undertake
qu'il ne la pourraient entendre;
that-they not it could understand
ne Pygmalion entaillier;
nor Pygmalion carve
en vain s'i pourrait travaillier
in vain himself-there could labor
Parrasius; veire Apellès,
Parrhasius indeed Apelles
que je mout bon peintre apel, les
whom I very good painter call the
beautez de li jamais descrivre
beauties of her ever describe
ne pourrait, tant eüst a vivre;
not could however-much he-had to live
ne Miro ne Policletus
neither Myron nor Polycleitus
jamais ne savraient cet us.
ever not would-know this practice
Zeusis neïs par son bel peindre
Zeuxis even by his fair painting
ne pourrait a tel fourme ataindre,
not could to such form attain

qui, pour faire l'image ou temple,
who for to-make the-image in-the temple
de cinc puceles fist essemple,
of five maidens made model
les plus beles que l'en pot querre
the most fair that one could seek
16190 e trouver en toute la terre,
and find in all the earth
qui devant lui se sont tenues
who before him themselves are held
tout en estant trestoutes nues,
all in standing all naked
pour sei prendre garde en chascune
for himself to-take heed in each
s'il trouvait nul defaut en l'une,
if-he found any defect in the-one
16195 ou fust seur cors ou fust seur membre,
either it-were on body or it-were on limb
si con Tulles le nous remembre,
so as Tully it to-us recalls
au livre de sa Retorique,
in-the book of his Rhetoric
qui mout est science autentique.
which very is knowledge authentic
Mais ci ne peüst il riens faire,
But here not could he anything do
16200 Zeusis, tant seüst bien pourtraire,
Zeuxis however-much he-knew well to-portray
ne coulourer sa pourtraiture,
nor color his portrait

tant est de grant beauté Nature.
so-much is of great beauty Nature
Zeusis! non pas trestuit li maistre
Zeuxis not at-all all the masters
que Nature fist onques naistre;
whom Nature made ever be-born
car, or seit que bien entendissent
for now be-it that well they-understood
sa beauté toute, e tuit vousissent
her beauty all and all wished
a tel pourtraiture muser,
at such portrait to-muse
ainz pourraient leur mains user
sooner could their hands wear-out
que si trés grant beauté pourtraire.
than so very great beauty portray
Nus fors Deus ne le pourrait faire.
Any except God not it could do
E pour ce que, se je poïsse,
And for this that if I could
volentiers au meins l'entendisse;
willingly at-the least it-I-would-understand
veire escrite la vous eüsse,
indeed written it for-you I-would-have
se je poïsse e je seüsse;
if I could and I knew-how
je meïsmes i ai musé
I myself there have mused
tant que tout mon sen i usai,
so-much that all my sense there I-wore-out

come fos e outrecuidiez,
as fool and presumptuous
cent tanz plus que vous ne cuidiez;
a-hundred times more than you — think
car trop fis grant presompcion,
for exceedingly I-did great presumption
quant onques mis m'entencion
when ever I-put my-intention
a si trés haute euvre achever;
to so very high work to-achieve
qu'ainz me poïst li cueurs crever,
for-sooner to-me could the heart burst
tant trouvai noble e de grant pris
so-much I-found noble and of great worth
la grant beauté que je tant pris,
the great beauty which I so-much prize
que par penser la compreïsse,
than by thinking it I-could-comprehend
pour nul travail que j'i meïsse,
for any toil that I-there put
ne que seulement en osasse
nor that only thereof I-dared
un mot tinter, tant i pensasse.
a word ring however-much there I-thought
Si sui dou penser recreüz;
So I-am of-the thinking weary
pour ce m'en sui atant teüz
for this myself-thereof I-am thereupon silent
que, quant je plus i ai pensé,
that when I more there have thought

tant est bele que plus n'en sai.
so-much is fair that more not-thereof I-know
Car Deus, li beaus outre mesure,
For God the fair beyond measure
quant il beauté mist en Nature,
when he beauty put in Nature
il en i fist une fontaine
he thereof there made a fountain
toujourz courant e toujourz pleine,
always running and always full
de cui toute beauté desrive;
from which all beauty derives
mais nus n'en set ne fonz ne rive.
but any not-thereof knows neither bottom nor bank
Pour ce n'est dreiz que conte face
For this not-is right that account I-make
ne de son cors ne de sa face,
neither of her body nor of her face
qui tant est avenant e bele
which so-much is comely and fair
que fleur de lis en mai nouvele,
that flower of lily in May new
rose seur rain, ne neif seur branche
rose on bough nor snow on branch
n'est si vermeille ne si blanche.
not-is so red nor so white
Si devraie je comparer,
So ought I pay-for-it
quant je l'os a riens comparer,
when I her-dare to anything compare

puis que sa beauté ne son pris
since that her beauty nor her worth
ne peut estre d'ome compris.»
not can be by-man comprehended
Quant ele oï ce sairement,
When she heard this oath
mout li fu grant alegement
much to-her was great relief
dou grant deul qu'ele demenait.
of-the great grief that-she showed
Pour deceüe se tenait,
For deceived herself she-held
e disait: «Lasse! qu'ai je fait!
and said Alas what-have I done
Ne me repenti mais de fait
Not myself I-repented ever of deed
qui m'avenist des lors en ça
which to-me-happened from then to here
que cist beaus mondes comença,
that this fair world began
fors d'une chose seulement,
except of-one thing only
ou j'ai mespris trop malement,
where I-have erred exceedingly evilly
don je me tieng trop a musarde;
whereof I myself hold exceedingly for fool
e quant ma musardie esgarde,
and when my folly I-regard
bien est dreiz que je m'en repente.
well is right that I myself-thereof repent

Lasse fole! lasse dolente!
Wretched fool wretched grieving
Lasse, lasse cent mile feiz!
Wretched wretched a-hundred thousand times
Ou sera mais trouvee feiz?
Where will-be ever found faith
Ai je bien ma peine empleiee!
Have I well my pain employed
Sui je bien dou sen desveiee,
Am I well from-the sense led-astray
qui toujourz ai cuidié servir
who always have thought to-serve
mes amis, pour gré deservir,
my friends for gratitude to-deserve
e trestout mon travail ai mis
and all my toil have put
en essaucier mes anemis!
in exalting my enemies
Ma debonaireté m'afole.
My graciousness me-destroys
Lors a mis son prestre a parole,
Then has put her priest to speech
qui celebrait en sa chapele;
who celebrated in her chapel
mais ce n'iert pas messe nouvele,
but this not-was at-all mass new
car toujourz ot fait ce servise
for always he-had done this service
des qu'il fu prestres de l'iglise.
since that-he was priest of the-church

Hautement, en leu d'autre messe,
Loudly in place of-other mass
devant Nature la deesse,
before Nature the goddess
li prestres, qui bien s'acordait,
the priest who well himself-agreed
en audience recordait
in audience recited
les figures representables
the figures representable
de toutes choses corrompables
of all things corruptible
qu'il ot escrites en son livre,
which-he had written in his book
si con Nature les li livre.
so as Nature them to-him delivers

Genius on Women's Secrets

XV

Nature asks Genius to hear her confession, and he agrees but asks her to stop weeping. He warns that women anger easily and that no man should tell a woman a secret, for sooner or later she will reveal it, even unasked. A husband who confides in her ties his own hands and cuts his own throat.

«Genius», dist ele, «beaus prestres,
Genius said she fair priest
qui des leus estes deus e maistres,
who of-the places are god and master

e selonc leur proprietez
and according-to their properties
trestouz en euvre les metez,
all to work them you-put
e bien achevez la besoigne,
and well achieve the business
si come a chascun leu besoigne,
so as to each place it-is-needed
d'une folie que j'ai faite,
of-a folly that I-have done
don je ne me sui pas retraite,
whence I not myself am at-all withdrawn
mais repentance mout m'empresse,
but repentance much me-presses
a vous me vueil faire confesse.
to you myself I-wish to-make confessed
— Ma dame, dou monde reïne,
My lady of-the world queen
cui toute riens mondaine encline,
to-whom all thing worldly bows
s'il est riens qui vous grieve en tant
if-it is anything which you grieves in so-much
que vous en ailliez repentant,
that you thereof go repenting
ou qui neïs vous plaise a dire,
or which even you may-please to say
de quiconques seit la matire,
of whatever be the matter
seit d'esjoïr ou de douleir,
be-it of-rejoicing or of grieving

bien me poez vostre vouleir
well to-me you-can your will
confessier trestout par leisir;
confess all at leisure
e je tout a vostre plaisir»,
and I all at your pleasure
fait Genius, «metre i vourrai
says Genius to-put there will-wish
tout le conseil que je pourrai;
all the counsel that I will-be-able
e celerai bien vostre afaire,
and will-conceal well your affair
se c'est chose qui face a taire.
if this-is thing which be to keep-silent
E se mestier avez d'assoudre
And if need you-have of-absolving
ce ne vous dei je mie toudre;
this not from-you ought I at-all take-away
mais laissiez ester vostre pleur.
but let be your weeping
— Certes», fait ele, «se je pleur,
Certainly says she if I weep
beaus Genius, n'est pas merveille.
fair Genius not-it-is at-all marvel
— Dame, touteveis vous conseille
Lady nevertheless you I-counsel
que vous voilliez ce pleur laissier,
that you may-wish this weeping to-leave
se bien vous voulez confessier,
if well yourself you-wish to-confess

e bien entendre a la matire
and well to-attend to the matter
que vous m'avez emprise a dire;
which you to-me-have undertaken to say
car granz est, ce crei, li outrages,
for great is this I-believe the outrage
car bien sai que nobles courages
for well I-know that noble heart
ne s'esmeut pas de po de chose.
not itself-moves at-all for little of thing
S'est mout fos qui troubler vous ose.
So-is very fool who to-trouble you dares
Mais, senz faille, il est veirs que fame
But without fail it is true that woman
legierement d'ire s'enflame.
easily with-wrath herself-inflames
Virgiles meïsmes tesmoigne,
Vergil himself witnesses
qui mout quenut de leur besoigne,
who much knew of their business
que ja fame n'iert tant estable
that ever woman not-will-be so stable
qu'el ne seit diverse e muable.
that-she not be various and changeable
E si rest trop ireuse beste:
And also is-in-turn exceedingly wrathful beast
Salemons dit qu'onc ne fu teste
Solomon says that-ever not was head
seur teste de sarpent crueuse,
above head of serpent cruel

ne riens de fame plus ireuse,
nor anything than woman more wrathful
n'onc riens, ce dit, n'ot tant malice.
nor-ever anything this he-says not-had so-much malice
Briement en fame a tant de vice
Briefly in woman there-is so-much of vice
que nus ne peut ses meurs parvers
that any not can her ways perverse
conter par rimes ne par vers.
recount by rhymes nor by verses
E si dit Titus Livius,
And also says Titus Livy
qui bien quenut quel sont li us
who well knew what are the usages
des fames e queus les manieres,
of-the women and what the manners
que vers leur meurs nules prieres
that toward their ways any prayers
ne valent tant come blandices,
not avail so-much as flatteries
tant sont decevables e nices,
so-much they-are deceivable and silly
e de flechissable nature.
and of bendable nature
Si redit ailleurs l'Escriture
So says-in-turn elsewhere the-Scripture
que de tout le femenin vice
that of all the feminine vice
li fondemenz est avarice.
the foundation is avarice

E quiconques dit a sa fame
And whoever tells to his wife
ses secrez, il en fait sa dame.
his secrets he thereof makes his lady
Nus on qui seit de mere nez,
Any man who be of mother born
s'il n'est ivres ou forsenez,
if-he not-is drunk or mad
ne deit a fame reveler
not ought to woman reveal
nule rien qui face a celer,
any thing which be to conceal
se d'autrui ne la veaut oïr.
if from-another not it he-wishes to-hear
Meauz vendrait dou païs foïr
Better would-be-worth from-the country to-flee
que dire a fame chose a taire,
than to-tell to woman thing to keep-silent
tant seit leiaus ne debonaire.
however-much she-be loyal or gracious
Ne ja nul fait secré ne face,
Nor ever any deed secret not let-him-do
s'il veit fame venir en place;
if-he sees woman come in place
car, s'il i a perill de cors,
for if-it there is peril of body
el le dira, bien le recors,
she it will-tell well it I-recall
combien que longuement atende.
however-much that long she-wait

E se nus riens ne l'en demande,
And if any anything not her-thereof asks
le dira ele vraiement,
it will-tell she truly
senz estrange amonestement:
without outside urging
pour nule rien ne s'en tairait.
for any thing not herself-thereof she-would-keep-silent
A son avis morte serait
To her opinion dead she-would-be
s'il ne li saillait de la bouche,
if-it not from-her leapt from the mouth
s'il i a perill ou reprouche.
if-it there is peril or reproach
E cil qui dit le li avra,
And he who told it to-her will-have
s'il est teus, puis qu'el le savra,
if-he is such since that-she it will-know
qu'il l'ose emprès ferir ne batre,
that-he her-dares after to-strike or to-beat
une feiz, non pas treis ne quatre,
one time not at-all three nor four
ja plus tost ne la touchera
ever more soon not her he-will-touch
come el le li reprouchera;
than she it to-him will-reproach
mais ce sera tout en apert.
but this will-be all in open
Qui se fie en fame il la pert;
Who himself trusts in woman he her loses

e li las qui en li se fie,
and the wretch who in her himself trusts
savez qu'il se fait? Il se lie
know-you what-he himself does He himself binds
les mains, e se cope la gueule;
the hands and himself cuts the throat
car, s'il, une feiz toute seule,
for if-he one time all alone
ose jamais vers li groucier,
dares ever toward her to-grumble
ne chastier, ne courroucier,
nor admonish nor anger
il met en tel perill sa vie,
he puts in such peril his life
s'il a dou fait mort deservie,
if-he has for-the deed death deserved
que par le col le fera pendre,
that by the neck him she-will-make hang
se li juige le peuent prendre,
if the judges him can take
ou murtrir par amis privez,
or murder by friends intimate
tant est a mal port arivez.
so-much he-is to evil port arrived

The Husband Who Tells His Wife

XVI

Genius describes the anxious husband who cannot sleep. His wife caresses him and asks what troubles him, reminds him that married people are one flesh, swears she will keep his secret, and says he wrongs her by his distrust.

Mais li fos, quant au seir se couche
But the fool when at-the evening himself lies-down
e gist lez sa fame en sa couche,
and lies beside his wife in his bed
ou reposer ne peut ou n'ose;
where rest not he-can or not-dares
qu'il a fait espeir quelque chose,
for-he has done perhaps some thing
ou veaut par aventure faire
or wishes by chance to-do
quelque murtre ou quelque contraire,
some murder or some harm
don il craint la mort receveir,
whereof he fears the death to-receive
se l'en le peut aperceveir;
if one it can perceive
si se tourne e plaint e soupire,
so himself turns and complains and sighs
e sa fame vers sei le tire,
and his wife toward herself him draws
qui bien veit qu'il est a mesaise,
who well sees that-he is at distress

si l'aplaigne e l'acole e baise,
so him-strokes and him-embraces and kisses
e se couche entre ses mameles:
and herself lies-down between her breasts
«Sire», fait ele, «queus nouveles?
Lord says she what news
Qui vous fait ainsinc soupirer
What you makes thus sigh
e tressaillir e revirer?
and start and turn-about
Nous somes or priveement
We are now privately
ici nous dui tant seulement,
here we two so only
les persones de tout cet monde,
the persons of all this world
vous li prumiers, je la segonde,
you the first I the second
qui meauz nous devons entramer
who best ourselves ought love-each-other
de cueur leial, fin, senz amer;
with heart loyal true without bitter
e de ma main, bien m'en remembre,
and with my hand well me-thereof I-remember
ai fermé l'uis de nostre chambre;
I-have shut the-door of our chamber
e les pareiz, don meauz les preise,
and the walls whence better them I-prize
sont espesses demie teise;
are thick half fathom

e si haut resont li chevron
and so high in-turn-are the rafters
que tuit seür estre i devron;
that all safe be there we-ought
e si somes loing des fenestres,
and also we-are far from-the windows
don mout est plus seürs li estres
whereby much is more safe the place
quant a noz secrez descouvrir;
as to our secrets uncovering
si ne les a poeir d'ouvrir
so not them has power of-opening
senz depecier nus on vivanz
without breaking any man living
ne plus que peut faire li venz.
nor more than can do the wind
Briement cist leus n'a point d'oïe:
Briefly this place not-has at-all of-hearing
vostre voiz n'i peut estre oïe,
your voice not-there can be heard
fors que de mei tant seulement;
except that by me so only
pour ce vous pri piteusement
for this you I-pray piteously
par amour que tant vous fieiz
by love that so-much yourself you-trust
en mei que vous le me dieiz.
in me that you it to-me tell
— Dame», fait il, «si Deus me veie,
Lady says he so God me may-see

pour nule rien ne le diraie,
for any thing not it I-would-say
car ce n'est mie chose a dire.
for this not-is at-all thing to say
— Avoi!», fait ele, «beaus douz sire,
Oh-come says she fair sweet lord
m'avez vous donc soupeçoneuse,
me-have you then suspect
qui sui vostre leial espeuse?
who am your loyal wife
Quant par mariage assemblasmes,
When by marriage we-came-together
Jesus Criz, que pas ne trouvasmes
Jesus Christ whom at-all not we-found
de sa grace aver ne eschar,
of his grace miserly nor stingy
nous fist deus estre en une char;
us made two be in one flesh
e quant nous n'avons char fors une
and since we not-have flesh except one
par le dreit de la lei comune,
by the right of the law common
n'il ne peut en une char estre
nor-it not can in one flesh be
fors uns seus cueurs a la senestre;
except one sole heart at the left
tuit un sont donques li cueur nostre;
all one are then the hearts our
le mien avez e je le vostre;
the mine you-have and I the yours

16445 riens ne peut donc ou vostre aveir
anything not can then in-the yours have
que li miens ne deie saveir.
that the mine not ought know
Pour ce pri que vous le me dites
For this I-pray that you it to-me tell
par guerredons e par merites;
by recompenses and by merits
car jamais joie au cueur n'avrai
for ever joy at-the heart not-I-will-have
16450 jusqu'a tant que je le savrai;
until-to so-much that I it will-know
e se dire nou me voulez,
and if to-tell not-it to-me you-wish
je vei bien que vous me boulez.
I see well that you me deceive
Si sai de quel cueur vous m'amez,
So I-know with what heart you me-love
qui douce amie me clamez,
who sweet friend me call
16455 douce seur e douce compaigne.
sweet sister and sweet companion
A cui parez vous tel chastaigne?
For whom peel you such chestnut
Certes, se nou me gehissiez,
Certainly if not-it to-me you-confess
bien pert que vous me traïssiez,
well appears that you me betray
car tant me sui en vous fiee,
for so-much myself am in you trusted

puis que m'eüstes afiee,
since that me-you-had betrothed
que dit vous ai toutes les choses
that told you I-have all the things
que j'oi dedenz mon cueur encloses.
which I-had within my heart enclosed
Si laissai pour vous pere e mere,
So I-left for you father and mother
oncle, neveu, sereur e frere,
uncle nephew sister and brother
e touz amis e touz parenz,
and all friends and all kinsfolk
si come il est chose aparanz.
so as it is thing apparent
Certes mout ai fait mauvais change,
Certainly very I-have made wicked exchange
quant si vers mei vous truis estrange,
when so toward me you I-find strange
que je plus ain que riens qui vive,
whom I more love than anything which lives
e tout ne me vaut une cive,
and all not to-me is-worth an onion
qui cuidiez que tant mespreïsse
who think that so-much I-would-err
vers vous que voz secrez deïsse.
toward you that your secrets I-would-tell
C'est chose qui ne pourrait estre.
This-is thing which not could be
Par Jesu Crit, le rei celestre,
By Jesus Christ the king celestial

qui vous deit meauz de mei garder?
who you ought better than me guard
Plaise vous au meins regarder,
May-it-please you at-the least to-regard
se de leiauté riens savez,
if of loyalty anything you-know
la fei que de mon cors avez:
the faith that of my body you-have
ne vous soufist pas bien cist gages?
not you suffices at-all well this pledge
En voulez vous meilleurs ostages?
Thereof wish you better hostages
Donc sui je des autres la pire,
Then am I of-the others the worst
se voz secrez ne m'osez dire.
if your secrets not to-me-you-dare to-tell
Je vei toutes ces autres fames
I see all these other women
qui sont de leur osteus si dames
who are of their houses so mistresses
que leur mari en eus se fient
that their husbands in them themselves trust
tant que touz leur secrez leur dient;
so-much that all their secrets to-them they-tell
tuit a leur fames se conseillent,
all with their wives themselves counsel
quant en leur liz ensemble veillent,
when in their beds together they-wake

e priveement se confessent
and privately themselves confess
si que riens a dire n'i laissent;
so that anything to say not-there they-leave
e plus souvent, c'est chose veire,
and more often this-is thing true
qu'il ne font neïs au prouveire.
than-they — do even to-the priest
Par eus meïsmes bien le sai,
By them themselves well it I-know
car maintes feiz oï les ai,
for many times heard them I-have
qu'eus m'ont trestout requeneü
for-they to-me-have all confessed
quanqu'eus ont oï e veü,
whatever-they have heard and seen
e tout neïs quanqu'eles cuident.
and all even whatever-they think
Ainsinc s'espurgent e se vuident.
Thus themselves-purge and themselves empty
Si ne sui je pas leur pareille;
Yet not am I at-all their like
nule vers mei ne s'apareille,
any toward me not herself-compares
car je ne sui pas jangleresse,
for I not am at-all chatterer
vilotiere ne tenceresse,
gadabout nor scold
e sui de mon cors preudefame,
and am of my body worthy-woman

coment qu'il aut vers Deu de l'ame.
however that-it go toward God of the-soul
Ja n'oïstes vous onques dire
Ever not-heard you ever say
que j'aie fait nul avoutire,
that I-have done any adultery
se li fol qui le vous conterent
if the fools who it to-you told
par mauvaistié nou controuverent.
by wickedness not-it invented
M'avez vous pas bien esprouvee?
Me-have you not well proved
Ou m'avez vous fausse trouvee?
Or me-have you false found
Emprès, beaus sire, regardez
After fair lord regard
coment vostre fei me gardez.
how your faith to-me you-keep
Certes malement mespreïstes
Certainly evilly you-erred
quant anel en dei me meïstes,
when ring on finger to-me you-put
e vostre fei me fiançastes.
and your faith to-me you-pledged
Ne sai coment faire l'osastes.
Not I-know how to-do it-you-dared
S'en mei ne vous osez fier,
If-in me not yourself you-dare to-trust
qui vous fist a mei marier?
who you made to me marry

Pour ce pri que la vostre feiz
For this I-pray that the your faith
me seit sauve au meins cete feiz.
to-me be safe at-the least this time
E leiaument vous asseür
And loyally you I-assure
e promet e fiance e jur,
and promise and pledge and swear
par le beneüré saint Pierre,
by the blessed saint Peter
que ce sera chose souz pierre.
that this will-be thing under stone
Certes mout seraie ore fole
Certainly very I-would-be now foolish
se de ma bouche issait parole
if from my mouth went-out word
don eüssiez honte ou domage;
whence you-had shame or harm
honte feraie a mon lignage,
shame I-would-do to my lineage
qu'onques nul jour ne diffamai,
which-ever any day not I-defamed
e tout prumierement a mei.
and all first to me
L'en seaut dire, e veirs est senz faille:
One is-wont to-say and true it-is without fail
qui tant est fos que son nés taille,
who so-much is foolish that his nose cuts
sa face a toujourz deseneure.
his face for always dishonors

Dites mei, si Deus vous secueure,
Tell me so God you may-succor
ce don voz cueurs se desconforte,
this whereof your heart itself discomforts
ou se ce non vous m'avez morte.»
or if this not you me-have dead
Lors li debaille piz e chief,
Then to-him she-bares breast and head
e le rebaise de rechief,
and him kisses-again once again
e pleure seur lui lermes maintes
and weeps upon him tears many
entre les baiseries feintes.
among the kissings feigned

Flee, Children, the Snake in the Grass

XVII

The husband tells his wife his shame and repents too late, and she now has him in her power. As Vergil warns children of the snake in the grass, Genius warns men never to reveal their secrets to women, though they should honor them and lie with them; Delilah betrayed Samson so. He adds that this was not said of Nature, who is wise.

Adonc li mescheanz li conte
Then the wretch to-her tells
son grant domage e sa grant honte,
his great harm and his great shame
e par sa parole se pent;
and by his word himself hangs

e quant dit l'a, si s'en repent.
and when told it-be-has so himself-thereof repents
Mais parole une feiz volee
But word one time flown
ne peut puis estre rapelee.
not can then be recalled
Lors li prie qu'ele se taise,
Then her he-prays that-she herself keep-silent
con cil qui plus est a mesaise
as he who more is at distress
qu'onques avant esté n'avait,
than-ever before been had
quant sa fame riens n'en savait.
when his wife anything not-thereof knew
E cele li redit senz faille
And she to-him says-again without fail
qu'el s'en taira, vaille que vaille.
that-she herself-thereof will-keep-silent be-worth what may-be-worth
Mais li chaitis, que cuide il faire?
But the wretch what thinks he to-do
Il ne peut pas sa langue taire:
He not can at-all his tongue silence
or tent a l'autrui retenir?
now aims-he at the-other's restraining
A quel chief en cuide il venir?
To what end thereof thinks he to-come
Or se veit la dame au deseure,
Now herself sees the lady at-the upper-hand

e set que de quelconques eure
and knows that at whatever hour
l'osera mais cil courroucier,
her-will-dare ever he to-anger
ne contre li de riens groucier,
nor against her of anything grumble
mu le fera tenir e quei,
mute him she-will-make keep and quiet
qu'ele a bien matire de quei.
for-she has well matter of what
Couvenant espeir li tendra
Covenant perhaps to-him she-will-hold
tant que courrouz entr'aus vendra.
until that anger between-them will-come
Encore s'ele tant atent,
Still if-she so-long waits
mais enviz atendra ja tant
but hardly she-will-wait ever so-long
que mout ne lui seit grant grevance,
that very not to-him be great grievance
tant avra le cueur en balance.
so-much he-will-have the heart in balance
E qui les omes amerait,
And who the men would-love
ce sarmon leur preescherait,
this sermon to-them would-preach
qui bien fait en touz leus a dire,
which well makes in all places to say
pour ce que chascuns on s'i mire,
for this that each man himself-there mirrors

pour aus de grant perill retraire.
for them from great peril to-withdraw
Si pourra il espeir desplaire
Yet will-be-able it perhaps displease
aus fames qui mout ont de jangles;
to-the women who much have of chatter
mais verité ne quiert pas angles.
but truth not seeks at-all corners
Beau seigneur, gardez vous de fames,
Fair lords guard yourselves from women
se voz cors amez e voz ames,
if your bodies you-love and your souls
au meins que ja si mal n'ouvreiz
at-the least that ever so ill not-you-work
que les secrez leur descouvreiz
that the secrets to-them you-uncover
que dedenz voz cueurs estuiez.
which within your hearts you-store
Fuiez, fuiez, fuiez, fuiez,
Flee flee flee flee
fuiez, enfant, fuiez tel beste,
flee children flee such beast
jou vous conseil e amoneste
I you counsel and admonish
senz decepcion e senz guile,
without deception and without guile
e notez cez vers de Virgile,
and note these verses of Vergil

mais qu'en voz cueurs si les sachiez
provided that-in your hearts so them you-know
qu'il n'en puissent estre sachiez:
that-they not-thence can be pulled
enfant qui cuilliez les flouretes
children who gather the little-flowers
e les fraises fresches e netes,
and the strawberries fresh and clean
ci gist li freiz sarpenz en l'erbe:
here lies the cold serpent in the-grass
fuiez, enfant, car il enerbe,
flee children for it poisons
e empoisone e envenime
and empoisons and envenoms
tout ome qui de lui s'aprime.
every man who to it himself-approaches
Enfant qui les fleurs alez querre,
Children who the flowers go to-seek
e les fraises naissanz par terre,
and the strawberries springing on ground
le mal sarpent refreidissant
the evil serpent chilling
qui se vait ici tapissant,
which itself goes here crouching
la malicieuse couleuvre
the malicious adder
qui son venin repont e cueuvre,
which its venom hides and covers

e le muce souz l'erbe tendre
and it conceals under the-grass tender
jusqu'a tant qu'el le puisse espandre
until-to so-much that-it it may spill
pour vous deceveir e grever,
for you to-deceive and harm
pensez, enfant, de l'eschever.
think children of it-shunning
Ne vous i laissiez pas haper, 16605
Not yourselves there let at-all seize
se de mort voulez eschaper;
if from death you-wish to-escape
car tant est venimeuse beste,
for so-much is venomous beast
par cors e par queue e par teste,
by body and by tail and by head
que, se de li vous aprouchiez,
that if to it yourselves you-approach
touz vous trouvereiz entouchiez, 16610
all yourselves you-will-find infected
qu'el mort e point en traïson
for-it bites and stings in treason
quanqu'ele ataint, senz guerison;
whatever-it reaches without cure
car de cetui venin l'ardure,
for of this venom the-burning
nus tiriacles ne la cure;
any theriac not it cures

16615 riens n'i vaut herbe ne racine:
anything not-there avails herb nor root
seul foïr en est medecine.
only fleeing thereof is medicine
Si ne di je pas touteveie,
Yet not say I at-all nevertheless
n'onc ne fu l'entencion meie,
nor-ever not was the-intention mine
que les fames chieres n'aiez,
that the women dear not-you-have
16620 ne que si foïr les deiez
nor that so flee them you-ought
que bien avec eus ne gisiez;
that well with them not you-lie
ainz comant que mout les prisiez
rather I-command that much them you-prize
e par raison les essauciez;
and by reason them exalt
bien les vestez, bien les chauciez,
well them clothe well them shoe
16625 e toujourz a ce labourez
and always at this labor
que les servez e enourez,
that them you-serve and honor
pour continuer vostre espiece,
for to-continue your species
si que ja mort ne la depiece;
so that ever death not it tears-apart

mais ja tant ne vous i fieiz
but ever so-much not yourselves there trust
que chose a taire leur dieiz
that thing to keep-silent to-them you-tell
bien sofrez qu'eus aillent e viegnent,
well allow that-they go and come
la maisnie e l'ostel maintiegnent,
the household and the-house maintain
s'eus sevent a ce metre cure;
if-they know to this to-put care
ou, s'il ravient par aventure
or if-it happens-in-turn by chance
qu'eus sachent acheter ou vendre,
that-they know-how to-buy or sell
a ce peuent eus bien entendre;
to this can they well attend
ou, s'eus sevent d'aucun mestier,
or if-they know of-some craft
facent le, s'eus en ont mestier;
let-them-do it if-they thereof have need
e sachent les choses apertes,
and let-them-know the things open
qui n'ont mestier d'estre couvertes;
which not-have need of-being covered
mais se tant vous abandonez
but if so-much yourselves you-abandon
que trop de poeir leur donez,
that too-much of power to-them you-give
a tart vous en repentireiz,
at late yourselves thereof you-will-repent

quant leur malice sentireiz.
when their malice you-will-feel
L'escriture neïs nous crie
The-scripture even to-us cries
que se la fame a seignourie,
that if the woman has lordship
ele est a son mari contraire
she is to her husband contrary
quant il veaut riens ou dire ou faire.
when he wishes anything either to-say or do
Prenez vous garde touteveie
Take you heed nevertheless
que l'osteus n'aille a male veie,
that the-house not-go to evil way
car l'en pert bien en meilleur garde.
for one loses well in better keeping
Qui sages est sa chose garde.
Who wise is his thing keeps
E vous qui ravez voz amies,
And you who in-turn-have your friends
portez leur bones compaignies.
bear them good company
Bien afiert qu'eus sachent chascunes
Well it-befits that-they know each
assez des besoignes comunes.
plenty of-the affairs common
Mais, se preuz estes e senez,
But if worthy you-are and sensible
quant entre voz braz les tenez,
when between your arms them you-hold

e les acolez e baisiez,
and them embrace and kiss
taisiez, taisiez, taisiez, taisiez;
be-silent be-silent be-silent be-silent
pensez de voz langues tenir,
think of your tongues holding
car riens n'en peut a chief venir
for anything not-thereof can to end come
quant des secrez sont parçonieres,
when of-the secrets they-are sharers
tant sont orguilleuses e fieres,
so-much they-are proud and haughty
e tant ont les langues cuisanz
and so-much have the tongues stinging
e venimeuses e nuisanz.
and venomous and harmful
Mais, quant li fol sont la venu
But when the fools are there come
qu'il sont entre leur braz tenu,
that-they are between their arms held
e qu'eus les acolent e baisent
and that-they them embrace and kiss
entre les jeus qui tant leur plaisent
among the games which so-much them please
lors n'i peut aveir riens celé;
then not-there can have anything concealed
la sont li secré revelé,
there are the secrets revealed
la se descueuvrent li mari,
there themselves uncover the husbands

don puis sont dolent e mari;
whence then they-are grieving and sorry
tuit encusent ci leur pensé,
all betray here their thought
fors li sage bien apensé.
except the wise well considered
Dalida la malicieuse,
Delilah the malicious
par flaterie venimeuse,
by flattery venomous
a Sanson, qui tant iert vaillanz,
from Samson who so-much was valiant
tant preuz, tant forz, tant bataillanz,
so worthy so strong so warlike
si come el le tenait forment
so as she him held strongly
soef en son giron dormant,
softly in her lap sleeping
copa les cheveus a ses forces,
cut the hairs with her shears
don il perdi toutes ses forces,
whereby he lost all his strengths
quant si des crins le depela,
when so of-the locks him she-stripped
e touz ses secrez revela,
and all his secrets revealed
que li fos contez li avait,
which the fool told to-her had
qui riens celer ne li savait.
who anything to-conceal not from-her knew

Mais n'en vueil plus d'essemples dire,
But not-thereof I-wish more of-examples to-tell
bien vous peut uns pour touz soufire.
well you can one for all suffice
Salemons neïs en parole,
Solomon even thereof speaks
don je vous dirai la parole
whereof I to-you will-tell the word
tantost, pour ce que je vous ain:
at-once for this that I you love
«De cele qui te dort ou sein
From her who to-thee sleeps in-the bosom
garde les portes de ta bouche,
guard the gates of thy mouth
pour foïr perill e reprouche.»
for to-flee peril and reproach
Cet sarmon devrait preeschier
This sermon ought preach
quiconques avrait ome chier,
whoever would-have man dear
que tuit de fames se gardassent
that all from women themselves guarded
si que jamais ne s'i fiassent.
so that ever not themselves-there trusted
Si n'ai je pas pour vous ce dit,
Yet not-have I at-all for you this said
car vous avez senz contredit
for you have without contradiction
toujourz esté leiaus e ferme.
always been loyal and firm

L'escriture neïs aferme,
The-scripture even affirms
tant vous a Deus doné sen fin,
so-much you has God given sense fine
que vous estes sage senz fin.
that you are wise without end

Nature's Confession: God's Fair World

XVIII

Genius comforts Nature and sits by his altar, and she kneels to confess. God, she says, made the world from nothing after the form in his mind, set its parts in order, and made her his chambermaid to keep the golden chain of the elements. All things obey her except one creature, and the heavens turn faithfully; the outer sphere is called aplanos, "without error."

Genius ainsinc la conforte,
Genius thus her comforts
e de quanqu'il peut li enorte
and with whatever-he can her exhorts
qu'el laist dou tout son deul ester;
that-she let of-the all her grief be
car nus ne peut riens conquester
for any not can anything gain
en deul, ce dit, ne en tristece.
in grief this he-says nor in sadness
C'est une chose qui mout blece
This-is a thing which much wounds
e qui, ce dit, riens ne profite.
and which this he-says anything not profits

Quant il ot sa volenté dite,
When he had his will said
senz plus faire longue preiere,
without more making long prayer
si s'assiet en une chaiere
so himself-sits in a chair
dejouste son autel assise;
beside his altar set
e Nature tantost s'est mise
and Nature at-once herself-is put
a genouz devant le prouveire,
on knees before the priest
mais, senz faille, c'est chose veire
but without fail this-is thing true
qu'el ne peut son deul oublier,
that-she not can her grief forget
n'il ne l'en reveaut plus prier,
nor-he not her-thereof wishes-in-turn more to-pray
qu'il i perdrait sa peine toute;
for-he there would-lose his pain all
ainz se taist e la dame escoute
rather himself is-silent and the lady listens-to
qui dit par grant devocion,
who says with great devotion
en plourant, sa confession,
in weeping her confession
que je ci vous aport escrite
which I here to-you bring written
mot a mot, si come el l'a dite.
word for word so as she it-has said

Cil Deus qui de beautez abonde,
That God who in beauties abounds
quant il trés beaus fist cet beau monde,
when he very fair made this fair world
don il portait en sa pensee
of-which he bore in his thought
la bele fourme pourpensee
the fair form premeditated
toujourz en pardurableté
always in everlastingness
ainz qu'ele eüst dehors esté,
before that-it had outside been
car la prist il son essemplaire,
for there took he his model
e quanque li fu necessaire;
and whatever to-him was necessary
car, s'il ailleurs le vousist querre
for if-he elsewhere it had-wished to-seek
il n'i trouvast ne ciel ne terre,
he not-there would-have-found neither heaven nor earth
ne riens don aidier se peüst,
nor anything whereby help himself he-could
con nule rien dehors n'eüst;
as any thing outside not-he-had
car de neient fist tout saillir
for from nothing he-made all leap-forth
cil en cui riens ne peut faillir;
he in whom anything not can fail
n'onc riens ne l'esmut a ce faire,
nor-ever anything not him-moved to this do

fors sa volenté debonaire,
except his will gracious
large, courteise, senz envie,
generous courteous without envy
qui fontaine est de toute vie.
which fountain is of all life
E le fist au comencement
And it made at-the beginning
une masse tant seulement,
a mass so only
qui toute iert en confusion,
which all was in confusion
senz ordre e senz distinccion,
without order and without distinction
puis le devisa par parties,
then it divided into parts
qui puis ne furent departies,
which then not were separated
e tout par nombres assoma,
and all by numbers summed
e set combien en la some a;
and knows how-many in the sum there-are
e par raisonables mesures
and by reasonable measures
termina toutes leur figures,
determined all their figures
e les fist en rondece estendre
and them made in roundness extend
pour meauz mouveir, pour plus comprendre,
for better to-move for more to-contain

selonc ce que mouvables furent
according-to this that movable they-were
e comprenables estre durent;
and containing be they-ought
e les mist en leus couvenables,
and them put in places fitting
selonc ce qu'il les vit metables:
according-to this that-he them saw placeable
les legieres en haut volerent,
the light-ones on high flew
les pesanz au centre en alerent
the heavy to-the center thence went
e les meienes ou mileu.
and the middle-ones in-the middle
Ainsinc sont ordené li leu
Thus are ordered the places
par dreit compas, par dreite espace.
by right compass by right space
Cil Deus meïsmes, par sa grace,
That God himself by his grace
quant il i ot par ses devises
when he there had by his devices
ses autres creatures mises,
his other creatures put
tant m'enoura, tant me tint chiere
so-much me-he-honored so-much me held dear
qu'il m'en establi chamberiere;
that-he me-thereof established chambermaid

servir m'i laisse e laissera
serve me-there he-lets and will-let
tant con sa volentez sera.
as-long as his will will-be
Nul autre dreit je n'i reclaime,
Any other right I not-there claim
ainz le merci quant il tant m'aime
rather him I-thank since he so-much me-loves
que si trés povre dameisele,
that so very poor damsel
en si grant maison e si bele,
in so great house and so fair
il, si granz sires, tant me prise
he so great lord so-much me prizes
qu'il m'a pour chamberiere prise.
that-he me-has for chambermaid taken
Pour chamberiere! certes veire
For chambermaid certainly indeed
pour conestable e pour vicaire,
for constable and for vicar
don je ne fusse mie digne,
whereof I not were at-all worthy
fors par sa volenté benigne.
except by his will benign

Si gart, tant m'a Deus enouree,
So I-keep so-much me-has God honored
la bele chaeine doree
the fair chain golden
qui les quatre elemenz enlace
which the four elements binds
trestouz enclins devant ma face;
all bowing before my face
e me bailla toutes les choses
and to-me gave all the things
qui sont en la chaeine encloses,
which are in the chain enclosed
e comanda que jes gardasse
and commanded that I-them keep
e leur fourmes continuasse,
and their forms continue
e vost que toutes m'obeïssent
and wished that all me-obey
e que mes regles apreïssent
and that my rules they-learn
si que jamais nes oubliassent,
so that ever not-them they-forget
ainz les tenissent e gardassent
rather them they-hold and keep
a toujourz pardurablement.
for always everlastingly
Si font eus veir comunement.
So do they indeed commonly

Toutes i metent bien leur cure,
All there put well their care
fors une seule creature.
except one sole creature
Dou ciel ne me dei je pas plaindre,
Of-the heaven not myself ought I at-all complain
qui toujourz tourne senz sei feindre,
which always turns without itself shirking
e porte en son cercle poli
and carries in its circle polished
toutes ses esteles o li,
all its stars with it
estencelanz e vertueuses,
sparkling and powerful
seur toutes pierres precieuses.
above all stones precious
Va s'en le monde deduiant,
Goes itself-thence the world delighting
començant son cours d'orient,
beginning its course from-east
e par occident s'achemine,
and by west itself-proceeds
ne de tourner arriers ne fine,
nor from turning back not ceases
toutes les roes ravissant,
all the wheels carrying-off
qui vont contre lui gravissant,
which go against it climbing
pour son mouvement retarder;
for its movement to-retard

mais ne l'en peuent si garder
but not it-thereof they-can so keep
qu'il ja pour eus cueure si lenz
that-it ever for them run so slow
qu'il n'ait en trente e sis mile anz,
that-it not-have in thirty and six thousand years
pour venir au point dreitement
for to-come to-the point directly
ou Deus le fist prumierement,
where God it made first
un cercle acompli tout entier,
a circle accomplished all entire
selonc la grandeur dou sentier
according-to the greatness of-the path
dou zodiaque a la grant roe
of-the zodiac at the great wheel
qui seur lui d'une fourme roe.
which upon it of-one form wheels
C'est li ceaus qui cueurt si a point
This-is the heaven which runs so to point
que d'erreur en son cours n'a point:
that of-error in its course not-has at-all
Aplanos pour ce l'apelerent
Aplanos for this it-called
cil qui point d'erreur n'i trouverent,
those who at-all of-error not-there found
car aplanos vaut en grezeis
for aplanos is-worth in Greek
chose senz erreur en franceis.
thing without error in French

Si n'est il pas veüz par ome
Yet not-is it at-all seen by man
cist autres ceaus que ci vous nome,
this other heaven which here to-you I-name
mais raison ainsinc le li preuve,
but reason thus it to-him proves
qui les demontreisons i treuve.
who the demonstrations there finds

The Planets, the Moon, and the Sun

XIX

Nature has no complaint of the seven planets. She explains the moon's dark and bright parts, the planets' contrary motion that holds back the heavens, and the sun lending light to the stars from the middle, so that Night seems less frightful to her husband Acheron, who would rather have the dark. The heavens' influences temper the elements in every body.

Ne ne me plaing des set planetes,
Nor not myself I-complain of-the seven planets
cleres e reluisanz e netes
clear and shining and clean
par tout le cours de sei chascune.
through all the course of itself each
Si semble il aus genz que la lune
Yet seems it to-the folk that the moon
ne seit pas bien nete ne pure,
not be at-all well clean nor pure
pour ce qu'el pert par leus ocure;
for this that-it appears in places dark

mais c'est par sa nature double
but this-is by its nature double
qu'el pert par leus espesse e trouble
that-it appears in places thick and cloudy
d'une part luist, d'autre part cesse
on-one part it-shines on-other part ceases
pour ce qu'ele est clere e espesse;
for this that-it is clear and thick
si li fait sa lueur perir
so to-it makes its light perish
ce que ne peut pas referir
this that not can at-all reflect
la clere part de sa sustance
the clear part of its substance
les rais que li solauz i lance,
the rays which the sun there launches
ainz s'en passent par mi tout outre;
rather themselves-thence pass through mid all beyond
mais l'espesse lueur demoutre,
but the-thick light shows
qui bien peut aus rais contrester
which well can to-the rays resist
pour sa lumiere conquester.
for its light to-gain
E pour faire entendre la chose,
And for to-make understand the thing
bien en peut l'en, en leu de glose,
well thereof can one in place of gloss

a briés moz un essemple metre,
in brief words an example put
pour meauz faire esclarcir la letre:
for better to-make clarify the letter
si con li veirres transparenz,
so as the glass transparent
ou li rai s'en passent par enz,
where the rays themselves-thence pass through within
qui par dedenz ne par darriere
which by inside nor by behind
n'a riens espès qui les refiere,
not-has anything thick which them reflects
ne peut les figures montrer,
not can the figures show
quant riens n'i peuent encontrer
when anything not-there can meet
li rai des eauz qui les retiegne,
the rays of-the eyes which them may-hold-back
par quei la fourme aus eauz reviegne;
by which the form to-the eyes may-return
mais plon, ou quelque chose espesse,
but lead or some thing thick
qui les rais trespasser ne laisse,
which the rays pass not lets
qui d'autre part metre vourrait,
if-one on-other side to-put would-wish
tantost la fourme retourrait;
at-once the form would-return
ou s'aucuns cors poliz i iere,
or if-some body polished there were

qui peüst referir lumiere,
which could reflect light
e fust espès d'autre ou de sei,
and were thick by-another or by itself
retourrait ele, bien le sai;
would-return it well it I-know
ausinc la lune en sa part clere,
likewise the moon in its part clear
don ele est semblable a s'espere,
whereby it is like to its-sphere
ne peut pas les rais retenir,
not can at-all the rays retain
par quei lueur li puist venir,
by which light to-it may come
ainz passent outre; mais l'espesse,
rather they-pass beyond but the-thick
qui passer outre ne les laisse,
which pass beyond not them lets
ainz les refiert forment arriere,
rather them reflects strongly back
fait a la lune aveir lumiere:
makes to the moon have light
pour ce pert par leus lumineuse
for this it-appears in places luminous
e par leus semble tenebreuse.
and in places seems dark

E la part de la lune ocure
And the part of the moon dark
nous represente la figure
to-us represents the figure
d'une trop merveilleuse beste;
of-a exceedingly marvelous beast
c'est d'un sarpent qui tient sa teste
this-is of-a serpent which holds its head
vers occident adès encline,
toward west always bent
vers orient sa queue afine;
toward east its tail ends
seur son dos porte un arbre estant,
upon its back it-carries a tree standing
ses rains vers orient estent,
its branches toward east it-stretches
mais en estendant les bestourne;
but in stretching them it-turns-awry
seur ce bestourneïz sejourne
upon this twisting dwells
uns on seur ses braz apuiez,
a man upon his arms leaning
qui vers occident a ruiez
who toward west has thrust
ses piez e ses cuisses andeus,
his feet and his thighs both
si come pert au semblant d'eus.
so as appears by-the seeming of-them

Mout font ces planetes bone euvre:
Much do these planets good work
chascune d'eles si bien euvre
each of-them so well works
que toutes set point ne sejournent;
that all seven at-all not rest
par leur doze maisons s'en tournent,
through their twelve houses themselves-thence turn
e par touz leur degrez s'en cueurent,
and through all their degrees themselves-thence run
e tant con deivent i demeurent;
and as-long as they-ought there remain
e, pour bien la besoigne faire,
and for well the business to-do
tournant par mouvement contraire,
turning by movement contrary
seur le ciel chascun jour aquierent
upon the heaven each day acquire
les porcions qui leur afierent
the portions which to-them belong
a leur cercles enteriner;
to their circles to-complete
puis recomencent senz finer,
then they-begin-again without ending
en retardant dou ciel le cours,
in retarding of-the heaven the course
pour faire aus elemenz secours;
for to-give to-the elements succor

car, s'il poait courre a delivre,
for if-it could run at freedom
riens ne pourrait desouz lui vivre.
anything not could beneath it live
Li beaus solauz qui le jour cause,
The fair sun which the day causes
qu'il est de toute clarté cause,
for-it is of all brightness cause
se tient ou milieu come reis,
itself holds in-the middle as king
trestouz reflambeianz de rais.
all blazing with rays
Ou milieu d'eus a sa maison;
In-the middle of-them it-has its house
ne ce n'est mie senz raison
nor this not-is at-all without reason
que Deus li beaus, li forz, li sages,
that God the fair the strong the wise
vost que fust ileuc ses estages;
wished that were there its dwelling
car, s'il plus bassement courust,
for if-it more low ran
n'est riens qui de chaut ne mourust;
not-is anything which of heat not would-die
e s'il courust plus hautement,
and if-it ran more high
freiz meïst tout a dannement.
cold would-put all to damnation

La depart sa clarté comune
There it-shares its brightness common
aus esteles e a la lune,
to-the stars and to the moon
e les fait apareir si beles
and them makes appear so fair
que la Nuit en fait ses chandeles
that the Night thereof makes her candles
au seir, quant ele met sa table,
at-the evening when she sets her table
pour estre meins espoentable
for to-be less frightful
devant Acheron son mari,
before Acheron her husband
qui mout en a le cueur mari;
who much thereof has the heart sorry
qu'il vousist meauz senz luminaire
for-he would-wish better without light
estre avec la Nuit toute neire,
to-be with the Night all black
si con jadis ensemble furent,
so as formerly together they-were
quant de prumier s'entrequenurent,
when at first each-other-they-knew
que la Nuit en leur desveries
that the Night in their madnesses
conçut les treis Forseneries
conceived the three Furies
qui sont en enfer jousticieres,
who are in hell justicers

garces felonesses e fieres.
wenches wicked and fierce
Mais touteveis la Nuit se pense,
But nevertheless the Night herself thinks
quant el se mire en sa despense,
when she herself looks in her pantry
en son celier ou en sa cave,
in her cellar or in her vault
que trop serait hideuse e have,
that exceedingly she-would-be hideous and wan
e face avrait trop tenebreuse,
and face would-have exceedingly dark
s'el n'avait la clarté joieuse
if-she not-had the brightness joyous
des cors dou ciel reflambeianz,
of-the bodies of-the heaven blazing
par mi l'air ocurci raianz,
through mid the-air darkened radiating
qui tourneient en leur esperes,
which turn in their spheres
si con l'establi Deus li peres.
so as it-established God the father
La font entr'aus leur armonies,
There make among-them their harmonies
qui sont causes des melodies
which are causes of-the melodies
e des diversitez de tons
and of-the diversities of tones
que par acordances metons
which by concords we-put

en toutes manieres de chant.
in all manners of song
N'est riens qui par celes ne chant.
Not-is anything which by those not sing
E muent par leur influences
And they-change by their influences
les accidenz e les sustances
the accidents and the substances
des choses qui sont souz la lune:
of-the things which are under the moon
par leur diversité comune
by their diversity common
s'espeissent li cler element,
themselves-thicken the clear elements
clers font les espès ensement;
clear they-make the thick likewise
e freit e chaut e sec e moiste,
and cold and hot and dry and moist
tout ausinc come en une boiste,
all just as in a box
font il en chascun cors venir,
make they in each body come
pour leur parz ensemble tenir;
for their parts together to-hold
tout seient il contrariant,
although be they contrary
les vont il ensemble liant;
them go they together binding
si font pais de quatre anemis,
so they-make peace of four enemies

quant si les ont ensemble mis,
when so them they-have together put
par atrempance couvenable
by tempering fitting
a complexion raisonable, 16970
to complexion reasonable
pour fourmer en la meilleur fourme
for to-form in the best form
toutes les choses que je fourme.
all the things which I form
E, s'il avient qu'eus seient pires,
And if-it happens that-they be worse
c'est dou defaut de leur matires.
this-is of-the defect of their matters

The Deaths That Men Procure

XX

Heat slowly spends the body's moisture until death, though many die sooner by excess or folly. The heavens incline men, but teaching and Reason can turn them.

Mais qui bien garder i savra, 16975
But who well to-look there will-know
ja si bone pais n'i avra
ever so good peace not-there will-be
que la chaleur l'umeur ne suce
that the heat the-moisture not sucks
e senz cessier gaste e manjuce
and without ceasing wastes and eats

de jour en jour, tant que venue
from day to day until that come
seit la mort qui leur est deüe
be the death which to-them is due
par mon dreit establissement,
by my right establishment
se mort ne leur vient autrement,
if death not to-them comes otherwise
qui seit par autre cas hastee,
which be by other case hastened
ainz que l'umeur seit degastee;
before that the-moisture be wasted
car, ja seit ce que nus ne puisse,
for although be this that any not can
pour medecine que l'en truisse,
for medicine that one may-find
ne pour riens don l'en sache ongier,
nor for anything wherewith one may-know to-anoint
la vie dou cors alongier,
the life of-the body lengthen
si sai je bien que de legier
yet know I well that with ease
la se peut chascuns abregier;
it himself can each shorten
car maint acourcent bien leur vie
for many shorten well their life
ainz que l'umeur seit defaillie
before that the-moisture be failed
par aus faire neier ou pendre,
by themselves making drown or hang

ou par quelque perill emprendre
or by some peril undertaking
don ainz qu'il s'en puissent foïr
whence before that-they themselves-thence can flee
se font ardeir ou enfoïr,
themselves make burn or bury
ou par quelque meschief destruire,
or by some mischief destroy
par leur faiz folement conduire;
by their deeds foolishly conducting
ou par leur privez anemis,
or by their intimate enemies
qui mainz en ont senz courpe mis
who many thereof have without fault put
par glaive a mort ou par venins,
by sword to death or by venoms
tant ont les cueurs faus e chenins;
so-much they-have the hearts false and doggish
ou par choeir en maladies
or by falling into sicknesses
par maus gouvernemenz de vies,
by evil governings of lives
par trop dormir, par trop veillier,
by too-much sleeping by too-much waking
trop reposer, trop traveillier,
too-much resting too-much laboring
trop engraissier e trop sechier,
too-much fattening and too-much drying
car en tout ce peut l'en pechier,
for in all this can one sin

par trop longuement jeüner,
by too long fasting
par trop de deliz aüner,
by too-many of delights gathering
par trop de mesaise vouleir,
by too-much of distress wishing
trop esjoïr e trop douleir,
too-much rejoicing and too-much grieving
par trop beivre, par trop mangier,
by too-much drinking by too-much eating
par trop leur qualitez changier,
by too-much their qualities changing
si come il pert meïsmement
so as it appears especially
quant il se font soudainement
when they themselves make suddenly
trop chaut aveir, trop freit sentir,
too-much hot have too-much cold feel
don a tart sont au repentir;
whereof at late they-are at-the repenting
ou par leur coustumes muer,
or by their customs changing
qui mout de gent refait tuer
which many of folk in-turn-makes kill
quant soudainement les remuent;
when suddenly them they-change
maint s'en grievent e maint s'en tuent,
many themselves-thereby harm and many themselves-thereby kill

car les mutacions soudaines
for the mutations sudden
sont trop a Nature grevaines;
are exceedingly to Nature grievous
si qu'il me font en vain pener
so that-they me make in vain toil
d'aus a mort naturel mener.
of-them to death natural to-lead
E ja seit ce que mout mesfacent
And although be this that much they-misdo
quant contre mei teus morz pourchacent,
when against me such deaths they-procure
si me peise il mout toutesveies
yet me grieves it much nevertheless
quant il demeurent entre veies,
when they remain between ways
come chaitif e recreant,
as wretched and craven
vaincu par mort si mescheant,
vanquished by death so unlucky
don bien se peüssent garder
whence well themselves they-could guard
s'il se vousissent retarder
if-they themselves had-wished to-hold-back
des outrages e des folies
from-the outrages and from-the follies
qui leur font acourcier leur vies
which to-them make shorten their lives

ainz qu'il aient atainte e prise
before that-they have attained and taken
la bone que je leur ai mise.
the boundary which I for-them have put
Empedoclès mal se garda,
Empedocles badly himself guarded
qui tant es livres regarda
who so-much in-the books looked
e tant ama philosophie,
and so-much loved philosophy
pleins, espeir, de melancolie,
full perhaps of melancholy
qu'onques la mort ne redouta,
that-ever the death not be-feared
mais tout vif ou feu se bouta
but all alive into-the fire himself thrust
e joinz piez en Ethna sailli,
and joined feet into Etna leapt
pour montrer que bien sont failli
for to-show that well are failed
cil qui mort veulent redouter;
those who death wish to-fear
pour ce s'i vost de gré bouter;
for this himself-there wished of will to-thrust
n'en preïst pas ne miel ne çucre,
not-thereof he-would-take at-all neither honey nor sugar
ainz eslut ileuc son sepucre
rather chose there his sepulcher
entre les sulphureus boillons.
among the sulfurous bubblings

Origenès, qui les coillons
Origen who the testicles
se çopa, po me reprisa,
himself cut little me prized
quant a ses mains les encisa
when with his hands them he-cut-off
pour servir en devocion
for to-serve in devotion
les dames de religion
the ladies of religion
si que nus soupeçon n'eüst
so that any suspicion not-had
que gesir avec eus peüst.
that lie with them he-could
Si dit l'en que les destinees
So says one that the destinies
leur orent teus morz destinees,
to-them had such deaths destined
e tel eür leur ont meü
and such fortune to-them have moved
des lors qu'il furent conceü;
from then that-they were conceived
e qu'il pristrent leur nacions
and that-they took their births
en teles constellacions
in such constellations
que par dreite necessité,
that by right necessity
senz autre possibilité,
without other possibility

c'est senz poeir de l'eschever,
this-is without power of it-avoiding
combien qu'il leur deie grever,
however-much that-it them ought grieve
leur couvient tel mort receveir.
them it-behooves such death to-receive
Mais je sai bien trestout de veir,
But I know well all of true
combien que li ciel i travaillent,
however-much that the heavens there labor
qui les meurs natureus leur baillent
which the ways natural to-them give
qui les enclinent a ce faire
which them incline to this do
qui les fait a ceste fin traire,
which them makes to this end draw
par la matire obeïssant,
by the matter obeying
qui leur cueur si va flechissant,
which their heart so goes bending
si peuent il bien par doctrine,
yet can they well by doctrine
par nourreture nete e fine,
by nurture clean and fine
par sivre bones compaignies,
by following good companies
de sens e de vertuz garnies,
with sense and with virtues furnished
ou par aucunes medecines,
or by some medicines

pour qu'eus seient bones e fines,
provided that-they be good and fine
e par bonté d'entendement,
and by goodness of-understanding
procurer qu'il seit autrement,
procure that-it be otherwise
pour qu'il aient, come senez,
provided that-they have as sensible
leur meurs natureus refrenez.
their ways natural restrained
Car, quant de sa propre nature,
For when of his own nature
contre bien e contre dreiture
against good and against righteousness
se veaut on ou fame atourner,
himself wishes man or woman to-turn
Raison l'en peut bien destourner,
Reason him-thence can well turn-away
pour qu'il la creie seulement:
provided that-he her believe only
lors ira la chose autrement;
then will-go the thing otherwise
car autrement peut il bien estre,
for otherwise can it well be
que que facent li cors celestre,
whatever that may-do the bodies celestial
qui mout ont grant poeir, senz faille,
which very have great power without fail
pour quei Raison encontre n'aille;
provided that Reason against not-go

mais n'ont poeir contre Raison,
but not-they-have power against Reason
car bien set chascuns sages on
for well knows each wise man
qu'il ne sont pas de Raison maistre,
that-they not are at-all of Reason master
n'il ne la firent mie naistre.
nor-they not her made at-all be-born

Predestination and Free Will

XXI

Nature takes up how God's foreknowledge can stand with free will. If everything happened by necessity, there would be no merit or punishment, and God would not be just. The argument that whatever is truly foretold must happen confuses a conditional necessity with a simple one.

Mais de soudre la question
But of solving the question
coment predestinacion
how predestination
e la devine prescience,
and the divine foreknowledge
pleine de toute pourveance,
full of all providence
peut estre o volenté delivre,
can be with will free
fors est a genz lais a descrivre;
hard is to folk lay to describe

e, qui voudrait la chose emprendre,
and who would-wish the thing to-undertake
trop leur serait fort a l'entendre,
exceedingly to-them would-be hard to it-understand
qui leur avrait neïs solues
if-one to-them had even solved
les raisons encontre meües.
the arguments against moved
Mais il est veirs, que qu'il leur semble,
But it is true whatever that-it to-them seems
qu'eus s'entreseufrent bien ensemble;
that-they each-other-allow well together
autrement cil qui bien feraient
otherwise those who well would-do
ja loier aveir n'en devraient,
ever reward have not-thereof ought
ne cil qui de pechier se peine
nor he who of sinning himself pains
jamais n'en devrait aveir peine,
ever not-thereof ought have pain
se teus estait la verité
if such were the truth
que tout fust par necessité;
that all were by necessity
car cil qui bien faire vourrait
for he who well to-do would-wish
autrement vouleir nou pourrait,
otherwise wish not-it could

ne cil qui le mal vourrait faire
nor he who the evil would-wish to-do
ne s'en pourrait mie retraire;
not himself-thence could at-all withdraw
vousist ou non, il le ferait,
he-would or not he it would-do
puis que destiné li serait.
since that destined to-him it-would-be
E si pourrait bien aucuns dire,
And also could well some-one say
pour desputer de la matire,
for to-dispute of the matter
que Deus n'est mie deceüz
that God not-is at-all deceived
des faiz qu'il a devant seüz,
of-the deeds that-he has before known
donc avendront il senz doutance
then will-happen they without doubt
si come il sont en sa science;
so as they are in his knowledge
mais il set quant il avendront,
but he knows when they will-happen
coment, e quel chief il tendront,
how and what end they will-hold
car s'autrement estre peüst
for if-otherwise be it-could
que Deus avant ne le seüst,
that God before not it knew
il ne serait pas touz poissanz,
he not would-be at-all all powerful

ne touz bons ne touz quenoissanz,
nor all good nor all knowing
n'il ne serait pas souverains,
nor-he not would-be at-all sovereign
li biaus, li douz, li prumerains;
the fair the sweet the first
n'il n'en savrait ne que nous fomes,
nor-he not-thereof would-know nor than we do
ou cuiderait avec les omes,
or would-think with the men
qui sont en douteuse creance,
who are in doubtful belief
senz certaineté de science;
without certainty of knowledge
mais tel erreur en Deu retraire,
but such error in God to-relate
ce serait deablie a faire;
this would-be devilry to do
nus on ne la devrait oïr
any man not it ought hear
qui de Raison vousist joïr:
who of Reason would-wish to-enjoy
don couvient il par vive force,
whence behooves it by living force
quant vouleirs d'ome a riens s'efforce,
when will of-man to anything itself-strives
de quanqu'il fait qu'ainsinc le face,
of whatever-be does that-thus it he-do
pense, die, vueille ou pourchace:
think say wish or procure

donc est ce chose destinee
then is this thing destined
qui ne peut estre destournee.
which not can be turned-aside
Don se deit il, ce semble, ensivre
Whence itself ought it this seems follow
que riens n'ait volenté delivre.
that anything not-have will free
E se les destinees tienent
And if the destinies hold
toutes les choses qui avienent,
all the things which happen
si con cist argumenz le preuve
so as this argument it proves
par l'aparence qu'il i treuve,
by the-appearance that-it there finds
cil qui bien euvre ou malement,
he who well works or evilly
quant il nou peut faire autrement,
when he not-it can do otherwise
quel gré l'en deit donc Deus saveir
what thanks him-for-it ought then God know
ne quel peine en deit il aveir?
or what pain thereof ought he have
S'il avait juré le contraire,
If-he had sworn the contrary
n'en peut il autre chose faire:
not-thereof can he other thing do

donc ne ferait pas Deus joustice
then not would-do at-all God justice
de bien rendre e de punir vice,
of good rendering and of punishing vice
car coment faire le pourrait?
for how do it could-be
Qui bien regarder i vourrait,
Who well to-look there would-wish
il ne serait vertuz ne vices;
it not would-be virtue nor vices
ne sacrefier en galices,
nor to-sacrifice in chalices
ne Deu prier riens ne vaudrait,
nor God to-pray anything not would-avail
quant vices e vertuz faudrait.
when vices and virtues would-fail
Ou se Deus joustice faisait,
Or if God justice did
con vices e vertuz ne seit,
as vices and virtues not be
il ne serait pas dreituriers,
he not would-be at-all righteous
ainz clamerait les usuriers,
rather he-would-declare the usurers
les larrons e les murtriers quites;
the thieves and the murderers quit
e les bons e les ypocrites,
and the good and the hypocrites
touz peserait a peis oni.
all he-would-weigh at weight even

Ainsinc seraient bien honi
Thus would-be well shamed
cil qui d'amer Deu se travaillent,
those who of-loving God themselves labor
s'il a s'amour en la fin faillent.
if-they of his-love in the end fail
E faillir les i couvendrait,
And fail them there it-would-behoove
puis que la chose a ce vendrait
since that the thing to this would-come
que nus ne pourrait recouvrer
that any not could recover
la grace Deu par bien ouvrer.
the grace (of-)God by well working
Mais il est dreituriers senz doute,
But he is righteous without doubt
car bonté reluist en lui toute,
for goodness shines in him all
autrement serait en defaut
otherwise would-be in default
cil en cui nule riens ne faut;
he in whom any thing not lacks
donc rent il seit gaaing ou perte
then renders he be-it gain or loss
a chascun selonc sa deserte;
to each according-to his desert
donc sont toutes euvres meries,
then are all works rewarded
e les destinees peries,
and the destinies perished

au meins si con genz lais en sentent,
at-the least so as folk lay thereof feel
qui toutes choses leur presentent,
which all things to-them present
bones, males, fausses e veires,
good evil false and true
par avenemenz necessaires,
by happenings necessary
e frans vouleirs est en estant,
and free will is in standing
que teus genz vont si mal traitant.
which such folk go so badly treating
Mais qui revoudrait oposer,
But who would-wish-in-turn to-object
pour destinees aloser
for destinies to-praise
e casser franche volenté,
and break free will
car maint en ont esté tenté,
for many thereby have been tempted
e dirait de chose possible,
and would-say of thing possible
combien qu'el puisse estre faillible,
however-much that-it may be fallible
au meins quant ele est avenue:
at-the least when it is happened
«S'aucuns l'avait devant veüe
If-some-one it-had before seen
e deïst: tel chose sera,
and said such thing will-be

ne riens ne l'en destournera:
nor anything not it-thence will-turn-aside
n'avrait il pas dit verité?
not-would-have he at-all said truth
Donc serait ce necessité;
Then would-be this necessity
car il s'ensuit, se chose est veire,
for it itself-follows if thing is true
donques est ele necessaire
then is it necessary
par la convertibilité
by the convertibility
de veir e de necessité:
of true and of necessity
don couvient il qu'el seit a force,
whence behooves it that-it be by force
quant necessité s'en efforce.
when necessity itself-thereof strives
Qui seur ce respondre vourrait,
Who upon this to-answer would-wish
eschaper coment en pourrait?
escape how thence could-he
Certes il dirait chose veire,
Certainly he would-say thing true
mais non pas pour ce necessaire;
but not at-all for this necessary
car, coment qu'il l'ait ainz veüe,
for however that-he it-have before seen

la chose n'est pas avenue
the thing not-is at-all happened
par necessaire avenement, 17225
by necessary happening
mais par possible seulement;
but by possible only
car, s'il est qui bien i regart,
for if-it is who well there may-look
c'est necessité en regart,
this-is necessity in regard
e non pas necessité simple,
and not at-all necessity simple
si que ce ne vaut une guimple. 17230
so that this not is-worth a wimple
E se chose a venir est veire,
And if thing to come is true
donc est ce chose necessaire,
then is this thing necessary
car tele verité possible
for such truth possible
ne peut pas estre convertible
not can at-all be convertible
avec simple necessité, 17235
with simple necessity
si come simple verité.
so as simple truth
Si ne peut tel raison passer
So not can such argument pass
pour franche volenté casser.
for free will to-break

Foreknowledge and Necessity

XXII

If everything were fixed, no one would need counsel or labor, so men's deeds do not happen by necessity. Nature rejects the answer that God knows events because they will happen, which makes his knowledge depend on men, and the answer that he knows them only as possibilities, which makes it uncertain. Others say all things are necessary as regards God; his knowledge is necessary, she grants, but it compels nothing.

D'autre part, qui garde i prendrait,
On-other part who heed there would-take
jamais aus genz ne couvendrait
ever to-the folk not would-behoove
de nule chose conseil querre,
of any thing counsel to-seek
ne faire besoignes en terre;
nor to-do affairs on earth
car pour quei s'en conseilleraient
for for what themselves-thereof they-would-counsel
ne besoignes pour quei feraient
nor affairs for what they-would-do
se tout iert avant destiné
if all was before destined
e par force determiné?
and by force determined
Pour conseil, pour euvre de mains
For counsel for work of hands
ja n'en serait ne plus ne meins,
ever not-thereof would-be neither more nor less

ne meauz ne pis n'en pourrait estre,
nor better nor worse not-thereof could be
fust chose nee ou chose a naistre,
it-were thing born or thing to be-born
fust chose faite ou chose a faire,
it-were thing done or thing to do
fust chose a dire ou chose a taire;
it-were thing to say or thing to keep-silent
nus d'aprendre mestier n'avrait,
any of-learning need not-would-have
senz estuide des arz savrait
without study of-the arts would-know
quanqu'il savra s'il s'estudie
whatever-he will-know if-he himself-studies
par grant travail toute sa vie.
by great toil all his life
Mais ce n'est pas a otreier:
But this not-is at-all to grant
donc deit l'en pleinement neier
then ought one fully deny
que les euvres d'humanité
that the works of-humanity
aviegnent par necessité;
happen by necessity
ainz font bien ou mal franchement
rather they-do good or evil freely
par leur vouleir tant seulement;
by their will so only
n'il n'est riens fors eus, au veir dire,
nor-it not-is anything except them to-the true saying

qui tel vouleir leur face eslire
which such will them make choose
que prendre ou laissier nou poïssent,
that take or leave not-it they-could
se de raison user vousissent.
if of reason use they-would-wish
Mais or serait fort a respondre
But now would-be hard to answer
pour touz les argumenz confondre
for all the arguments to-confound
que l'en peut encontre amener.
which one can against bring
Maint se voudrent a ce pener,
Many themselves wished to this to-toil
e distrent, par sentence fine,
and said by sentence fine
que la prescience devine
that the foreknowledge divine
ne met point de necessité
not puts at-all of necessity
seur les euvres d'humanité;
upon the works of-humanity
car bien se vont apercevant,
for well themselves go perceiving
pour ce que Deus les set devant
for this that God them knows before
ne s'ensuit il pas qu'eus aviegnent
not itself-follows it at-all that-they happen
par force, ne que teus fins tiegnent;
by force nor that such ends they-hold

mais pour ce qu'eles avendront
but for this that-they will-happen
e tel chief ou tel fin tendront, 17280
and such head or such end will-hold
pour ce les set ainz Deus, ce dient.
for this them knows before God this they-say
Mais cist mauvaisement deslient
But these badly untie
le neu de cete question;
the knot of this question
car qui veit leur entencion
for who sees their intention
e se veaut a raison tenir, 17285
and himself wishes to reason to-hold
li fait qui sont a avenir,
the deeds which are to happen
se cist donent veire sentence,
if these give true sentence
causent en Deu sa prescience
cause in God his foreknowledge
e la font estre necessaire.
and it make be necessary
Mais mout est grant folie a creire 17290
But very is great folly to believe
que Deus si feiblement entende
that God so feebly understands
que ses sens d'autrui faiz depende;
that his sense on-others' deeds depends

e cil qui tel sentence sivent
and those who such sentence follow
contre Deu malement estrivent,
against God evilly strive
quant veulent par si fableier
when they-wish by so fabling
sa prescience afeibleier.
his foreknowledge to-weaken
Ne raison ne peut pas entendre
Nor reason not can at-all understand
que l'en puisse a Deu riens aprendre,
that one can to God anything teach
n'il ne pourrait certainement
nor-be not could certainly
estre sages parfaitement
be wise perfectly
s'il iert en tel defaut trouvez
if-be were in such defect found
que cist cas fust seur lui prouvez.
that this case were upon him proved
Donc ne vaut riens cete response,
Then not is-worth anything this response
qui la Deu prescience esconse,
which the (of-)God foreknowledge hides
e repont sa grant pourveance
and hides his great providence
souz les tenebres d'ignorance,
under the darknesses of-ignorance
qui n'a poeir, tant est certaine,
which not-has power so-much is certain

d'aprendre riens par euvre humaine;
of-learning anything by work human
e s'el le poait, senz doutance,
and if-it it could without doubt
ce li vendrait de non poissance,
this to-it would-come from not power
qui rest douleur a recenser
which is-in-turn grief to recount
e pechiez neïs dou penser.
and sin even of-the thinking
Li autre autrement en sentirent,
The others otherwise thereof felt
e selonc leur sen respondirent,
and according-to their sense answered
e s'acorderent bien, senz faille,
and themselves-agreed well without fail
que des choses, coment qu'il aille,
that of-the things however that-it go
qui vont par volenté delivre,
which go by will free
si come eleccion les livre,
so as choice them delivers
set Deus quanqu'il en avendra,
knows God whatever-it thereof will-happen
e quel fin chascune tendra,
and what end each will-hold
par une addicion legiere,
by an addition light

c'est a saveir en tel maniere
this-is to know in such manner
come eles sont a avenir;
as they are to happen
e veulent par ce soutenir
and wish by this to-sustain
qu'il n'i a pas necessité,
that-it not-there has at-all necessity
ainz vont par possibilité,
rather they-go by possibility
si qu'il set quel fin eus feront
so that-he knows what end they will-make
e s'eus seront ou ne seront;
and if-they will-be or not will-be
tout ce set il bien de chascune
all this knows he well of each
que de deus veies tendra l'une:
that of two ways will-hold the-one
cete ira par negacion,
this-one will-go by negation
cete par affirmacion,
that-one by affirmation
non pas si termineement
not at-all so determinately
qu'il n'avieigne espeir autrement;
that-it not-happen perhaps otherwise
car bien peut autrement venir,
for well can otherwise come
se frans vouleirs s'i veaut tenir.
if free will itself-there wishes to-hold

Mais coment osa nus ce dire?
But how dared any this to-say
Coment osa tant Deu despire
How dared so-much God to-despise
qu'il li dona tel prescience
that-he to-him gave such foreknowledge
qu'il n'en set riens fors en doutance,
that-he not-thereof knows anything except in doubt
quant il n'en peut aperceveir
when he not-thereof can perceive
determinablement le veir?
determinately the truth
Car, quant d'un fait la fin savra,
For when of-a deed the end he-will-know
ja si seüe ne l'avra,
ever so known not it-he-will-have
quant autrement peut avenir;
when otherwise it-can happen
s'il li veit autre fin tenir
if-he to-it sees other end hold
que cele qu'il avra seüe,
than that which-he will-have known
sa prescience iert deceüe,
his foreknowledge will-be deceived
come mal certaine e semblable
as ill certain and like
a opinion decevable,
to opinion deceivable
si come avant montré l'avaie.
so as before shown it-I-had

Li autre alerent autre veie,
The others went other way
e maint encore a ce se tienent
and many still to this themselves hold
qu'il dient des faiz qui avienent
that-they say of-the deeds which happen
17355 ça jus par possibilité
here below by possibility
qu'il vont tuit par necessité
that-they go all by necessity
quant a Deu, non pas autrement;
as to God not at-all otherwise
car il set termineement
for he knows determinately
de toujourz, e senz nule faille,
from always and without any fail
17360 coment que de franc vouleir aille,
however that of free will it-go
les choses ainz que faites seient,
the things before that done they-be
quelconques fins que eles aient,
whatever ends that they have
e par science necessaire.
and by knowledge necessary
Senz faille il dient chose veire
Without fail they say thing true
17365 de tant que tuit a ce s'acordent,
in so-much that all to this themselves-agree

e pour verité bien recordent
and for truth well record
qu'il a necessaire science,
that-he has necessary knowledge
e de toujourz, senz ignorance,
and from always without ignorance
set il coment iront li fait.
knows he how will-go the deeds
Mais contraignance pas n'i fait, 17370
But constraint at-all not-there he-does
ne quant a sei ne quant aus omes;
neither as to himself nor as to-the men
car saveir des choses les somes
for knowing of-the things the sums
e les particularitez
and the particularities
de toutes possibilitez,
of all possibilities
ce li vient de sa grant poissance, 17375
this to-him comes from his great power
de sa bonté, de sa science,
from his goodness from his knowledge
vers cui riens ne se peut repondre.
toward whom anything not itself can hide
E qui voudrait par ce respondre
And who would-wish by this to-answer
qu'il mete es faiz necessité,
that-he put in-the deeds necessity
il ne dirait pas verité; 17380
he not would-say at-all truth

car pour ce qu'il les set devant
for for this that-he them knows before
ne sont il pas, de ce me vant;
not are they at-all of this myself I-boast
ne pour ce qu'il sont puis, ja veir
nor for this that-they are then ever true
ne li feront devant saveir;
not to-him they-will-make before know
17385 mais pour ce qu'il est touz poissanz
but for this that-he is all powerful
e touz bons e touz quenoissanz,
and all good and all knowing
pour ce set il de tout le veir
for this knows he of all the truth
si que riens nou peut deceveir,
so that anything not-him can deceive
riens ne peut estre qu'il ne veie.
anything not can be that-he not see
17390 E pour tenir la dreite veie,
And for to-hold the right way
qui bien voudrait la chose emprendre,
who well would-wish the thing to-undertake
qui n'est pas legiere a entendre,
which not-is at-all light to understand
un gros essemple en pourrait metre
a coarse example thereof could put
aus genz lais, qui n'entendent letre,
to-the folk lay who not-understand letters

car teus genz veulent grosse chose,
for such folk wish coarse thing
senz grant soutiveté de glose.
without great subtlety of gloss

The Mirror of God

XXIII

If one man learns beforehand what another freely chooses, his knowing forces nothing; God knows all things so, past and to come, in his everlasting mirror, which is himself, and his foreknowledge leaves the will free. The world's order holds by necessity in its universal causes, but particular things may be turned aside by chance or will, so destiny is only a disposition beneath predestination.

S'uns on par franc vouleir faisait
If-a man by free will did
une chose, quel qu'ele seit,
a thing whatever that-it be
ou dou faire se retardast,
or from-the doing himself held-back
pour ce que, se l'en l'esgardast,
for this that if one him-looked-at
il en avrait honte e vergoigne,
he thereof would-have shame and disgrace
teus pourrait estre la besoigne;
such could be the business
e uns autres riens n'en seüst
and an other anything not-thereof knew
devant que cil faite l'eüst,
before that he done it-had

ou qu'il l'eüst laissiee a faire,
or that-he it-had left to do
s'il se vost meauz dou fait retraire:
if-he himself wished better from-the deed to-withdraw
cil qui la chose après savrait
he who the thing after would-know
ja pour ce mise n'i avrait
ever for this put not-there would-have
necessité ne contraignance;
necessity nor constraint
e s'il en eüst la science
and if-he thereof had the knowledge
ausinc bien eüe devant,
likewise well had before
mais que plus ne l'alast grevant,
provided that more not him-went harming
ainz le seüst tant seulement,
rather it knew so only
ce n'est pas empeeschement
this not-is at-all hindrance
que cil n'ait fait ou ne feïst
that he have done or — did
ce qui li pleüst ou seïst;
this which to-him pleased or suited
ou que dou faire ne cessast,
or that from-the doing — he-ceased
se sa volenté li laissast,
if his will him let

qu'il a si franche e si delivre
which-he has so free and so unbound
qu'il pot le fait foïr ou sivre.
that-he could the deed flee or follow
Ausinc Deus, e plus noblement,
Likewise God and more nobly
e tout determinablement
and all determinately
set les choses a avenir
knows the things to happen
e quel chief eus ont a tenir,
and what end they have to hold
coment que la chose puisse estre
however that the thing may be
par la volenté de son maistre,
by the will of its master
qui tient en sa subjeccion
who holds in his subjection
le poeir de l'eleccion,
the power of the-choice
e s'encline a l'une partie
and himself-inclines to the-one part
par son sen ou par sa folie;
by his sense or by his folly
e set les choses trespassees,
and knows the things past
coment faites e compassees;
how done and contrived
e de ceus qui des faiz cessierent,
and of those who from-the deeds ceased

set il s'a faire les laissierent
knows he if-to do them they-left
pour honte ou pour autre achaison,
for shame or for other cause
seit raisonable ou senz raison,
be-it reasonable or without reason
si con leur volentez les meine;
so as their will them leads
car je sui trestoute certaine
for I am all certain
qu'il sont de genz a grant plenté
that-they are of folk in great plenty
qui de mal faire sont tenté,
who of evil doing are tempted
touteveis a faire le laissent;
nevertheless to do it they-leave
don aucuns en i a qui cessent
whereof some thereof there are who cease
pour vivre vertueusement,
for to-live virtuously
e pour l'amour Deu seulement,
and for the-love (of-)God only
qui sont de meurs bien acesmé;
who are of ways well adorned
mais cist sont mout a cler semé;
but these are very at thin sown
l'autre, qui de pechier s'apense,
the-other who of sinning himself-thinks
s'il n'i cuidait trouver defense,
if-he not-there thought to-find prohibition

touteveis son courage donte
nevertheless his heart tames
pour peeur de peine ou de honte.
for fear of pain or of shame
Tout ce veit Deus apertement
All this sees God openly
devant ses eauz presentement,
before his eyes presently
e toutes les condicions
and all the conditions
des faiz e des entencions.
of-the deeds and of-the intentions
Riens ne se peut de lui garder,
Anything not itself can from him guard
ja tant ne savra retarder;
ever so-much not it-will-know to-delay
car ja chose n'iert si lointiegne
for ever thing not-will-be so distant
que Deus devant sei ne la tiegne
that God before himself not it hold
ausinc con s'ele fust presente.
just as if-it were present
Demeurt dis anz ou vint ou trente,
It-Let-remain ten years or twenty or thirty
veire cinc cenz, veire cent mile,
indeed five hundred indeed a-hundred thousand
seit a faire a champ ou a vile,
be-it to do in field or in town
seit oneste ou desavenant,
be-it honest or unseemly

si la veit Deus des maintenant
yet it sees God from now
ausinc con s'el fust avenue;
just as if-it were happened
e de toujourz l'a il veüe
and from always it-has he seen
par demontrance veritable
by demonstration true
a son miroer pardurable,
in his mirror everlasting
que nus, fors lui, ne set polir,
which any except him not knows to-polish
senz riens a franc vouleir tolir.
without anything from free will taking
Cil miroers c'est il meïsmes,
That mirror this-is he himself
de cui comencement preïsmes.
from whom beginning we-took
En cet bel miroer poli,
In this fair mirror polished
qu'il tient e tint toujourz o li,
which-he holds and held always with him
ou tout veit quanqu'il avendra
where all he-sees whatever-it will-happen
e toujourz present le tendra,
and always present it will-hold
veit il ou les ames iront
sees he where the souls will-go
qui leiaument le serviront,
which loyally him will-serve

e de ceus ausinc qui n'ont cure
and of those likewise who not-have care
de leiauté ne de dreiture; 17480
of loyalty nor of righteousness
e leur promet en ses ydees
and to-them promises in his ideas
des euvres qu'eus avront ouvrees
for-the works that-they will-have worked
sauvement ou dannacion:
salvation or damnation
c'est la predestinacion,
this-is the predestination
c'est la prescience devine, 17485
this-is the foreknowledge divine
qui tout set e riens ne devine;
which all knows and anything not guesses
qui seaut aus genz sa grace estendre
which is-wont to-the folk its grace to-extend
quant el les veit a bien entendre,
when it them sees to good attend
ne n'a pas pour ce souplanté
nor not-has at-all for this supplanted
poeir de franche volenté. 17490
power of free will
Tuit ome euvrent par franc vouleir,
All men work by free will
seit pour joïr ou pour douleir.
be-it for rejoicing or for grieving
C'est sa presente vision,
This-is his present vision

car qui la diffinicion
for who the definition
de pardurableté deslie,
of everlastingness unties
ce est possession de vie
this is possession of life
qui par fin ne peut estre prise,
which by end not can be taken
trestoute ensemble, senz devise.
all together without division
Mais de cet monde l'ordenance,
But of this world the-ordinance
que Deus, par sa grant pourveance,
which God by his great providence
vost establir e ordener,
wished to-establish and ordain
ce couvient il a fin mener
this behooves it to end to-lead
quant aus causes universeles.
as to-the causes universal
Celes seront par force teles
Those will-be by force such
come eus deivent en touz tens estre.
as they ought in all time be
Toujourz feront li cors celestre
Always will-make the bodies celestial
selonc leur revolucions
according-to their revolutions
toutes leur transmutacions,
all their transmutations

e useront de leur poissances,
and will-use of their powers
par necessaires influences,
by necessary influences
seur les particulieres choses
upon the particular things
qui sont es elemenz encloses,
which are in-the elements enclosed
quant seur eus leur rais recevront
when upon them their rays they-will-receive
si con receveir les devront;
so as receive them they-will-have-to
car toujourz choses engendrables
for always things engenderable
engendreront choses semblables,
will-engender things like
ou feront leur commixions
or will-make their commixtures
par natureus complexions,
by natural complexions
selonc ce qu'eus avront chascunes
according-to this that-they will-have each
entr'eus proprietez comunes;
among-them properties common
e qui devra mourir mourra,
and who will-have-to die will-die
e vivra tant come il pourra.
and will-live as-long as he can

E par leur naturel desir
And by their natural desire
voudront li cueur des uns gesir
will-wish the hearts of-the ones to-lie
en oiseuses e en delices,
in idleness and in delights
cist en vertuz e cist en vices.
these in virtues and those in vices
Mais par aventure li fait
But by chance the deeds
ne seront pas toujourz si fait
not will-be at-all always so done
come li cors dou ciel entendent,
as the bodies of-the heaven intend
se les choses d'aus se defendent,
if the things from-them themselves defend
qui toujourz leur obeïraient
which always them would-obey
se destournees n'en estaient
if turned-aside not-thence they-were
ou par cas ou par volenté.
either by chance or by will
Toujourz seront il tuit tenté
Always will-be they all tempted
de ce faire ou li cueurs s'encline,
of this doing where the heart itself-inclines
qui de traire a tel fin nes fine,
which from drawing to such end not-them ceases
si come a chose destinee.
so as to thing destined

Ainsinc otrei je destinee
Thus grant I destiny
que ce seit disposicion
that this be disposition
souz la predestinacion
under the predestination
ajoustee aus choses mouvables,
added to-the things movable
selonc ce qu'eus sont enclinables.
according-to this that-they are inclinable

Fortune, Floods, and Famines

XXIV

A man may be born fortunate or not, but virtue or sin can change it, and a miser who reasons against his nature can learn to give. Those who knew beforehand what the heavens intended could escape heat, flood, and famine, as Deucalion and Pyrrha escaped the flood and Joseph stored grain in Egypt. Only astronomy, or a miracle, gives such foreknowledge.

Ainsinc peut estre on fortunez
Thus can be man fortunate
pour estre, des lors qu'il fu nez,
for being from then that-he was born
preuz e hardiz en ses afaires,
worthy and bold in his affairs
sages, larges e debonaires,
wise generous and gracious
d'amis garniz e de richeces,
with-friends furnished and with riches

e renomez de granz proeces;
and renowned for great prowesses
ou pour fortune aveir parverse;
or for fortune to-have perverse
mais bien se gart ou il converse,
but well himself let-him-guard where he dwells
car tout peut estre empeechié
for all can be hindered
seit par vertu seit par pechié.
be-it by virtue be-it by sin
S'il sent qu'il seit avers e chiches,
If-he feels that-he be miserly and stingy
car teus on ne peut estre riches,
for such man not can be rich
contre ses meurs par raison vieigne
against his ways by reason let-him-come
e soufisance a sei retieigne;
and sufficiency to himself retain
preigne bon cueur, doigne e despende
let-him-take good heart give and spend
deniers e robes e viande;
pence and robes and food
mais que de ce son non ne charge
provided that with this his name not he-burden
que l'en le tieigne pour fol large:
that one him hold for foolish generous
si n'avra garde d'avarice,
so not-he-will-have fear of-avarice
qui d'entasser les genz atice,
which of-heaping the folk incites

e les fait vivre en tel martire
and them makes live in such martyrdom
qu'il n'est riens qui leur puist soufire,
that-it not-is anything which them may suffice
e si les avugle e compresse
and so them blinds and oppresses
que nul bien faire ne leur laisse;
that any good do not them lets
e leur fait toutes vertuz perdre
and them makes all virtues lose
quant a li se veulent aerdre.
when to it themselves they-wish to-cling
Ainsinc peut on, se mout n'est nices,
Thus can man if very not-is silly
garder sei de touz autres vices,
guard himself from all other vices
ou sei de vertuz destourner,
or himself from virtues turn-away
s'il se veaut a mal atourner;
if-he himself wishes to evil to-turn
car frans vouleirs est si poissanz,
for free will is so powerful
s'il est de sei bien quenoissanz,
if-it is of itself well knowing
qu'il se peut toujourz garantir,
that-it itself can always protect
s'il peut dedenz son cueur sentir
if-he can within his heart feel
que pechiez vueille estre ses maistres,
that sin wish to-be his master

coment qu'il aut des cors celestres;
however that-it go with-the bodies celestial
car qui devant saveir pourrait
for who before know could
queus faiz li ceaus faire vourrait,
what deeds the heaven to-do would-wish
bien les pourrait empeechier;
well them could hinder
car s'il voulait si l'air sechier
for if-it wished so the-air to-dry
que toutes genz de chaut mourussent,
that all folk of heat died
e les genz avant le seüssent,
and the folk before it knew
il forgeraient maisons neuves
they would-build houses new
en moistes leus ou près de fleuves,
in moist places or near of rivers
ou granz cavernes crouseraient
or great caverns would-hollow
e souz terre se muceraient,
and under earth themselves would-hide
si que dou chaut n'avraient garde.
so that of-the heat not-would-have fear
Ou s'il ravient, combien qu'il tarde,
Or if-it happens-in-turn however-much that-it delay
que par eve aviegne deluiges,
that by water happen deluge

cil qui savraient les refuiges
those who would-know the refuges
laisseraient avant les plaignes
would-leave before the plains
e s'en fuiraient es montaignes
and themselves-thence would-flee to-the mountains
ou feraient si forz navies
or would-make so strong ships
qu'il i sauveraient leur vies
that-they there would-save their lives
par la grant inondacion,
through the great inundation
con fist jadis Deucalion
as did formerly Deucalion
e Pirra, qui s'en eschaperent,
and Pyrrha who themselves-thence escaped
par la nacele ou il entrerent,
by the boat where they entered
qu'il ne fussent des floz hapé.
that-they not were by-the waves seized
E quant il furent eschapé,
And when they were escaped
qu'il vindrent au port de salu,
that-they came to-the port of safety
e virent pleines de palu
and saw full of swamp
par mi le monde les valees,
through mid the world the valleys
quant les mers s'en furent alees,
when the seas themselves-thence were gone

e qu'ou mont n'ot seigneur ne dame,
and that-in-the world not-was lord nor lady
fors Deucalion e sa fame,
except Deucalion and his wife
si s'en alerent a confesse
so themselves-thence went to confession
au temple Themis la deesse,
to-the temple (of-)Themis the goddess
qui juijait seur les destinees
who judged upon the destinies
de toutes choses destinees.
of all things destined
A genouillons ileuc se mistrent
On kneelings there themselves they-put
e conseil a Themis requistrent
and counsel of Themis asked
coment il pourraient ouvrer
how they could work
pour leur lignage recouvrer.
for their lineage to-recover
Themis, quant oï la requeste,
Themis when she-heard the request
qui mout estait bone e oneste,
which very was good and honest
leur conseilla qu'il s'en alassent
them counseled that-they themselves-thence go
e qu'il emprès leur dos gitassent
and that-they behind their back throw
tantost les os de leur grant mere.
at-once the bones of their great mother

Tant iert cete response amere
So-much was this response bitter
a Pirra qu'el la refusait,
to Pyrrha that-she it refused
e contre la sort s'escusait
and against the lot herself-excused
qu'el ne devait pas depecier
that-she not ought at-all break
les os sa mere ne blecier,
the bones (of-)her mother nor wound
jusqu'a tant que Deucalion
until-to so-much that Deucalion
li en dist l'esposicion.
to-her thereof told the-exposition
«N'esteut», dist il, «autre sen querre:
Not-it-is-needful said he other sense to-seek
nostre grant mere, c'est la terre;
our great mother this-is the earth
les pierres, se nomer les os,
the stones if to-name them I-dare
certainement ce sont ses os:
certainly these are her bones
emprès nous les couvient giter
behind us them behooves to-throw
pour noz lignages souciter.»
for our lineages to-raise-up
Si con dit l'ot, ainsinc le firent,
So as said it-be-had thus it they-did

e maintenant ome saillirent
and at-once men leapt
des pierres que Deucalion
from-the stones which Deucalion
gitait par bone entencion,
threw by good intention
e des pierres Pirra les fames
and from-the stones (of-)Pyrrha the women
17640 saillirent en cors e en ames,
leapt in bodies and in souls
tout ainsinc con dame Themis
all just as lady Themis
leur avait en l'oreille mis,
to-them had in the-ear put
qu'onques n'i quistrent autre pere.
that-ever not-there they-sought other father
Jamais ne sera que n'en pere
Ever not it-will-be that not-thereof appear
17645 la durece en tout le lignage.
the hardness in all the lineage
Ainsinc ouvrerent come sage
Thus worked as wise
cil qui garantirent leur vie
those who protected their life
dou grant deluige par navie.
from-the great deluge by ship
Ausinc cil eschaper pourraient
Likewise those escape could
17650 qui tel deluige avant savraient.
who such deluge before would-know

Ou se harbauz devait saillir,
Or if famine should spring-up
qui si feïst les biens faillir
which so made the goods fail
que genz de fain mourir deüssent
that folk of hunger die should
pour ce que point de blé n'eüssent,
for this that at-all of grain not-they-had
tant en pourraient retenir
so-much thereof they-could retain
ainz que ce peüst avenir
before that this could happen
deus anz devant, ou treis, ou quatre,
two years before or three or four
que bien pourrait la fain abatre
that well could the hunger strike-down
touz li peuples gros e menuz,
all the people great and small
quant li harbauz serait venuz,
when the famine would-be come
si con fist Joseph en Egite
so as did Joseph in Egypt
par son sen e par sa merite,
by his sense and by his merit
e faire si grant garnison
and make so great provision
qu'il en pourraient guerison
that-they thereof could cure
senz fain e senz mesaise aveir.
without hunger and without distress have

Ou s'il poaient ainz saveir
Or if-they could before know
qu'il deüst faire outre mesure
that-it should make beyond measure
en iver estrange freidure,
in winter strange cold
il metraient avant leur cures
they would-put before their cares
en aus garnir de vesteüres,
in themselves furnishing with garments
e de busche a granz charretees
and with logs by great cartloads
pour faire feus en cheminees;
for to-make fires in chimneys
e joncheraient leur maisons,
and would-strew their houses
quant vendrait la freide saisons,
when would-come the cold season
de bele paille nete e blanche,
with fair straw clean and white
qu'il pourraient prendre en leur granche;
which-they could take in their barn
e clorraient uis e fenestres,
and would-close doors and windows
si serait plus seürs li estres.
so would-be more safe the place
Ou feraient estuves chaudes,
Or would-make bathhouses hot
en quei leur baleries baudes
in which their dancings merry

tuit nu pourraient demener,
all naked they-could lead
quant l'air verraient forsener
when the-air they-would-see rage
e giter pierres e tempestes
and throw stones and storms
qui tuassent aus chans les bestes,
which killed in-the fields the beasts
e granz fleuves prendre e glacier.
and great rivers seize and freeze
Ja tant nes savrait menacier
Ever so-much not-them would-know to-threaten
ne de tempestes ne de glaces
neither with storms nor with ices
qu'il ne risissent des menaces;
that-they not laughed at-the threats
e queroleraient laienz,
and they-would-carol within
des periz quites e raienz;
of-the perils quit and ransomed
bien pourraient l'air escharnir.
well they-could the-air mock
Si se pourraient il garnir.
So themselves could they furnish
Mais se Deus n'i faisait miracle
But if God not-there did miracle
par vision ou par oracle,
by vision or by oracle
il n'est nus on, je n'en dout mie,
it not-is any man I not-thereof doubt at-all

s'il ne set par astronomie
if-he not knows by astronomy
les estranges complexions,
the strange complexions
les diverses posicions
the divers positions
des cors dou ciel, e qu'il regart
of-the bodies of-the heaven and that-he regard
seur queus climaz il ont regart,
upon what climes they have regard
qui ce puisse devant saveir
who this can before know
par science ne par aveir.
by knowledge nor by wealth

Destiny Made an Excuse

XXV

Since the body can shield itself from the heavens, the soul's free will can do more. Nature speaks of this because man, her enemy, blames destiny and God for his sins and his ill-matched marriages. That answer is false: the foolish thoughts come from men themselves, who could withdraw from evil if they knew themselves.

E quant li cors a tel poissance
And since the body has such power
qu'il fuit des ceaus la destrempance,
that-it flees of-the heavens the intemperance
e leur destourbe ainsinc leur euvre,
and to-them disturbs thus their work

quant encontre aus si bien se cueuvre,
when against them so well itself covers
e plus poissanz, bien le recors,
and more powerful well it I-recall
est force d'ame que de cors,
is force of-soul than of body
car ele meut le cors e porte;
for it moves the body and carries
s'el ne fust, il fust chose morte:
if-it not were it were thing dead
meauz donc e plus legierement,
better then and more easily
par us de bon entendement,
by use of good understanding
pourrait eschever franc vouleir
could avoid free will
quanque le peut faire douleir.
whatever it can make grieve
N'a garde que de riens se dueille,
Not-has fear that of anything itself it-grieve
pour quei consentir ne s'i vueille,
provided that to-consent not itself-there it-wish
e sache par cueur cete clause,
and it-let-know by heart this clause
qu'il est de sa mesaise cause;
that-it is of its distress cause
foraine tribulacion
outward tribulation
n'en peut fors estre occasion.
not-thereof can except be occasion

N'il n'a des destinees garde,
Nor-it not-has of-the destinies fear
se sa nativeté regarde
if its nativity it-regards
e quenoist sa condicion.
and knows its condition
Que vaut tel predicacion?
What is-worth such predication
17725 Il est seur toutes destinees,
It is above all destinies
ja si ne seront destinees.
ever so not they-will-be destined
Des destinees plus palasse,
Of-the destinies more I-would-speak
fortune e cas determinasse,
fortune and chance I-would-determine
e bien vousisse tout espondre,
and well I-would-wish all to-expound
17730 plus oposer e plus respondre,
more to-object and more to-answer
e mainz essemples en deïsse,
and many examples thereof I-would-tell
mais trop longuement i meïsse
but too long there I-would-put
ainz que j'eüsse tout finé.
before that I-had all finished
Bien est ailleurs determiné.
Well it-is elsewhere determined

Qui nou set a clerc le demande
Who not-it knows of clerk it let-him-ask
qui leü l'ait e qui l'entende.
who read it-has and who it-understands
N'encor, se taire m'en deüsse,
Nor-yet if keep-silent myself-thereof I-should
ja certes palé n'en eüsse,
ever certainly spoken not-thereof I-would-have
mais il afiert a ma matire;
but it belongs to my matter
car mes anemis pourrait dire,
for my enemy could say
quant m'orrait ainsinc de lui plaindre,
when me-would-hear thus of him complain
pour ses desleiautez esteindre,
for his disloyalties to-extinguish
e pour son createur blasmer,
and for his creator to-blame
que jou vueille a tort diffamer;
that I-him wish at wrong to-defame
qu'il meïsmes souvent seaut dire
for-he himself often is-wont to-say
qu'il n'a pas franc vouleir d'eslire,
that-he not-has at-all free will of-choosing

car Deus par sa prevision
for God by his prevision
si le tient en subjeccion
so him holds in subjection
que tout par destinee meine
that all by destiny he-leads
e l'euvre e la pensee humaine,
both the-work and the thought human
si que, s'il veaut a vertu traire,
so that if-he wishes to virtue to-draw
ce li fait Deus a force faire,
this him makes God by force do
e s'il de mal faire s'efforce,
and if-he of evil doing himself-strives
ce li refait Deus faire a force,
this him makes-in-turn God do by force
qui meauz le tient que par le deit,
who better him holds than by the finger
si qu'il fait quanque faire deit
so that-he does whatever do he-ought
de tout pechié, de toute aumosne,
of all sin of all alms
de bel paler e de ramposne,
of fair speaking and of insult
de los e de detraccion,
of praise and of detraction
de larrecin, d'ocision,
of theft of-killing
e de pais e de mariage,
and of peace and of marriage

seit par raison, seit par outrage.
be-it by reason be-it by outrage
«Ainsinc», fait il, «couvenait estre.
Thus says he it-behooved to-be
Cete fist Deus pour cetui naistre,
This-woman made God for this-man to-be-born
ne cil ne poait autre aveir
nor he not could other have
pour nul sen ne pour nul aveir:
for any sense nor for any wealth
destinee li estait cete.»
destined to-him was this-one
E puis se la chose est mal faite,
And then if the thing is badly done
que cist seit fos ou cele fole,
that this-one be foolish or that-one foolish
quant aucuns encontre en parole,
when some-one against it speaks
e maudit ceus qui consentirent
and curses those who consented
au mariage e qui le firent,
to-the marriage and who it made
il respont lors li mal senez:
he answers then the ill witted
«A Deu», fait il, «vous en prenez,
To God says he yourself thereof take
qui veaut que la chose ainsinc aille;
who wills that the thing thus go
tout ce fist il faire senz faille.»
all this made he do without fail

Lors conferme par sairement
Then confirms by oath
qu'il ne pot aler autrement.
that-it not could go otherwise
Non, non, cete response est fausse,
No no this response is false
ne sert pas les genz de tel sausse
not serves at-all the folk with such sauce
li vrais Deus qui ne peut mentir
the true God who not can lie
qu'il les face a mal consentir.
that-he them make to evil consent
D'aus vient li fos apensemenz
From-them comes the foolish thought
don naist li maus consentemenz
whence is-born the evil consent
qui les esmeut aus euvres faire
which them moves to-the works to-do
don il se deüssent retraire;
whence they themselves ought withdraw
car bien retraire s'en peüssent,
for well withdraw themselves-thence they-could
mais qu'il senz plus se queneüssent;
provided that-they without more themselves knew
leur createur lors reclamassent,
their creator then they-would-invoke
qui les amast se il l'amassent;
who them would-love if they him-loved

car cil seus aime sagement
for he alone loves wisely
qui se quenoist entierement.
who himself knows entirely

If the Beasts Could Speak

XXVI

The dumb beasts do not know themselves, and if they could speak and reason together, horses, oxen, elephants, and even fleas and lice would turn on men. But a reasonable creature, man or angel, that does not know itself has no excuse, for it can follow reason and use free will.

Senz faille toutes bestes mues,
Without fail all beasts dumb
d'entendement vuides e nues,
of-understanding empty and bare
se mesquenoissent par nature, 17795
themselves misknow by nature
car, s'eus eüssent paleüre
for if-they had speech
e raison pour eus entrentendre,
and reason for themselves to-understand-each-other
qu'eus s'entrepeüssent aprendre,
that-they each-other-could teach
mal fust aus omes avenu.
ill would-be to-the men happened

Jamais li bel destrier crenu
Ever the fair chargers maned
ne se laisseraient donter,
not themselves would-let tame
ne chevaliers seur aus monter;
nor knights upon them mount
jamais beus sa teste cornue
ever ox his head horned
ne metrait a jou de charrue;
not would-put to yoke of plow
asne, mulet, chamel pour ome
ass mule camel for man
jamais ne porteraient some,
ever not would-carry burden
nou priseraient un gastel;
not-him would-prize a cake
jamais ne porterait chastel
ever not would-carry castle
olifanz seur sa haute eschine,
elephant upon his high spine
qui de son nés trompe e boisine,
who with his nose trumpets and blares
e s'en paist a seir e a main,
and himself-therewith feeds at evening and at morning
si come uns on fait de sa main;
so as a man does with his hand
ja chien ne chat nou serviraient,
ever dog nor cat not-him would-serve
car senz ome bien cheviraient;
for without man well they-would-manage

ours, lou, lion, lepart, sengler,
bear wolf lion leopard boar
tuit voudraient ome estrangler;
all would-wish man to-strangle
li raz neïs l'estranglerait,
the rat even him-would-strangle
quant au berceul petiz serait;
when in-the cradle little he-would-be
jamais oiseaus pour nul apel
ever bird for any call
ne metrait en perill sa pel,
not would-put in peril its skin
ainz pourrait mout ome grever
rather could much man harm
en dormant par les eauz crever.
in sleeping by the eyes bursting
E s'il voulait a ce respondre
And if-he wished to this to-answer
qu'il les cuiderait touz confondre,
that-he them would-think all to-confound
pour ce qu'il set faire armeüres,
for this that-he knows to-make armors
heaumes, hauberz, espees dures,
helmets hauberks swords hard
e set faire ars e arbalestes;
and knows to-make bows and crossbows
ausinc feraient autres bestes.
likewise would-do other beasts
Ne ront il singes e marmotes,
Not have-in-turn they apes and monkeys

qui leur feraient bones cotes
who for-them would-make good coats
de cuir, de fer, veire pourpoinz?
of leather of iron indeed doublets
Il ne demourrait ja pour poinz,
It not would-remain ever for fists
car cist ouverraient de mains,
for these would-work with hands
si n'en vaudraient mie meins;
so not-thereof would-be-worth at-all less
e pourraient estre escrivain.
and could be writers
Il ne seraient ja si vain
They not would-be ever so vain
que trestuit ne s'assoutillassent
that all not themselves-sharpened
coment aus armes contrestassent,
how to-the arms they-might-resist
e queusques engins referaient,
and some engines would-make-in-turn
don mout aus omes greveraient.
whereby much to-the men they-would-harm
Neïs puces e oreilliees,
Even fleas and earwigs
s'eles s'ierent entortilliees,
if-they themselves-were twisted
en dormant, dedenz leur oreilles,
in sleeping within their ears
les greveraient a merveilles.
them would-harm to marvels

Peoill neïs, siron e lentes
Lice even mites and nits
tant leur livrent souvent ententes
so-much to-them deliver often troubles
qu'il leur font leur euvres laissier,
that-they them make their works leave
e aus flechir e abaissier,
and themselves bend and stoop
ganchir, tourner, saillir, triper,
swerve turn leap hop
e degrater e defriper,
and scratch and tear-clothes
e despoillier e deschaucier,
and undress and unshoe
tant les peuent il enchaucier.
so-much them can they pursue
Mousches neïs a leur mangier
Flies even at their eating
leur meinent souvent grant dangier,
to-them bring often great trouble
e les assaillent es visages,
and them assail in-the faces
ne leur chaut s'il sont reis ou pages.
nor to-them matters if-they are kings or pages
Froumiz e petites vermines
Ants and little vermin
leur feraient trop d'ataïnes,
to-them would-do too-many of-vexations
s'il ravaient d'aus quenoissance.
if-they had-in-turn of-themselves knowledge

Mais veirs est que cete ignorance
But true is that this ignorance
leur vient de leur propre nature;
to-them comes from their own nature
mais raisonable creature,
but reasonable creature
seit morteus on, seit devins anges,
be-it mortal man be-it divine angel
qui tuit deivent a Deu loanges,
who all owe to God praises
s'el se mesquenoist come nice,
if-it itself misknows as simple
cist defauz li vient de son vice,
this defect to-it comes from its vice
qui le sen li trouble e enivre,
which the sense to-it troubles and makes-drunk
car el pot bien raison ensivre
for it could well reason follow
e pot de franc vouloir user;
and could of free will use
n'est riens qui l'en puisse escuser.
not-is anything which it-thereof can excuse
E pour ce tant dit vous en ai,
And for this so-much told you thereof I-have
e teus raisons i amenai
and such arguments there I-brought
que leur jangle vueil estanchier,
for their chatter I-wish to-stanch
car riens nes en peut revenchier.
for anything not-them thence can defend

Winds, Storms, and Floods

XXVII

Returning to the heavens, Nature describes how they stir winds, thunder, and lightning that break the clouds and uproot trees, which folk wrongly blame on devils. Rains make the rivers overflow and ruin the crops, and the fish roam through fields, temples, and churches, to the anger and grief of the woodland gods and nymphs.

Mais pour m'entencion parsivre,
But for my-intention to-pursue
don je voudraie estre delivre,
whereof I would-wish to-be free
pour ma douleur que j'i recors,
for my grief that I-there recall
qui me trouble l'ame e le cors,
which to-me troubles the-soul and the body
n'en vueil or plus dire a ce tour;
not-thereof I-wish now more to-say at this turn
vers les ceaus arriers m'en retour,
toward the heavens back myself-thence I-return
qui bien font quanque faire deivent
which well do whatever do they-ought
aus creatures, qui receivent
to-the creatures which receive
les celestiaus influences
the celestial influences
selonc leur diverses sustances.
according-to their divers substances

Les venz font il contrarier,
The winds make they contend
l'air enflamber, braire e crier,
the-air flame bray and cry
e esclater en maintes parz
and burst in many parts
par toneirres e par esparz,
by thunders and by lightnings
qui tabourent, timbrent e trompent
which drum timbrel and trumpet
tant que les nues s'en desrompent
until that the clouds themselves-thereby break
par les vapeurs qu'il font lever;
by the vapors that-they make rise
si leur fait les ventres crever
so to-them makes the bellies burst
la chaleur e li mouvemenz
the heat and the movement
par orribles tourneiemenz,
by horrible whirlings
e tempester e giter foudres,
and storm and throw thunderbolts
e par terre eslever les poudres,
and on earth raise the dusts
veire tours e clochiers abatre,
indeed towers and belfries cast-down
e mainz veauz arbres si debatre
and many old trees so batter
que de terre en sont arachié;
that from earth thereby are uprooted

ja si fort n'ierent atachié
ever so strongly not-they-will-be attached
que ja racines riens leur vaillent
that ever roots anything them avail
que tuit envers a terre n'aillent,
that all backward to earth not-go
ou que des branches n'aient routes,
or that of-the branches not-they-have broken
au meins une partie ou toutes.
at-the least a part or all
Si dit l'en que ce font deables
So says one that this do devils
a leur cros e a leur chaables,
with their hooks and with their cables
a leur ongles, a leur havez,
with their nails with their grapnels
mais teuz diz ne vaut deus navez,
but such saying not is-worth two turnips
qu'il en sont a tort mescreü,
for-they thereof are at wrong suspected
car nule riens n'i a neü
for any thing not-there has harmed
fors les tempestes e li vent,
except the storms and the winds
qui si les vont aconsivant;
which so them go overtaking
ce sont les choses qui leur nuisent,
these are the things which them harm

ceus versent blez e vignes cuisent
these overturn grains and vines burn
e fleurs e fruiz d'arbres abatent;
and flowers and fruits of-trees cast-down
tant les tempestent e debatent
so-much them they-storm and batter
qu'il ne peuent es rains durer
that-they not can on-the branches last
tant qu'il se puissent meürer.
until that-they themselves can ripen
Veire plourer a grosses lermes
Indeed weep with big tears
refont il l'air en divers termes,
make-in-turn they the-air at diverse times
s'en ont si grant pitié les nues
so-thereof have so great pity the clouds
qu'eus s'en despueillent toutes nues,
that-they themselves-thereby strip all naked
ne ne prisent lors un festu
nor not prize then a straw
le neir mantel qu'eus ont vestu;
the black mantle which-they have donned
car a tel deul faire s'atirent
for to such grief to-make themselves-prepare
que tout par pieces le descirent.
that all into pieces it they-tear
Si li aïdent a plourer
So to-it they-help to weep
con s'en les deüst acourer,
as if-one them should strike-down

e pleurent si parfondement,
and weep so deeply
si fort e si espessement
so hard and so thickly
qu'eus font les fleuves desriver,
that-they make the rivers overflow
e contre les chans estriver
and against the fields strive
e contre les forez veisines
and against the forests neighboring
par leur outrageuses cretines,
by their outrageous floods
don il couvient souvent perir
whence it behooves often to-perish
les blez e le tens encherir,
the grains and the time grow-dear
don li povre qui les labeurent
whence the poor who them till
l'esperance perdue pleurent.
the-hope lost weep
E quant li fleuve se desrivent,
And when the rivers themselves overflow
li peisson, qui leur fleuve sivent,
the fish which their river follow
si come il est dreiz e raisons,
so as it is right and reason
car ce sont leur propres maisons,
for these are their own houses
s'en vont, come seigneur e maistre,
themselves-thence go as lords and masters

par chans, par prez, par vignes paistre;
through fields through meadows through vineyards to-graze
e s'escoursent contre les chesnes,
and themselves-hurl against the oaks
contre les pins, contre les fresnes,
against the pines against the ashes
e tolent aus bestes sauvages
and take-from the beasts wild
leur maneirs e leur eritages,
their dwellings and their heritages
e vont ainsinc par tout najant;
and go thus through all swimming
don tuit vif s'en vont enrajant
whereby all alive themselves-thence go raging
Bachus, Cerès, Pan, Cybelé,
Bacchus Ceres Pan Cybele
quant si s'en vont atroupelé
when so themselves-thence go flocked
li peisson a leur noeüres
the fish with their swimmings
par leur delitables pastures.
through their delightful pastures
E li satirel e les fees
And the satyrs and the fairies
sont mout dolent en leur pensees
are very grieving in their thoughts
quant il perdent par teus cretines
when they lose by such floods
leur delicieuses gaudines;
their delicious groves

les nimphes pleurent leur fontaines
the nymphs weep their fountains
quant des fleuves les treuvent pleines
when with-the rivers them they-find full
e seurabondanz e couvertes,
and overflowing and covered
come dolentes de leur pertes;
as grieving of their losses
e li folet e les driades
and the goblins and the dryads
ront les cueurs de deul si malades
in-turn-have the hearts with grief so sick
qu'il se tienent trestuit pour pris
that-they themselves hold all for taken
quant si veient leur bois pourpris,
when so they-see their woods seized
e se plaignent des deus des fleuves
and themselves complain of-the gods of-the rivers
qui leur font vilenies neuves,
who to-them do villainies new
tout senz deserte e senz forfait,
all without desert and without misdeed
con riens ne leur aient forfait.
as anything not to-them they-have wronged
E des prouchaines basses viles,
And of-the nearby low towns
qu'il treuvent chaitives e viles,
which-they find wretched and vile
resont li peisson ostelier:
in-turn-are the fish lodgers

n'i remaint granche ne celier
not-there remains barn nor cellar
ne leu si vaillant ne si chier
nor place so worthy nor so dear
que par tout ne s'aillent fichier.
that through all not themselves-they-go to-thrust
Vont en temples e en iglises
They-go into temples and into churches
e tolent aus deus leur servises,
and take-from the gods their services
e chacent des chambres ocures
and chase from-the chambers dark
les deus privez e leur figures.
the gods household and their figures

Fair Weather and the Rainbow

XXVIII

When fair weather returns, the clouds put on bright colors, spin their fleeces, and fly off with Aeolus's winged horses, while the air puts on its blue mantle. The rainbows they carry can be understood only by students of Aristotle and of Alhazen's Book of Sights, which also explains the powers of mirrors to make small things large and far things near.

E quant revient a chief de piece
And when it-comes-back at end of while
que li beaus tens le lait depiece,
that the fair weather the ugly breaks-up

car aus ceaus desplaist e enuie
for to-the heavens displeases and annoys
tens de tempestes e de pluie,
weather of storms and of rain
l'air ostent de trestoute s'ire,
the-air they-remove from all its-wrath
e le font resbaudir e rire;
and it make rejoice and laugh
e quant les nues raperceivent
and when the clouds perceive-in-turn
que l'air si resbaudi receivent,
that the-air so rejoiced they-receive
adonc se resjoïssent eles,
then themselves rejoice they
e, pour estre avenanz e beles,
and for to-be comely and fair
font robes, emprès leur douleurs,
make robes after their griefs
de toutes leur beles couleurs;
of all their fair colors
e metent leur toisons sechier
and put their fleeces to-dry
au bel soleil plaisant e chier,
in-the fair sun pleasing and dear
e les vont par l'air charpissant
and them go through the-air carding
au tens cler e resplendissant,
in-the weather clear and resplendent
puis filent, e quant ont filé,
then they-spin and when they-have spun

si font voler de leur filé
so they-make fly of their spun-thread
granz aguilliees de fil blanches,
great needlefuls of thread white
ausinc com pour cousdre leur manches.
just as for to-sew their sleeves
E quant il leur reprent courage
And when it to-them takes-again courage
d'aler loing en pelerinage,
of-going far in pilgrimage
s font ateler leur chevaus,
so they-make harness their horses
montent e passent monz e vaus,
they-mount and pass mountains and valleys
e s'en fuient come desvanz;
and themselves-thence flee like madmen
car Eolus, li deus des venz,
for Aeolus the god of-the winds
ainsinc est cil deus apelez,
thus is that god called
quant il les a bien atelez,
when he them has well harnessed
car eus n'ont autre charretier
for they not-have other carter
qui sache leur chevaus traitier,
who may-know their horses to-handle
leur met es piez si bones eles
to-them puts on-the feet so good wings
que nus oiseaus n'ot onques teles.
that any bird not-had ever such

Lors prent li airs son mantel inde,
Then takes the air his mantle blue
qu'il vest trop volentiers en Inde,
which-he puts-on exceedingly willingly in India
si s'en afuble e si s'apreste
so himself-therewith cloaks and so himself-prepares
de sei cointir, de faire feste,
of himself adorning of making feast
e d'atendre en bel point les nues
and of-awaiting in fair state the clouds
tant qu'eles seient revenues,
until that-they be returned
qui pour le monde soulacier,
which for the world to-solace
ausinc com pour aler chacier,
just as for to-go to-hunt
un arc en leur poing prendre seulent,
a bow in their fist to-take are-wont
ou deus, ou treis, quant eles veulent,
or two or three when they wish
qui sont apelez ars celestres,
which are called bows celestial
don nus ne set, s'il n'est bons maistres
whereof any not knows if-he not-is good master
pour tenir des regarz escole,
for to-hold of-the sights school
coment li solauz les piole,
how the sun them variegates
quantes couleurs il ont ne queles,
how-many colors they have nor which

ne pour quei tant ne pour quei teles,
nor for what so-many nor for what such
ne la cause de leur figure;
nor the cause of their figure
e li couvendrait prendre cure
and him would-behoove to-take care
d'estre deciples Aristote,
of-being disciple (of-)Aristotle
qui meauz mist natures en note
who better put natures in note
que nus on puis le tens Caïn.
than any man since the time (of-)Cain
Alhacen, li niés Huchaïn,
Alhazen the nephew (of-)Huchain
qui ne refu ne fos ne garz,
who not in-turn-was neither fool nor knave
cist fist le livre des Regarz:
this-one made the book of-the Sights
de ce deit cil science aveir
of this ought he knowledge have
qui veaut de l'arc en ciel saveir;
who wishes of the-bow in heaven to-know
car de ce deit estre juigierres
for of this ought be judge
clers natureus e regardierres;
clerk natural and observer
e sache de geometrie,
and let-him-know of geometry

don necessaire est la maistrie
whereof necessary is the mastery
au livre des Regarz prouver:
for-the book of-the Sights proving
lors pourra les causes trouver,
then he-will-be-able the causes find
e les forces des miroers,
and the powers of-the mirrors
qui tant ont merveilleus poers
which so-much have marvelous powers
que toutes choses trés petites,
that all things very small
letres grailles, trés loing escrites,
letters slender very far written
e poudres de sablon menues,
and dusts of sand fine
si granz, si grosses sont veües,
so great so big are seen
e si près mises aus miranz,
and so near put to-the gazers
car chascuns les peut choisir enz,
for each them can discern within
que l'en les peut lire e conter
that one them can read and count
de si loing que, qui raconter
from so far that who to-relate
le voudrait e l'avrait veü,
it would-wish and it-would-have seen

ce ne pourrait estre creü
this not could be believed
d'ome qui veü ne l'avrait,
by-man who seen not it-would-have
ou qui les causes n'en savrait;
or who the causes not-thereof would-know
si ne serait ce pas creance,
so not would-be this at-all belief
18060 puis qu'il en avrait la science.
since that-he thereof would-have the knowledge

Mars and Venus, and the Powers of Mirrors

XXIX

Nature says that had Mars and Venus looked in such mirrors, they would have seen Vulcan's net and kept out of it. Genius agrees and adds that Mars might have cut the net, and that Venus, caught, would have sworn her way out, for no one lies more boldly than a woman. Nature agrees that women are full of guile.

Mars e Venus, qui ja pris furent
Mars and Venus who once taken were
ensemble ou lit ou il se jurent,
together in-the bed where they themselves lay
s'il, ainz que seur le lit montassent,
if-they before that upon the bed they-mounted
en teus miroers se mirassent,
in such mirrors themselves had-looked

mais que leur miroers tenissent
provided that their mirrors they-held
si que le lit dedenz veïssent,
so that the bed within they-saw
ja ne fussent pris ne liez
ever not they-would-be taken nor bound
es laz soutiz e deliez
in-the snares subtle and fine
que Vulcanus mis i avait,
which Vulcan put there had
de quei nus d'aus riens ne savait;
of which any of-them anything not knew
car s'il les eüst faiz d'ouvraigne
for if-he them had made of-work
plus soutille que fil d'iraigne,
more subtle than thread of-spider
eüssent il les laz veüz,
had they the snares seen
si fust Vulcanus deceüz,
so would-be Vulcan deceived
car il n'i fussent pas entré,
for they not-there would-be at-all entered
car chascuns laz plus d'un grant tré
for each snare more than-a great beam
leur parust estre gros e lons,
to-them would-appear to-be thick and long
si que Vulcanus li felons,
so that Vulcan the wicked
ardanz de jalousie e d'ire,
burning with jealousy and with-wrath

ja ne prouvast leur avoutire;
ever not would-prove their adultery
ne ja li deu riens n'en seüssent
nor ever the gods anything not-thereof would-know
se cil teus miroers eüssent,
if those such mirrors had
car de la place s'en foïssent
for from the place themselves-thence they-would-flee
quant les laz tenduz i veïssent,
when the snares stretched there they-saw
e courussent ailleurs gesir,
and would-run elsewhere to-lie
ou meauz celassent leur desir;
where better they-would-conceal their desire
ou feïssent quelque chevance
or would-make some shift
pour eschever leur mescheance,
for to-avoid their mischance
senz estre honiz ne grevez.
without being shamed nor harmed
Di je veir, fei que me devez,
Say I true faith that to-me you-owe
de ce que vous avez oï?
of this that you have heard
— Certes», dist li prestres, «oï.
Certainly said the priest yes
Cist miroer, c'est chose veire,
These mirrors this-is thing true
leur fussent lors mout necessaire,
to-them would-be then very necessary

car ailleurs assembler peüssent
for elsewhere assemble they-could
quant le perill i queneüssent;
when the peril there they-knew
ou a l'espee qui bien taille,
or with the-sword which well cuts
espeir, Mars, li deus de bataille,
perhaps Mars the god of battle
se fust si dou jalous venchiez,
himself would-be so of-the jealous-man avenged
que ses laz eüst detrenchiez;
that his snares he-would-have cut-up
lors li peüst en bon eür
then for-him he-could in good fortune
rafaitier sa fame asseür
caress his woman securely
ou lit, senz autre place querre,
in-the bed without other place to-seek
ou près dou lit, neïs a terre;
or near of-the bed even on ground
e se par aucune aventure,
and if by some chance
qui mout fust felonesse e dure,
which very were wicked and hard
danz Vulcanus i seurvenist
lord Vulcan there came-upon
lors neïs quant Mars la tenist,
then even when Mars her held
Venus, qui mout est sage dame,
Venus who very is wise lady

car trop a de barat en fame,
for exceedingly there-is of fraud in woman
se, quant l'uis li oïst ouvrir,
if when the-door him she-heard open
peüst a tens ses reins couvrir,
could in time her loins cover
bien eüst escusacions
well would-have excuses
par queusque cavillacions,
by some cavils
e controuvast autre achaison
and would-invent other reason
pour quei Mars vint en la maison,
for which Mars came into the house
e jurast quanque l'en vousist
and would-swear whatever one wished
tant que ses preuves li tousist,
until that his proofs from-him she-took
e li feïst a force acreire
and him made by force believe
qu'onques la chose ne fu veire;
that-ever the thing not was true
tout l'eüst il neïs veüe,
although it-had he even seen
deïst ele que la veüe
would-say she that the sight
li fust ocurcie e troublee,
to-him was darkened and troubled

tant eüst la langue doublee
so-much she-would-have the tongue doubled
en diverses plicacions
in divers foldings
a trouver escusacions.
at finding excuses
Car riens ne jure ne ne ment
For anything not swears nor not lies
de fame plus hardiement;
than woman more boldly
si que Mars s'en alast touz quites.
so that Mars himself-thence would-go all quit
— Certes, sire prestres, bien dites,
Certainly lord priest well you-say
come preuz e courteis e sages.
as worthy and courteous and wise
Trop ont fames en leur courages
Exceedingly have women in their hearts
e soutillitez e malices;
both subtleties and malices
qui ce ne set fos est e nices,
who this not knows fool is and silly
n'onc de ce ne les escuson.
nor-ever of this not them we-excuse
Plus hardiement que nus on
More boldly than any man
certainement jurent e mentent;
certainly they-swear and lie

meïsmement quant eus se sentent
especially when they themselves feel
de queusque forfaiz encourpees,
of some misdeeds guilty
ja si ne seront atrapees,
ever so not they-will-be caught
en cet cas especiaument;
in this case especially
don bien puis dire leiaument:
whence well I-can say loyally
qui cueur de fame apercevrait,
who heart of woman would-perceive
jamais fier ne s'i devrait;
ever trust not himself-there ought
non ferait il certainement,
not would-do he certainly
qu'il l'en mescherrait autrement.»
for-it him-thereof would-befall-ill otherwise

Mirrors That Deceive

xxx

The poet notes that Solomon calls blessed the man who finds a good wife. Nature goes on: mirrors can make mountains look tiny, burn things, multiply images, and show phantoms, and distance and sick eyes deceive as well, making one thing seem two. Those deceived boast, lying, that they have seen devils.

Ainsinc s'acordent, ce me semble,
Thus themselves-agree this to-me seems
Nature e Genius ensemble.
Nature and Genius together
Si dist Salemons toutevois,
Yet said Solomon nevertheless
puis que par la verité vois,
since that by the truth I-go
que beneürez on serait
that blessed man would-be
qui bone fame trouverait.
who good woman would-find
«Encore ont miroer», dist ele,
Still have mirrors said she
«mainte autre force grant e bele,
many-an other power great and fair
car choses granz e grosses mises
for things great and big put
trés près semblent si loing assises,
very near seem so far set

fust neïs la plus grant montaigne
it-were even the most great mountain
qui seit entre France e Sardaigne,
which be between France and Sardinia
qu'eus i peuent estre veües
that-they there can be seen
si petites e si menues
so small and so tiny
qu'enviz les pourrait l'en choisir,
that-hardly them could one discern
tant i gardast l'en a loisir.
however-much there looked one at leisure
Autre mirail par veritez
Other mirrors by truths
montrent les propres quantitez
show the proper quantities
des choses que l'en i regarde,
of-the things that one there looks-at
s'il est qui bien i preigne garde.
if-it is who well there take heed
Autre miroer sont qui ardent
Other mirrors are which burn
les choses quant eus les regardent,
the things when they them face
qui les set a dreit compasser,
who them knows at right to-adjust

pour les rais ensemble amasser
for the rays together to-amass
quant li solauz reflambeianz
when the sun blazing
est seur les miroers raianz.
is upon the mirrors radiating
Autre font diverses images
Others make divers images
apareir en divers estages,
appear in diverse stations
dreites, bellongues e enverses,
upright oblong and inverted
par composicions diverses;
by compositions divers
e d'une en font il pluseurs naistre
and from-one thereof make they several be-born
cil qui des miroers sont maistre;
those who of-the mirrors are masters
e font quatre eauz en une teste
and make four eyes in one head
s'il ont a ce la fourme preste;
if-they have for this the form ready
si font fantosmes aparanz
so make phantoms appearing
a ceus qui regardent par enz;
to those who look through within
font les neïs dehors pareir
make them even outside appear
touz vis, seit par eve ou par air;
all alive be-it by water or by air

e les peut l'en voeir joer
and them can one see play
entre l'ueil e le miroer
between the-eye and the mirror
par les diversitez des angles,
by the diversities of-the angles
seit li meiens compoz ou sengles,
be-it the medium compound or single
d'une nature ou de diverse,
of-one nature or of divers
en quei la fourme se reverse,
in which the form itself reverses
qui tant se va montepliant
which so-much itself goes multiplying
par le meien obedient
by the medium obedient
qu'el vient aus eauz aparissanz
that-it comes to-the eyes appearing
selonc les rais resortissanz
according-to the rays rebounding
qu'il si diversement receit
which-it so diversely receives
que les regardeeurs deceit.
that the beholders it-deceives
Aristotes neïs tesmoigne,
Aristotle even witnesses
qui bien sot de cete besoigne,
who well knew of this business
car toute science avait chiere:
for all knowledge he-had dear

uns on, ce dit, malades iere,
a man this he-says sick was
si li avait la maladie
so to-him had the sickness
sa veüe mout afeiblie,
his sight much weakened
e li airs iert ocurs e troubles,
and the air was dark and troubled
e dit que par ces raisons doubles
and says that by these reasons double
vit il en l'air de place en place
saw he in the-air from place to place
aler par devant sei sa face.
go by before himself his face
Briement, mirail, s'il n'ont ostacles,
Briefly mirrors if-they not-have obstacles
font apareir trop de miracles.
make appear exceedingly-many of miracles
Si font bien diverses distances,
So make well divers distances
senz miroers, granz decevances:
without mirrors great deceptions
sembler choses, entr' eus lointaines,
seem things between them distant
estre conjointes e prouchaines;
to-be conjoined and near
e sembler d'une chose deus,
and seem of-one thing two
selonc la diversité d'eus,
according-to the diversity of-them

ou sis de treis, ou uit de quatre,
or six from three or eight from four
qui se veaut au voeir esbatre,
who himself wishes at-the seeing to-amuse
ou plus ou meins en peut voeir;
or more or less thereof can see
si peut il ses eauz assoeir,
so can he his eyes set
e pluseurs choses sembler une,
and several things seem one
qui bien les ordene ou aüne.
who well them orders or gathers
Neïs d'un si trés petit ome
Even of-a so very small man
que chascuns a nain le renome
that each as dwarf him names
font eus pareir aus eauz veianz
make they appear to-the eyes seeing
qu'il seit plus granz que dis jaianz,
that-he be more great than ten giants
e pert par sus les bois passer
and appears over above the woods to-pass
senz branche pleier ne casser,
without branch bending nor breaking
si que tuit de peeur en tremblent;
so that all with fear thereof tremble

e li jaiant nain i resemblent
and the giants dwarfs there resemble
par les eauz qui si les desveient
by the eyes which so them mislead
quant si diversement les veient.
when so diversely them they-see
E quant ainsinc sont deceü
And when thus are deceived
cil qui teus choses ont veü
those who such things have seen
par miroers ou par distances,
by mirrors or by distances
qui leur ont fait teus demontrances,
which to-them have made such demonstrations
si vont puis au peuple e se vantent,
so go then to-the people and themselves boast
e ne dient pas veir, ainz mentent,
and not say at-all true rather lie
qu'il ont les deables veüz,
that-they have the devils seen
tant sont es regarz deceüz.
so-much they-are in-the sights deceived
Si font bien ueil enferm e trouble
So make well eye sick and troubled
de chose sengle sembler double,
of thing single seem double
e pareir ou ciel double lune,
and appear in-the sky double moon
e deus chandeles sembler d'une,
and two candles seem of-one

n'il n'est nus qui si bien se gart
nor-it not-is any who so well himself guard
qui souvent ne faille en regart,
who often not fail in sight
18245 don maintes choses juiges ont
whence many things judged have
d'estre mout autres qu'eus ne sont.
of-being very other than-they — are

Visions, Dreams, and Sleepwalkers

XXXI

Nature passes over the causes of mirror images and visions, which laymen would not believe. Some sleepwalkers rise, dress, and travel far, then blame devils; the frenzied wander off and die of cold; the melancholy and the devout see figures in their minds and think them real. Dreamers, lovers above all, see in sleep what they think of by day.

Mais ne vueil or pas metre cures
But not I-wish now at-all to-put cares
en desclareier les figures
in declaring the figures
des miroers ne ne dirai
of-the mirrors nor not I-will-say
18250 coment sont reflechi li rai,
how are reflected the rays
ne leur angles ne vueil descrivre:
nor their angles not I-wish to-describe
tout est ailleurs escrit en livre;
all is elsewhere written in book

ne pour quei des choses mirees
nor for what of-the things mirrored
sont les images revirees
are the images turned-back
aus eauz de ceus qui la se mirent
to-the eyes of those who there themselves look
quant vers les miroers se virent,
when toward the mirrors themselves they-turn
ne les leus de leur aparences;
nor the places of their appearances
ne les causes des decevances;
nor the causes of-the deceptions
ne ne revueil dire, beau prestre,
nor not wish-I-in-turn to-say fair priest
ou teus ydoles ont leur estre:
where such idols have their being
ou es miroers ou defores;
either in-the mirrors or outside
ne ne raconterai pas ores
nor not I-will-relate at-all now
d'autres visions merveilleuses,
of-other visions marvelous
seient plaisanz ou doulereuses,
be-they pleasing or sorrowful
que l'en veit avenir soudaines;
which one sees happen sudden
saveir mon s'eles sont foraines,
to-know indeed if-they are outward
ou senz plus en la fantasie:
or without more in the fantasy

ce ne despleierai je mie,
this not will-unfold I at-all
n'il nou recouvient ores pas,
nor-it not-it behooves-in-turn now at-all
ainceis les tais e les trespas
rather them I-silence and them I-pass-over
avec les choses devant dites,
with the things before said
qui ja n'ierent par mei descrites;
which ever not-will-be by me described
car trop i ra longue matire,
for too there in-turn-is long matter
e si serait grief chose a dire,
and also would-be grievous thing to say
e mout serait fort a l'entendre,
and very would-be hard to it-understand
s'il iert qui le seüst aprendre
if-it were who it might-know to-teach
a genz lais especiaument,
to folk lay especially
qui nou dirait generaument.
who not-it would-say generally
Si ne pourraient il pas creire
So not could they at-all believe
que la chose fust ainsinc veire,
that the thing were thus true
des miroers meïsmement,
of-the mirrors especially
qui tant euvrent diversement,
which so-much work diversely

se par estrumenz nou voaient,
if by instruments not-it they-saw
se clerc livrer les leur voulaient,
if clerks to-deliver them to-them wished
qui seüssent par demontrance
who knew by demonstration
cete merveilleuse science.
this marvelous science
Ne des visions les manieres,
Nor of-the visions the manners
tant sont merveilleuses e fieres,
so-much they-are marvelous and fierce
ne pourraient il otreier,
not could they grant
qui les leur voudrait despleier;
who them to-them would-wish to-unfold
ne queus sont les decepcions
nor what are the deceptions
qui vienent par teus visions,
which come by such visions
seit en veillant, seit en dormant,
be-it in waking be-it in sleeping
don maint s'esbaïssent forment;
whereof many themselves-astonish greatly
pour ce les vueil ci trespasser;
for this them I-wish here to-pass-over
ne si ne vueil or pas lasser
nor so not I-wish now at-all to-weary
mei de paler ne vous d'oïr;
me of speaking nor you of-hearing

bon fait prolixité foïr.
good makes prolixity to-flee
Si sont fames mout enuieuses,
So are women very irksome
e de paler contrarieuses;
and of speaking contrary
si vous pri qu'il ne vous desplaise
so you I-pray that-it not you displease
pour ce que dou tout ne m'en taise,
for this that of-the all not myself-thereof I-keep-silent
se bien par la verité vois.
if well by the truth I-go
Tant en vueil dire toutevois
So-much thereof I-wish to-say nevertheless
que maint en sont si deceü
that many thereby are so deceived
que de leur liz s'en sont meü,
that from their beds themselves-thence are moved
e se chaucent neïs e vestent
and themselves shoe even and clothe
e de tout leur harneis s'aprestent
and with all their gear themselves-prepare
si con li sen comun someillent
so as the senses common slumber
e tuit li particulier veillent;
and all the particular wake
prennent bourdons, prennent escharpes,
take staves take scrips
ou peus, ou faucilles, ou sarpes,
or stakes or sickles or billhooks

e vont cheminant longues veies,
and go traveling long ways
e ne sevent ou toutesveies;
and not know where nevertheless
e montent neïs es chevaus
and mount even on-the horses
e passent ainsinc monz e vaus
and pass thus mountains and valleys
par seches veies ou par fanges
by dry ways or by muds
tant qu'il vienent en leus estranges.
until that-they come into places strange
E quant li sen comun s'esveillent,
And when the senses common themselves-awake
mout s'esbaïssent e merveillent.
much themselves-astonish and marvel
Quant puis en leur dreit sen revienent,
When then into their right sense they-come-back
e quant avec les genz se tienent,
and when with the folk themselves they-hold
si tesmoignent, non pas pour fables,
so they-witness not at-all for fables
que la les ont portez deables,
that there them have carried devils
qui de leur osteus les osterent.
who from their houses them removed
E il meïsmes s'i porterent.
And they themselves themselves-there carried

Si rest bien souvent avenu,
So is-in-turn well often happened
quant aucun sont pris e tenu
when some are taken and held
par aucune grant maladie,
by some great sickness
si come il pert en frenesie,
so as it appears in frenzy
quant il n'ont gardes soufisanz,
when they not-have keepers sufficient
ou sont seul es osteus gisanz,
or are alone in-the houses lying
qu'il saillent sus e puis cheminent,
that-they leap up and then travel
e de tant cheminer ne finent
and of so-much traveling not cease
qu'il treuvent queusque leus sauvages,
that-they find some places wild
ou prez, ou vignes, ou boschages,
or meadows or vineyards or groves
e se laissent ileuc choeir.
and themselves let there fall
La les puet l'en emprès voeir,
There them can one after see
se l'en i vient, combien qu'il tarde,
if one there comes however-much that-he delay
pour ce qu'il n'orent point de garde,
for this that-they not-had at-all of keeper

fors gent espeir fole e mauvaise,
except folk perhaps foolish and wicked
touz morz de freit e de mesaise.
all dead of cold and of distress
Ou quant sont neïs en santé,
Or when they-are even in health
veit l'en de ceus a grant plenté
sees one of those in great plenty
qui maintes feiz, senz ordenance, 18345
who many times without order
par naturel acoustumance,
by natural habit
de trop penser sont curieus,
of too-much thinking are anxious
quant trop sont melancolieus,
when too are melancholy
ou poereus outre mesure,
or fearful beyond measure
qui mainte diverse figure 18350
who many-a divers figure
se font pareir en aus meïsmes
to-themselves make appear in them themselves
autrement que nous ne deïsmes
otherwise than we — said
quant des miroers palions,
when of-the mirrors we-spoke
don si briement nous passions;
whence so briefly we passed

e de tout ce leur semble lores
and of all this to-them seems then
qu'il seit ainsinc pour veir defores.
that-it be thus for true outside
Ou qui, par grant devocion,
Or who by great devotion
en trop grant contemplacion,
in exceedingly great contemplation
font apareir en leur pensees
make appear in their thoughts
les choses qu'il ont pourpensees,
the things that-they have meditated
e les cuident tout proprement
and them think all properly
voeir defors apertement.
to-see outside openly
E ce n'est fors trufle e mençonge,
And this not-is except trifle and lie
ainsinc con de l'ome qui songe,
just as of the-man who dreams
qui veit, ce cuide, en leur presences
who sees this he-thinks in their presences
les esperitueus sustances,
the spiritual substances
si con fist Scipion jadis;
so as did Scipio formerly
e veit enfer e paradis,
and sees hell and paradise
e ciel, e air, e mer, e terre,
and heaven and air and sea and earth

e tout quanque l'en i peut querre.
and all whatever one there can seek
Il veit esteles apareir,
He sees stars appear
e veit oiseaus voler par air,
and sees birds fly through air
e veit peissons par mer noer,
and sees fishes through sea swim
e veit bestes es bois joer
and sees beasts in-the woods play
e faire tourz e beaus e genz,
and make turns both fair and noble
e veit diversitez de genz,
and sees diversities of folk
les uns en chambres soulacier,
the ones in chambers take-solace
les autres veit par bois chacier,
the others he-sees through woods hunt
par montaignes e par rivieres,
through mountains and through rivers
par prez, par vignes, par jaschieres;
through meadows through vineyards through fallows
e songe plaiz e juigemenz,
and dreams pleas and judgments
e guerres e tourneiemenz,
and wars and tourneys
e baleries e queroles,
and dancings and carols
e ot vïeles e citoles,
and hears viols and citoles

e flaire espices odoureuses,
and smells spices odorous
e gouste choses savoureuses,
and tastes things savory
e sent entre ses braz s'amie,
and feels between his arms his-friend
touteveis n'i est ele mie;
nevertheless not-there is she at-all
ou veit Jalousie venant,
or sees Jealousy coming
un pestail a son col tenant,
a pestle on her neck holding
qui prouvez ensemble les treuve
who proved together them finds
par Male Bouche, qui contreuve
by Wicked Tongue who invents
les choses ainz que faites seient,
the things before that done they-be
don tuit amant par jour s'esmaient.
whereof all lovers by day themselves-dismay
Car cil qui fins amanz se claiment,
For those who true lovers themselves call
quant d'amour ardemment s'entraiment,
when with-love ardently each-other-love
don mout ont travauz e enuiz,
whence much they-have labors and troubles
quant se sont endormi de nuiz
when themselves are asleep by night
en leur liz, ou mout ont pensé,
in their beds where much they-have thought

car les proprietez en sai,
for the properties thereof I-know
si songent les choses amees
so they-dream the things loved
que tant ont par jour reclamees;
which so-much they-have by day called-for
ou songent de leur aversaires
or dream of their adversaries
qui leur font enuiz e contraires.
who to-them do troubles and harms

Dreams and Dame Abonde's Witches

XXXII

Many believe that every third child goes out three nights a week with Dame Abonde while the body lies empty; Nature calls this folly, since a body without its soul is dead, and if it were true the whole world would be going. She will not judge whether dreams are true, and turns back to the clouds, whose rainbows vanish when unstrung.

Ou, s'il sont en morteus haïnes,
Or if-they are in mortal hatreds
courrouz songent e ataïnes,
angers they-dream and quarrels
e contenz o leur anemis
and strifes with their enemies
qui les ont en haïne mis,
who them have in hatred put

e choses a guerre ensivables,
and things to war consequent
par contraires ou par semblables.
by contraries or by likes
Ou s'il resont mis en prison
Or if-they in-turn-are put in prison
par aucune grant mesprison,
by some great misdeed
songent il de leur delivrance,
dream they of their deliverance
s'il en sont en bone esperance;
if-they thereof are in good hope
ou songent ou gibet ou corde,
or dream either gibbet or rope
se li cueurs par jour leur recorde,
if the heart by day to-them recalls
ou queusque choses desplaisanz,
or some things displeasing
qui ne sont mie hors, mais enz.
which not are at-all out but in
Si recuident il pour veir lores
So think-in-turn they for true then
que ces choses seient defores;
that these things be outside
e font de tout ou deul ou feste,
and make of all either grief or feast
e tout portent dedenz leur teste,
and all carry within their head

qui les cinc sens ainsinc deceit
which the five senses thus deceives
par les fantosmes qu'el receit.
by the phantoms which-it receives
Don maintes genz par leur folies
Whereby many folk by their follies
cuident estre par nuit estries,
think to-be by night witches
erranz aveques dame Abonde;
wandering with lady Abonde
e dient que par tout le monde
and say that through all the world
li tierz enfant de nacion
the third children of birth
sont de cete condicion
are of this condition
qu'il vont treis feiz en la semaine
that-they go three times in the week
si con destinee les meine;
so as destiny them leads
e par touz ces osteus se boutent,
and through all these houses themselves thrust
ne clés ne barres ne redoutent,
nor keys nor bars not fear
ainz s'en entrent par les fendaces,
rather themselves-thence enter by the cracks
par chatieres e par crevaces;
by cat-holes and by crevices
e se partent des cors les ames,
and themselves part from-the bodies the souls

e vont avec les bones dames
and go with the good ladies
par leus forains e par maisons,
through places outlying and through houses
e le preuvent par teus raisons:
and it prove by such reasons
car les diversitez veües
for the diversities seen
ne sont pas en leur liz venues,
not are at-all in their beds come
ainz sont leur ames qui labeurent
rather are their souls which labor
e par le monde ainsinc s'en cueurent.
and through the world thus themselves-thence run
E tant come il sont en tel eire,
And as-long as they are on such journey
si come il font aus genz acreire,
so as they make to-the folk believe
qui leur cors bestourné avrait,
who their body turned-over would-have
jamais l'ame entrer n'i savrait.
ever the-soul to-enter not-there would-know
Mais trop a ci folie orrible,
But exceedingly there-is here folly horrible
e chose qui n'est pas possible,
and thing which not-is at-all possible
car cors humains est chose morte
for body human is thing dead
si tost con s'ame en sei ne porte;
so soon as its-soul in itself not it-carries

donques est ce chose certaine
then is this thing certain
que cil qui treis feiz la semaine
that those who three times the week
cete maniere d'eire sivent
this manner of-journey follow
treis feiz meurent, treis feiz revivent
three times die three times revive
en une semaine meïsmes;
in one week same
e s'il est si con nous deïsmes,
and if-it is so as we said
donc resoucitent mout souvent
then revive very often
li deciple de tel couvent.
the disciples of such convent
Mais c'est bien terminee chose,
But this-is well determined thing
e bien l'os reciter senz glose,
and well it-I-dare to-recite without gloss
que nus qui deie a mort courir
that any who ought to death run
n'a que d'une mort a mourir;
not-has but of-one death to die
ne ja ne resoucitera
nor ever not he-will-revive
tant que ses juigemenz sera,
until that his judgment will-be

se n'iert miracle especial
if not-will-be miracle special
de par le Deu celestial,
on behalf-of the God celestial
si con de saint Ladre lisons;
so as of saint Lazarus we-read
car ce pas ne contredisons.
for this at-all not we-contradict
E quant l'en dit, d'autre partie,
And when one says on-other part
que, quant l'ame s'est departie
that when the-soul itself-is departed
dou cors ainsinc desaourné,
from-the body thus unadorned
s'el treuve le cors bestourné,
if-it finds the body turned-over
el ne set en lui revenir:
it not knows into it to-return
qui peut teus fables soutenir?
who can such fables sustain
Qu'il est veirs, e bien le recors:
For-it is true and well it I-recall
ame dessevree de cors
soul separated from body
plus est aperte e sage e cointe
more is open and wise and clever
que quant ele est au cors conjointe,
than when it is to-the body conjoined
don el suit la complexion,
whereof it follows the complexion

qui li trouble s'entencion;
which to-it troubles its-understanding
donc est meauz lors par li seüe
then is better then by it known
l'entree que ne fu l'issue,
the-entrance than — was the-exit
par quei plus tost la trouverrait,
by which more soon it it-would-find
ja si bestourné nou verrait.
ever so turned-over not-it would-see
D'autre part, que li tierz dou monde
On-other part that the third of-the world
aille ainsinc avec dame Abonde,
go thus with lady Abonde
si con foles vieilles le preuvent
so as foolish old-women it prove
par les visions qu'eus i treuvent:
by the visions that-they there find
don couvient il, senz nule faille,
whence behooves it without any fail
que trestouz li mondes i aille;
that all the world there go
qu'il n'est nus, seit veirs soit mençonge,
for-it not-is any be-it true be-it lie
qui mainte vision ne songe,
who many-a vision not dreams
non pas treis feiz en la semaine,
not at-all three times in the week
mais quinze feiz en la quinzaine,
but fifteen times in the fortnight

ou plus ou meins par aventure,
or more or less by chance
si con sa fantasie endure.
so as his fantasy endures
Ne ne revueil dire des songes
Nor not wish-I-in-turn to-say of-the dreams
s'il sont veir ou s'il sont mençonges;
if-they are true or if-they are lies
se l'en les deit dou tout eslire,
if one them ought of-the all choose
ou s'il font dou tout a despire;
or if-they make of-the all to despise
pour quei li un sont plus orrible,
for what the ones are more horrible
plus bel li autre e plus paisible,
more fair the others and more peaceful
selonc leur aparicions
according-to their apparitions
en diverses complexions,
in divers complexions
e selonc les divers courages
and according-to the diverse hearts
des meurs divers e des aages;
of-the ways diverse and of-the ages
ou se Deus par teus visions
or if God by such visions
enveie revelacions,
sends revelations
ou li malignes esperiz,
or the malign spirit

pour metre les genz es periz.
for to-put the folk into-the perils
De tout ce ne m'entremetrai,
Of all this not myself-I-will-engage
mais a mon propos me retrai.
but to my purpose myself I-draw-back
Si vous di donques que les nues,
So to-you I-say then that the clouds
quant lasses sont e recreües
when weary are and spent
de traire par l'air de leur fleches,
of shooting through the-air of their arrows
e plus des moistes que des seches;
and more of-the moist than of-the dry
car de pluies e de rousees
for with rains and with dews
les ont trestoutes arousees,
them they-have all watered
se chaleur aucune n'en seche
if heat some not-thereof dries
pour traire quelque chose seche;
for to-shoot some thing dry
si destendent leur ars ensemble,
so they-unstring their bows together
quant ont trait tant com bon leur semble.
when they-have shot as-much as good to-them seems
Mais trop ont estranges manieres
But exceedingly have strange manners
cil arc don traient ces archieres,
those bows wherewith shoot these archers

car toutes leur couleurs s'en fuient
for all their colors themselves-thence flee
quant en destendant les estuient;
when in unstringing them they-store
ne jamais puis de ceus meïsmes
nor ever then with those same
ne retrairont que nous veïsmes;
not they-will-shoot-again which we saw
mais s'eus veulent autre feiz traire,
but if-they wish other time to-shoot
nouveaus ars leur couvient refaire
new bows to-them behooves to-make-again
que li solauz puist pioler;
which the sun may variegate
nes couvient autrement doler.
not-them behooves otherwise to-hew

Comets, Kings, and Nobility

XXXIII

The heavens kindle comets, which shine on kings no more than on the poor, whatever diviners say. Kings are not richer than the poor, since sufficiency makes riches, and like paintings and powerful friends they please only from afar; Nature makes all men equal at birth, and Fortune does the rest. True nobility comes from a good heart, not from lineage, and clerks, who read of virtue and vice in books, have more reason to be noble than princes.

Encore euvre plus l'influence
Still works more the-influence
des ceaus, qui tant ont grant poissance
of-the heavens which so-much have great power
par mer e par terre e par air:
by sea and by land and by air
les cometes font il pareir,
the comets make they appear
qui ne sont pas es ceaus posees,
which not are at-all in-the heavens set
ainz sont par mi l'air embrasees;
rather are through mid the-air kindled
e po durent puis qu'eus sont faites,
and little last since that-they are made
don maintes fables sont retraites:
whereof many fables are related
les morz aus princes en devinent
the deaths of-the princes thereby divine
cil qui de deviner ne finent.
those who of divining not cease

Mais les cometes plus n'aguietent
But the comets more not-watch
ne plus espessement ne gietent
nor more thickly not throw
leur influences ne leur rais
their influences nor their rays
seur povres omes que seur reis,
upon poor men than upon kings
ne seur reis que seur povres omes;
nor upon kings than upon poor men
ainceis euvrent, certain en somes,
rather they-work certain thereof we-are
ou monde seur les regions
in-the world upon the regions
selonc les disposicions
according-to the dispositions
des climaz, des omes, des bestes,
of-the climes of-the men of-the beasts
qui sont aus influences prestes
which are to-the influences ready
des planetes e des esteles
of-the planets and of-the stars
qui graigneur poeir ont seur eles.
which greater power have upon them
Si portent les senefiances
So they-carry the significances
des celestiaus influences,
of-the celestial influences

e les complexions esmeuvent
and the complexions stir
si come obeïssanz les treuvent.
so as obedient them they-find
Si ne di je pas ne n'afiche
Yet not say I at-all nor not-affirm
que rei deient estre dit riche
that kings ought be called rich
plus que les persones menues
more than the persons small
qui vont a pié par mi les rues;
who go on foot through mid the streets
car soufisance fait richece
for sufficiency makes riches
e couveitise fait povrece.
and covetousness makes poverty
Seit reis ou n'ait vaillant deus chiches,
Be-he king or not-have worth two chickpeas
qui plus couveite meins est riches.
who more covets less is rich
E qui voudrait creire escritures,
And who would-wish to-believe writings
li rei resemblent les peintures,
the kings resemble the paintings
don tel essemple nous apreste
whereof such example to-us prepares
cil qui nous escrist l'Almageste,
he who for-us wrote the-Almagest

se bien s'i savait prendre garde
if well himself-there knew to-take heed
cil qui les peintures regarde;
he who the paintings looks-at
qu'eus plaisent qui ne s'en apresse,
that-they please who not himself-thereof approaches
mais de près la plaisance cesse;
but from near the pleasure ceases
de loing semblent trop deliteuses,
from far they-seem exceedingly delightful
de près ne sont point doucereuses.
from near not they-are at-all sweet
Ainsinc va des amis poissanz:
Thus it-goes with-the friends powerful
douz est a leur mesquenoissanz
sweet is to their non-knowers
leur servise e leur acointance,
their service and their acquaintance
par le defaut d'experience;
by the lack of-experience
mais qui bien les esprouverait,
but who well them would-test
tant d'amertume i trouverait
so-much of-bitterness there would-find
qu'il s'i craindrait mout a bouter,
that-he himself-there would-fear much to thrust
tant fait leur grace a redouter.
so-much is their grace to fear

Ainsinc nous asseüre Horaces
Thus us assures Horace
de leur amours e de leur graces.
of their loves and of their graces
Ne li prince ne sont pas digne
Nor the princes not are at-all worthy
que li cors dou ciel doignent signe
that the bodies of-the heaven give sign
de leur mort plus que d'un autre ome,
of their death more than of-an other man
car leur cors ne vaut une pome
for their body not is-worth an apple
outre le cors d'un charruier,
beyond the body of-a plowman
ou d'un clerc, ou d'un escuier;
or of-a clerk or of-a squire
car jes faz touz semblables estre,
for I-them make all alike be
si come il apert a leur naistre.
so as it appears at their birth
Par mei naissent semblable e nu
By me are-born alike and naked
fort e feible, gros e menu;
strong and weak great and small
touz les met en equalité
all them I-put in equality
quant a l'estat d'humanité;
as to the-state of-humanity
Fortune i met le remanant,
Fortune there puts the remainder

qui ne set estre parmanant,
who not knows to-be permanent
qui ses biens a son plaisir done
who her goods at her pleasure gives
ne ne prent garde a quel persone,
nor not takes heed to what person
e tout retost ou retoudra
and all takes-back or will-take-back
toutes les feiz qu'ele voudra.
all the times that-she will-wish
E se nus contredire m'ose,
And if any to-contradict me-dares
qui de gentillece s'alose,
who of nobility himself-praises
e die que li gentill ome,
and says that the noble men
si con li peuples les renome,
so as the people them names
sont de meilleur condicion
are of better condition
par noblece de nacion
by nobility of birth
que cil qui les terres coutivent
than those who the lands cultivate
ou qui de leur labeur se vivent,
or who from their labor themselves live
je respons que nus n'est gentis
I answer that any not-is noble
s'il n'est a vertuz ententis,
if-he not-is to virtues intent

ne n'est vilains fors pour ses vices,
nor not-is churl except for his vices
don il pert outrageus e nices.
whereby he appears outrageous and silly
Noblece vient de bon courage,
Nobility comes from good heart
car gentillece de lignage
for nobility of lineage
n'est pas gentillece qui vaille
not-is at-all nobility which avails
pour quei bonté de cueur i faille;
provided that goodness of heart there fail
par quei deit estre en li paranz,
by which ought be in it apparent
la proëce de ses parenz,
the prowess of his forebears
qui la gentillece conquistrent
who the nobility conquered
par les travauz que granz i mistrent.
by the labors which great there they-put
E quant dou siecle trespasserent,
And when from-the world they-passed
toutes leur vertuz emporterent,
all their virtues they-carried-away
e laissierent aus eirs l'aveir,
and left to-the heirs the-wealth
qui plus ne porent d'aus aveir.
who more not could of-them have
L'aveir ont, riens plus n'i a leur,
The-wealth they-have anything more not-there is theirs

ne gentillece ne valeur,
neither nobility nor worth
s'il ne font tant que gentill seient
if-they not do so-much that noble they-be
par sens ou par vertuz qu'il aient.
by sense or by virtues that-they have
Si ront clerc plus grant avantage
So in-turn-have clerks more great advantage
d'estre gentill, courteis e sage,
of-being noble courteous and wise
e la raison vous en lirai,
and the reason to-you thereof I-will-read
que n'ont li prince ne li rei,
than have the princes nor the kings
qui ne sevent de letreüre;
who not know of letters
car li clers veit en l'escriture,
for the clerk sees in the-writing
avec les sciences prouvees,
with the sciences proved
raisonables e demontrees,
reasonable and demonstrated
touz maus don l'en se deit retraire,
all evils whence one himself ought withdraw
e touz les biens que l'en peut faire;
and all the goods that one can do
les choses veit dou monde escrites
the things he-sees of-the world written
si come eus sont faites e dites;
so as they are done and said

il veit es ancienes vies
he sees in-the ancient lives
de touz vilains les vilenies,
of all churls the villainies
e touz les faiz des courteis omes,
and all the deeds of-the courteous men
e des courteisies les somes.
and of-the courtesies the sums
Briement il veit escrit en livre
Briefly he sees written in book
quanque l'en deit foïr e sivre;
whatever one ought flee and follow
par quei tuit clerc, deciple e maistre,
by which all clerks disciples and masters
sont gentill ou le deivent estre.
are noble or it ought be
E sachent cil qui ne le sont
And let-know those who not it are
c'est pour les cueurs que mauvais ont;
this-is for the hearts that wicked they-have
qu'il en ont trop plus d'avantages
for-they thereof have exceedingly more of-advantages
que cil qui cueurt aus cers sauvages.
than he who runs after-the harts wild

Clerks, Knights, and True Nobility

XXXIV

Clerks who ignore what they read are worse than laymen. Whoever wants nobility must shun pride and sloth, follow arms or study, and honor ladies without trusting them too much; bold, courteous knights like Gawain and Robert of Artois deserve praise. Ancient princes honored poets like Vergil and Ennius, but philosophers now go poor. Nobility brings only the burden of matching one's forebears, and a man who boasts of another's is a churl, even if he is Alexander's son.

Si valent pis que nule gent
So are-worth worse than any folk
clerc qui le cueur n'ont noble e gent,
clerks who the heart not-have noble and gentle
quant les biens queneüz eschivent
when the goods known they-shun
e les vices veüz ensivent;
and the vices seen follow
e plus puni devraient estre
and more punished ought be
devant l'empereeur celestre
before the-emperor celestial
clerc qui s'abandonent aus vices
clerks who themselves-abandon to-the vices
que les genz lais, simples e nices,
than the folk lay simple and silly
qui n'ont pas les vertuz escrites
who not-have at-all the virtues written
que cil tienent vis e despites.
which those hold vile and despised

E se prince sevent de letre,
And if princes know of letters
ne se peuent il entremetre
not themselves can they engage
de tant lire e de tant aprendre,
of so-much reading and of so-much learning
qu'il ont trop ailleurs a entendre;
for-they have too-much elsewhere to attend
par quei, pour gentillece aveir,
by which for nobility to-have
ont li clerc, ce poez saveir,
have the clerks this you-can know
plus bel avantage e graigneur
more fair advantage and greater
que n'ont li terrien seigneur.
than have the earthly lords
E pour gentillece conquerre,
And for nobility to-conquer
qui mout est enourable en terre,
which very is honorable on earth
tuit cil qui la veulent aveir
all those who it wish to-have
cete regle deivent saveir:
this rule ought know
quiconques tent a gentillece
whoever aims at nobility
d'orgueil se gart e de parece,
from-pride himself let-him-guard and from sloth
aille aus armes ou a l'estuide,
let-him-go to-the arms or to the-study

e de vilenie se vuide.
and of villainy himself empty
Humble cueur ait, courteis e gent,
Humble heart let-him-have courteous and gentle
en trestouz leus, vers toute gent,
in all places toward all folk
fors senz plus vers ses anemis,
except without more toward his enemies
quant acorz n'i peut estre mis.
when accord not-there can be put
Dames eneurt e dameiseles,
Ladies let-him-honor and damsels
mais ne se fie trop en eles,
but not himself trust too-much in them
qu'il l'en pourrait bien meschoeir,
for-it him-thereof could well befall-ill
car nus trop n'est bons a voeir.
for any too-much not-is good to see
Teus on deit aveir los e pris,
Such man ought have praise and worth
senz estre blasmez ne repris,
without being blamed nor rebuked
e de gentillece le non
and of nobility the name
deit receveir, li autre non.
ought receive the others not
Chevaliers aus armes hardiz,
Knight at-the arms bold
preuz en faiz e courteis par diz,
worthy in deeds and courteous by words

si con fu mi sires Gauvains,
so as was my lord Gawain
qui ne fu pas parauz aus vains,
who not was at-all equal to-the vain
e li bons cuens d'Arteis Roberz,
and the good count of-Artois Robert
qui des lors qu'il issi do berz
who from then that-he came-out of-the cradle
hanta touz les jourz de sa vie
practiced all the days of his life
largece, eneur, chevalerie,
largesse honor chivalry
n'onc ne li plut oiseus sejourz,
nor-ever not to-him pleased idle sojourn
ainz devint on devant ses jourz.
rather became man before his days
Teus chevaliers, preuz e vaillanz,
Such knight worthy and valiant
larges, courteis e bataillanz,
generous courteous and warlike
deit par tout estre bien venuz,
ought through all be well come
loez, amez e chiers tenuz.
praised loved and dear held
Mout redeit l'en clerc enourer
Much ought-in-turn one clerk honor
qui bien veaut a sen labourer,
who well wishes at sense to-labor

e pense des vertuz ensivre
and thinks of-the virtues to-follow
qu'il veit escrites en son livre.
which-he sees written in his book
E si fist l'en certes jadis;
And so did one certainly formerly
bien en nomeraie ja dis,
well thereof I-would-name now ten
veire tant que, se je les nombre,
indeed so-many that if I them number
enuiz sera d'oïr le nombre.
weariness will-be of-hearing the number
Jadis li vaillant gentill ome,
Formerly the valiant noble men
si con la letre les renome,
so as the letter them names
empereeur, duc, conte, rei,
emperors dukes counts kings
don ja ci plus ne conterai,
whereof ever here more not I-will-tell
les philosophes enourerent;
the philosophers honored
aus poetes neïs donerent
to-the poets even they-gave
viles, jardins, leus enourables,
towns gardens places honorable
e maintes choses delitables.
and many things delightful
Naples fu donee a Virgile,
Naples was given to Vergil

qui plus est delitable vile
which more is delightful town
que n'est Paris ne Lavardins.
than is Paris nor Lavardin
En Calabre rot beaus jardins
In Calabria in-turn-had fair gardens
Ennius, qui doné li furent
Ennius which given to-him were
des anciens qui le quenurent.
by-the ancients who him knew
Mais pour quei plus en trouveraie?
But for what more thereof would-I-find
Par pluseurs le vous prouveraie,
By several it to-you I-would-prove
qui furent né de bas lignages,
who were born of low lineages
e plus orent nobles courages
and more had noble hearts
que maint fill de reis ne de contes,
than many-a son of kings nor of counts
don ja ci ne vous iert faiz contes,
whereof ever here not to-you will-be made tale
qui pour gentis furent tenuz.
who for noble were held
Or est li tens a ce venuz
Now is the time to this come
que li bon qui toute leur vie
that the good who all their life
travaillent en philosophie,
labor in philosophy

e s'en vont en estrange terre
and themselves-thence go into strange land
pour sen e pour valeur conquerre,
for sense and for worth to-conquer
e seufrent les granz povretez,
and suffer the great poverties
ou mendianz ou endetez,
either begging or indebted
e vont espeir deschauz e nu,
and go perhaps unshod and naked
ne sont amé ne chier tenu.
not are loved nor dear held
Prince nes prisent une pome;
Princes not-them prize an apple
e si sont il plus gentill ome,
and yet are they more noble men
si me gart Deus d'aveir les fievres,
so me keep God from-having the fevers
que cil qui vont chacier aus lievres,
than those who go to-hunt after-the hares
e que cil qui sont coustumiers
and than those who are accustomed
de maindre es paterneus fumiers.
of dwelling on-the paternal dunghills
E cil qui d'autrui gentillece,
And he who from-another's nobility
senz sa valeur, senz sa proece,
without his worth without his prowess

veaut emporter los e renon
wishes to-carry-off praise and renown
est il gentis? Je di que non;
is he noble I say that not
ainz deit estre vilains clamez,
rather ought be churl called
e vis tenuz, e meins amez
and vile held and less loved
que s'il estait filz d'un truant:
than if-he were son of-a vagabond
je n'en irai ja nul chuant.
I not-thereof will-go ever anyone flattering
E fust neïs fiz Alixandre,
And he-were even son (of-)Alexander
qui tant osa d'armes emprendre,
who so-much dared of-arms to-undertake
e tant continua les guerres
and so-much continued the wars
qu'il fu sires de toutes terres;
that-he was lord of all lands
e puis que cil li obeïrent
and after that those him obeyed
qui contre lui se combatirent,
who against him themselves fought
e que cil se furent rendu
and that those themselves were surrendered
qui ne s'ierent pas defendu,
who not themselves-were at-all defended
dist il, tant fu d'orgueil destreiz,
said he so-much he-was by-pride constrained

que cist mondes iert si estreiz
that this world was so narrow
qu'il s'i poait enviz tourner,
that-he himself-there could hardly turn
n'il n'i voulait plus sejourner,
nor-he not-there wished more to-sojourn
ainz pensait d'autre monde querre
rather thought of-other world to-seek
pour comencier nouvele guerre;
for to-begin new war
e s'en alait enfer brisier,
and himself-thence went hell to-break
pour sei faire par tout prisier,
for himself to-make through all prize
don trestuit de peeur tremblerent
whereat all with fear trembled
li deu d'enfer, car il cuiderent,
the gods of-hell for they thought
quant je le leur dis, que ce fust
when I it to-them said that this were
cil qui par le baston de fust,
he who by the staff of wood
pour les ames par pechié mortes,
for the souls by sin dead
devait d'enfer brisier les portes,
ought of-hell break the gates
e leur grant orgueil escachier,
and their great pride crush
pour ses amis d'enfer sachier.
for his friends from-hell to-pull

Mais poson, ce qui ne peut estre,
But let-us-suppose this which not can be
que j'en face aucuns gentis naistre
that I-thereof make some noble be-born
e que des autres ne me chaille
and that of-the others not to-me it-matter
qu'il vont apelant vilenaille:
whom-they go calling rabble
quel bien a il en gentillece?
what good has it in nobility
Certes, qui son engin adrece
Certainly who his wit directs
a bien la verité comprendre,
to well the truth comprehending
il ne peut autre chose entendre
he not can other thing understand
qui bone seit en gentillece
which good be in nobility
fors qu'il semble que la proece
except that-it seems that the prowess
de leur parenz deivent ensivre.
of their forebears they-ought follow
Souz cet fais deit cil toujourz vivre
Under this burden ought he always live
qui gentis on veaut resembler,
who noble man wishes to-resemble
s'il ne veaut gentillece embler
if-he not wishes nobility to-steal
e senz deserte los aveir.
and without desert praise to-have

Car je faz a touz a saveir
For I make to all to know
que gentillece aus genz ne done
that nobility to-the folk not gives
nule autre chose qui seit bone
any other thing which be good
fors que ce fais tant seulement.
except that this burden so only
E sachent bien certainement
And let-them-know well certainly
que nus ne deit aveir loenge
that any not ought have praise
par vertu de persone estrange;
by virtue of person strange
n'il ne rest pas dreiz que l'en blasme
nor-it not is-in-turn at-all right that one blame
nule persone d'autrui blasme:
any person for-another's blame
cil seit loez qui le desert;
he be praised who it deserves
mais cil qui de nul bien ne sert,
but he who of any good not serves
en cui l'en treuve mauvaistiez,
in whom one finds wickednesses
vilenies e engrestiez,
villainies and malices
e vanteries e bobanz;
and boastings and pomps
ou s'il rest doubles e lobanz,
or if-he is-in-turn double and flattering

d'orgueil farsiz e de ramposnes,
with-pride stuffed and with insults
senz charitez e senz aumosnes,
without charities and without alms
ou negligenz e pareceus,
or negligent and lazy
car l'en en treuve trop de ceus,
for one thereof finds too-many of those
tout seit il nez de teus parenz
although be he born of such forebears
ou toute vertuz fu paranz,
in-whom all virtue was apparent
il n'est pas dreiz, bien dire l'os,
it not-is at-all right well to-say it-I-dare
qu'il ait de ses parenz le los;
that-he have of his forebears the praise
ainz deit estre plus vis tenuz
rather ought be more vile held
que s'il iert de chaitis venuz.
than if-he were from wretches come

Nobility Cannot Be Inherited

XXXV

Wealth can be left to heirs, but wisdom and nobility cannot, and those who boast of their forebears while they hunt and idle are base churls. A vicious king's son is more shamed than a carter's, and princes' deaths only seem marked by comets because they are talked of more. Nature lists the heavens' other works: shooting stars, seasons, snow, eclipses, and the tides.

E sachent tuit ome entendable
And let-know all men intelligent
qu'il n'est mie chose semblable
that-it not-is at-all thing alike
d'aquerre sen e gentillece
of-acquiring sense and nobility
e renomee par proece,
and renown by prowess
e d'aquerre granz tenemenz,
and of-acquiring great holdings
granz deniers, granz aournemenz,
great pence great adornments
quant a faire en ses volentez;
as to doing in his wills
car cil qui est entalentez
for he who is desirous
de travaillier sei pour aquerre
of laboring himself for to-acquire
deniers, aournemenz ou terre,
pence adornments or land

bien ait neïs d'or amassez
well he-may-have even of-gold amassed
cent mile mars ou plus assez,
a-hundred thousand marks or more plenty
tout peut laissier a ses amis.
all he-can leave to his friends
Mais cil qui son travail a mis
But he who his toil has put
es autres choses desus dites
in-the other things above said
tant qu'il les a par ses merites,
until that-he them has by his merits
amours nou peut a ce plaissier
love not-him can to this bend
qu'il leur en puist ja riens laissier.
that-he to-them thereof may ever anything leave
Peut il laissier science? Non;
Can he leave knowledge No
ne gentillece ne renon.
nor nobility nor renown
Mais il leur en peut bien aprendre,
But he them thereof can well teach
s'il i veulent essemple prendre.
if-they there wish example to-take
Autre chose cist n'en peut faire;
Other thing this-one not-thereof can do
ne cil n'en peuent riens plus traire.
nor those not-thereof can anything more draw

Si n'i refont il pas grant force,
Yet not-there do-in-turn they at-all great force
qu'il n'i donraient une escorce,
for-they not-there would-give a rind
mainz en i a, fors que d'aveir
many thereof there are except that of-having
les possessions e l'aveir.
the possessions and the-wealth
Si dient qu'il sont gentill ome,
So they-say that-they are noble men
pour ce que l'en les i renome;
for this that one them there names
e que leur bon parent le furent,
and that their good forebears it were
qui furent tel come estre durent;
who were such as be they-ought
e qu'il ont e chiens e oiseaus,
and that-they have both dogs and birds
pour sembler gentis damoiseaus;
for to-seem noble young-lords
e qu'il vont chaçant par rivieres,
and that-they go hunting along rivers
par bois, par chans e par bruieres;
through woods through fields and through heaths
e qu'il se vont oiseus esbatre.
and that-they themselves go idle to-amuse
Mais il sont mauvais vilain natre,
But they are wicked churls base
qui d'autrui noblece se vantent.
who of-another's nobility themselves boast

Il ne dient pas veir, ainz mentent,
They not say at-all true rather lie
e le non de gentillece emblent,
and the name of nobility steal
quant leur bons parenz ne resemblent.
when their good forebears not they-resemble
Car, quant jes faz semblables naistre,
For when I-them make alike be-born
s'il veulent donques gentill estre
if-they wish then noble to-be
d'autre noblece que de cele
of-other nobility than of that
que je leur doing, qui mout est bele,
which I to-them give which very is fair
qui a non naturel franchise,
which has name natural freedom
que j'ai seur touz egaument mise,
which I-have upon all equally put
avec raison que Deus leur done,
with reason which God to-them gives
qui les fait, tant est sage e bone,
which them makes so-much it-is wise and good
semblables a Deu e aus anges,
like to God and to-the angels
se mort nes en feïst estranges,
if death not-them thereby made strange
qui par sa mortel difference
which by its mortal difference
fait des omes la dessevrance,
makes of-the men the separation

aquierent neuves gentilleces,
let-them-acquire new nobilities
s'il ont en aus tant de proeces;
if-they have in them so-many of prowesses
car s'il par aus ne les aquierent,
for if-they by themselves not them acquire
jamais gentill par autrui n'ierent.
ever noble by another not-they-will-be
Je n'en met hors ne reis ne contes.
I not-thereof put out neither kings nor counts
D'autre part, il est plus granz hontes
On-other part it is more great shame
d'un fil de rei, s'il estait nices
of-a son of king if-he were silly
e pleins d'outrages e de vices,
and full of-outrages and of vices
que s'il iert fiz d'un charretier,
than if-he were son of-a carter
d'un porchier ou d'un çavetier.
of-a swineherd or of-a cobbler
Certes plus serait enourable
Certainly more would-be honorable
a Gauvain le bien combatable
to Gawain the well fighting
qu'il fust d'un coart engendrez,
that-he were by-a coward engendered
qui sist au feu touz encendrez,
who sat at-the fire all ashen

qu'il ne serait s'il iert coarz,
than-it — would-be if-he were coward
e fust ses peres Renoarz.
and were his father Rainouart
Mais, senz faille, ce n'est pas fable,
But without fail this not-is at-all fable
la mort d'un prince est plus notable
the death of-a prince is more notable
que n'est la mort d'un païsant,
than is the death of-a peasant
quant l'en le treuve mort gisant,
when one him finds dead lying
e plus loing en vont les paroles;
and more far thereof go the words
e pour ce cuident les genz foles,
and for this think the folk foolish
quant il ont veü les cometes,
when they have seen the comets
qu'eus seient pour les princes faites.
that-they be for the princes made
Mais s'il n'iert jamais reis ne princes
But if-it not-were ever king nor prince
par reiaumes ne par provinces,
through kingdoms nor through provinces
e fussent tuit pareil en terre,
and were all equal on earth
fussent en pais, fussent en guerre,
they-were in peace they-were in war

si feraient li cors celestre
yet would-make the bodies celestial
en leur tens les cometes naistre,
in their time the comets be-born
quant es regarz se recevraient
when in-the aspects themselves they-would-receive
ou teus euvres faire devraient,
where such works do they-ought
pour qu'il eüst en l'air matire
provided that-it were in the-air matter
qui leur peüst a ce soufire.
which to-them could for this suffice
Dragons volanz e estenceles
Dragons flying and sparks
font il par l'air sembler esteles,
make they through the-air seem stars
qui des ceaus en cheant descendent,
which from-the heavens in falling descend
si con les foles genz entendent;
so as the foolish folk understand
mais raison ne peut pas voeir
but reason not can at-all see
que riens puisse des ceaus choeir,
that anything can from-the heavens fall
car en aus n'a riens corrompable;
for in them not-is anything corruptible
tout est ferm e fort e estable;
all is firm and strong and stable

n'il ne receivent pas empreintes
nor-they not receive at-all imprints
pour qu'eus seient dehors empeintes;
for which-they be outside struck
ne riens ne les pourrait casser,
nor anything not them could break
n'il n'i lairaient rien passer,
nor-they not-there would-let anything pass
tant fust soutive ne perçable,
however-much it-were subtle or piercing
s'el n'iert espeir esperitable.
if-it not-were perhaps spiritual
Leur rai, senz faille, bien i passent,
Their rays without fail well there pass
mais nes empirent ne ne cassent.
but not-them impair nor not break
Les chauz estez, les freiz ivers
The hot summers the cold winters
font il par leur regarz divers;
make they by their aspects diverse
e font les neis e font les grelles,
and make the snows and make the hails
une eure grosses, autre grailles;
one hour big other small
e noz autres impressions,
and our other impressions
selonc leur oposicions,
according-to their oppositions
e selonc ce qu'il s'entresloignent,
and according-to this that-they draw-apart

ou s'apressent ou se conjoignent;
or themselves-approach or themselves conjoin
don maint ome souvent s'esmaient
whereby many men often themselves-dismay
quant es ceaus les eclisses veient,
when in-the heavens the eclipses they-see
e cuident estre mal bailli
and think to-be badly treated
des regarz qui leur sont failli
of-the aspects which to-them are failed
des planetes devant veües.
of-the planets before seen
Don si tost perdent les veües,
Whereof so soon they-lose the sights
mais, se les causes en seüssent,
but if the causes thereof they-knew
ja de riens ne s'en esmeüssent.
ever of anything not themselves-thereof they-would-be-moved
E par behourdeïz de venz,
And by jousting of winds
les ondes de mer eslevanz,
the waves of sea raising
font les floz aus nues baisier;
make the floods to-the clouds kiss
puis refont la mer apaisier,
then make-in-turn the sea calm
qu'el n'est teus qu'ele ose grondir
so-that-it not-is such that-it dares to-growl
ne ses floz faire rebondir;
nor its floods make rebound

fors celui que par estouveir
except that-one which by necessity
li fait la lune adès mouveir,
to-it makes the moon always move
e le fait aler e venir:
and it makes go and come
n'est riens qui ce puist retenir.
not-is anything which this may hold-back
E qui voudrait plus bas enquerre
And who would-wish more low to-inquire
des miracles que font en terre
of-the miracles which do on earth
li cors dou ciel e les esteles,
the bodies of-the heaven and the stars
tant en i trouverait de beles
so-many thereof there would-find of fair
que jamais n'avrait tout escrit
that ever not-would-have all written
qui tout voudrait metre en escrit.
who all would-wish to-put in writing
Ainsinc li ciel vers mei s'aquitent,
Thus the heavens toward me themselves-acquit
qui par leur bontez tant profitent
which by their goodnesses so-much profit
que bien me puis aperceveir
that well myself I-can perceive
qu'il font bien trestuit leur deveir.
that-they do well all their duty

The Obedient Elements, and Man Alone

XXXVI

The elements, plants, birds, fish, and beasts all keep Nature's rules, mate freely, and keep up their kinds. Man alone, whom she made in his master's image and gave being, life, and feeling, a little new world, does her worse than any wolf cub. His understanding is not her gift, she admits, since she makes nothing everlasting.

Ne ne me plaing des elemenz:
Nor not myself I-complain of-the elements
bien gardent mes comandemenz,
well they-keep my commandments
bien font entre aus leur mixtions,
well make among them their mixtures
tournant en resolucions;
turning in resolutions
car quanque la lune a souz sei
for whatever the moon has under itself
est corrompable, bien lou sai;
is corruptible well it I-know
riens ne s'i peut si bien nourrir
anything not itself-there can so well nourish
que tout ne couviegne pourrir.
that all not it-behoove to-rot
Tuit ont de leur complexion,
All have of their complexion
par naturel entencion,
by natural intention
regle qui ne faut ne ne ment:
rule which not fails nor not lies

tout vait a son comencement.
all goes to its beginning
Cete regle est si generaus
This rule is so general
qu'el ne veaut defaillir ver aus.
that-it not wishes to-fail toward them
Si ne me plaing mie des plantes,
So not myself I-complain at-all of-the plants
qui d'obeïr ne sont pas lentes:
which of-obeying not are at-all slow
bien sont a mes-leis ententives,
well they-are to my-laws attentive
e font, tant come eles sont vives,
and make as-long as they are alive
leur racines e leur foilletes,
their roots and their little-leaves
trons e rains e fruiz e flouretes;
trunks and boughs and fruits and little-flowers
chascune chascun an aporte
each each year brings
quanqu'el peut, tant qu'ele seit morte,
whatever-it can until that-it be dead
come erbes, arbres e boissons.
as grasses trees and bushes
Ne des oiseaus ne des poissons,
Nor of-the birds nor of-the fishes
qui mout sont bel a regarder:
which very are fair to look-at
bien sevent mes regles garder,
well they-know my rules to-keep

e sont si trés bon escolier
and are so very good scholars
qu'il traient tuit a mon colier;
that-they draw all at my collar
tuit faonent a leur usages,
all breed at their usages
e font eneur a leur lignages;
and do honor to their lineages
ne les laissent pas dechoeir,
nor them let at-all decline
don c'est granz soulaz a voeir.
whence this-is great solace to see
Ne ne me plaing des autres bestes
Nor not myself I-complain of-the other beasts
cui je faz enclines les testes
whom I make bowed the heads
e regardanz toutes vers terre:
and looking all toward earth
ceus ne me murent onques guerre;
these not to-me moved ever war
toutes a ma cordele tirent,
all at my cord pull
e font si con leur pere firent.
and do so as their fathers did
Li malles vait o sa femele,
The male goes with his female
ci a couple avenant e bele,
here there-is couple comely and fair

tuit engendrent e vont ensemble
all engender and go together
toutes les feiz que bon leur semble,
all the times that good to-them seems
ne ja nul marchié n'i feront
nor ever any bargain not-there they-will-make
quant ensemble s'acorderont;
when together themselves-they-will-agree
ainz plaist a l'un pour l'autre faire
rather pleases to the-one for the-other to-do
par courteisie debonaire;
by courtesy gracious
e trestuit a paié se tienent
and all for paid themselves hold
des biens qui de par mei leur vienent.
of-the goods which on behalf-of me to-them come
Si font mes beles verminetes,
So do my fair little-vermin
froumi, papillon e mouschetes.
ants butterflies and little-flies
Verm qui de pourreture naissent
Worms which from rot are-born
de mes comanz garder ne cessent;
of my commands keeping not cease
e mes sarpenz et mes couleuvres,
and my serpents and my adders
tuit s'estudient en mes euvres.
all themselves-apply in my works

Mais seus on, cui je fait avaie
But alone man for-whom I made had
trestouz les biens que je savaie;
all the goods that I knew
seus on, cui je faz e devis
alone man whom I make and devise
haut vers le ciel porter le vis;
high toward the heaven to-carry the face
seus on, que je fourme e faz naistre
alone man whom I form and make be-born
en la propre fourme son maistre;
in the very form (of-)his master
seus on, pour cui peine e labeur,
alone man for whom I-toil and labor
c'est la fins de tout mon labeur,
this-is the end of all my labor
n'il n'a pas, se je ne li done,
nor-he not-has at-all if I not to-him give
quant a la corporel persone,
as to the bodily person
ne de par cors ne de par membre,
neither on behalf-of body nor on behalf-of limb
qui li vaille une pome d'ambre,
which to-him may-be-worth an apple of-amber
ne quant a l'ame vraiement,
nor as to the-soul truly
fors une chose seulement:
except one thing only
il tient de mei, qui sui sa dame,
he holds from me who am his lady

treis forces, que de cors que d'ame,
three powers both of body and of-soul
car bien puis dire senz mentir:
for well I-can say without lying
jou faz estre, vivre e sentir.
I-him make be live and feel
Mout a li chaitis d'avantages,
Much has the wretch of-advantages
s'il vousist estre preuz e sages:
if-he would-wish to-be worthy and wise
de toutes les vertuz abonde
in all the virtues he-abounds
que Deus a mises en cet monde;
which God has put in this world
compainz est a toutes les choses
companion he-is to all the things
qui sont en tout le monde encloses,
which are in all the world enclosed
e de leur bontez parçonierres:
and of their goodnesses sharer
il a son estre avec les pierres,
he has his being with the stones
e vit avec les erbes drues,
and lives with the grasses thick
e sent avec les bestes mues;
and feels with the beasts dumb
encor peut il trop plus en tant
still can he exceedingly more in so-much
qu'il avec les anges entent.
that-he with the angels understands

Que vous puis je plus recenser?
What to-you can I more recount
Il a quanque l'en peut penser.
He has whatever one can think
C'est uns petiz mondes nouveaus.
This-is a little world new
Cist me fait pis que nus louveaus.
This-one to-me does worse than any wolf-cub
Senz faille, de l'entendement,
Without fail of the-understanding
quenois je bien que vraiement
know I well that truly
celui ne lui donai je mie;
that not to-him gave I at-all
la ne s'estent pas ma baillie.
there not itself-extends at-all my jurisdiction
Ne sui pas sage ne poissant
Not am-I at-all wise nor powerful
de faire rien si quenoissant.
of making anything so knowing
Onques ne fis rien pardurable,
Ever not I-made anything everlasting
quanque je faz est corrompable.
whatever I make is corruptible
Platons meïsmes le tesmoigne
Plato himself it witnesses
quant il pale de ma besoigne
when he speaks of my business
e des deus qui de mort n'ont garde:
and of-the gods who of death not-have fear

leur crierres, ce dit, les garde
their creator this he-says them keeps
e soutient pardurablement
and sustains everlastingly
par son vouleir tant seulement;
by his will so only
e se cil vouleirs nes tenist
and if that will not-them held
trestouz mourir les couvenist.
all die them it-would-behoove
Mi fait, ce dit, sont tuit soluble,
My deeds this he-says are all soluble
tant ai poeir povre e obnuble
so-much I-have power poor and clouded
au regart de la grant poissance
at-the regard of the great power
dou deu qui veit en sa presence
of-the god who sees in his presence
la trible temporalité
the triple temporality
souz un moment d'eternité.
under one moment of-eternity

Plato's God and the Incarnation

XXXVII

Nature cites Plato's creator telling the gods they are mortal by nature but everlasting by his will. Plato could not understand what a virgin's womb contained, the triune God made flesh, which happened without Nature, as Vergil's Sibyl and Albumasar foretold. All her labor was for man, yet he alone breaks her rules, and she will accuse him before God.

C'est li reis, c'est li empereres
This-is the king this-is the emperor
qui dit aus deus qu'il est leur peres.
who says to-the gods that-he is their father
Ce sevent cil qui Platon lisent,
This know those who Plato read
car les paroles teus i gisent;
for the words such there lie
au meins en est ce la sentence
at-the least thereof is this the sense
selonc le langage de France.
according-to the language of France
«Deu des deus don je sui faisierres,
Gods of-the gods whereof I am maker
vostres peres, vostres crierres,
your father your creator
e vous estes mes creatures
and you are my creatures
e mes euvres e mes faitures,
and my works and my makings
par nature estes corrompable,
by nature you-are corruptible

par ma volenté pardurable,
by my will everlasting
car ja riens n'iert fait par Nature,
for ever anything not-will-be made by Nature
combien qu'ele i mete grant cure,
however-much that-she there put great care
qui ne faille en quelque saison;
which not fail in some season
mais quanque par bone raison
but whatever by good reason
veaut Deus conjoindre e atremper,
wishes God to-conjoin and temper
forz e bons e sages senz per,
strong and good and wise without peer
ja ne voudra ne n'a volu
ever not he-will-wish nor not-has wished
que ce seit jamais dissolu;
that this be ever dissolved
ja n'i vaudra corrupcion.
ever not-there will-avail corruption
Don je faz tel conclusion:
Whence I make such conclusion
puis que vous començastes estre
since that you began to-be
par la volenté vostre maistre,
by the will (of-)your master
don fait estes e engendré,
whereby made you-are and engendered
par quei je vous tieng e tendrai,
by which I you hold and will-hold

n'estes pas de mortalité
not-you-are at-all of mortality
ne de corrupcion quité
nor of corruption quit
dou tout, que touz ne vous veïsse
of-the all that all not you I-would-see
mourir, se je ne vous tenisse.
die if I not you held
Par nature mourir pourreiz,
By nature die you-will-be-able
mais par mon vueil ja ne mourreiz;
but by my will ever not you-will-die
car mes vouleirs a seignourie
for my will has lordship
seur les liens de vostre vie,
over the bonds of your life
qui les composicions tienent
which the compositions hold
don pardurabletez vous vienent.»
whence everlastingnesses to-you come
C'est la sentence de la letre
This-is the sense of the letter
que Platons vost ou livre metre,
which Plato wished in-the book to-put
qui meauz de Deu paler osa;
who better of God to-speak dared

plus le prisa, plus l'alosa
more him prized more him-praised
qu'onques ne fist nus terriens
than-ever — did any earthly-one
des philosophes anciens.
of-the philosophers ancient
Si n'en pot il pas assez dire,
Yet not-thereof could he at-all enough say
car il ne peüst pas soufire 19120
for he not could at-all suffice
a bien parfaitement entendre
to well perfectly understand
ce qu'onques riens ne pot comprendre
this that-ever anything not could contain
fors li ventres d'une pucele.
except the womb of-a maiden
Mais, senz faille, il est veirs que cele
But without fail it is true that she
a cui li ventres en tendi 19125
to whom the womb thereby stretched
plus que Platons en entendi,
more than Plato thereof understood
car el sot des qu'el le portait,
for she knew since that-she him bore
don au porter se confortait,
whereof at-the bearing herself she-comforted
qu'il iert l'espere merveillable
that-he was the-sphere marvelous
qui ne peut estre terminable, 19130
which not can be terminable

qui par touz leus son centre lance,
which through all places its center launches
ne leu n'a la circonference;
nor place not-has the circumference
qu'il iert li merveilleus triangles
that-he was the marvelous triangle
don l'unité fait les treis angles,
whereof the-unity makes the three angles
ne li trei tout entierement
nor the three all entirely
ne font que l'un tant seulement;
not make but the-one so only
c'est li cercles trianguliers,
this-is the circle triangular
c'est li triangles circuliers
this-is the triangle circular
qui en la vierge s'ostela.
which in the virgin itself-lodged
N'en sot pas Platons jusque la;
Not-thereof knew at-all Plato up-to there
ne vit pas la trine unité
not he-saw at-all the trine unity
en cete simple trinité,
in this simple trinity
ne la deïté souveraine
nor the deity sovereign
afublee de pel humaine,
cloaked with skin human
c'est Deus qui crierres se nome.
this-is God who creator himself names

Cis fist l'entendement de l'ome,
This-one made the-understanding of the-man
e en faisant le li dona;
and in making it to-him gave
e cil si li guerredona
and he so him repaid
come mauvais, au dire veir,
as wicked to-the saying true
qu'il cuida puis Deu deceveir;
that-he thought then God to-deceive
mais il meïsmes se deçut,
but he himself himself deceived
don mi sires la mort reçut,
whereby my lord the death received
quant il, senz mei, prist char humaine,
when he without me took flesh human
pour le chaitif oster de peine.
for the wretch to-remove from pain
Senz mei, car je ne sai coment,
Without me for I not know how
fors qu'il peut tout par son comant;
except that-he can all by his command
ainz fui trop forment esbaïe
rather I-was exceedingly strongly astonished
quant il de la vierge Marie
when he of the virgin Mary
fu pour le chaitif en char nez,
was for the wretch in flesh born
e puis penduz touz encharnez;
and then hanged all incarnate

car par mei ne peut ce pas estre
for by me not can this at-all be
que riens puisse de vierge naistre.
that anything may of virgin be-born
Si fu jadis par maint prophete
So was formerly by many-a prophet
cete incarnacion retraite,
this incarnation related
e par juïs e par paiens,
and by Jews and by pagans
que meauz noz cueurs en apaiens,
that better our hearts thereby we-may-appease
e plus nous efforciens a creire
and more ourselves we-may-strive to believe
que la prophecie seit veire;
that the prophecy be true
car es bucoliques Virgile
for in-the bucolics (of-)Vergil
lisons cete voiz de Sebile,
we-read this voice of Sibyl
dou Saint Esperit enseignie:
by-the Holy Spirit taught
«Ja nous est nouvele lignie
Now to-us is new lineage
dou haut ciel ça jus enveiee,
from-the high heaven here below sent
pour aveier gent desveiee,
for to-guide folk astray

don li siecle de fer faudront
whereby the ages of iron will-fail
e cil d'or ou monde saudront.»
and those of-gold in-the world will-spring
Albumasar neïs tesmoigne,
Albumasar even witnesses
coment qu'il seüst la besoigne,
however that-he knew the business
que dedenz le virginal signe
that within the virginal sign
naistrait une pucele digne,
would-be-born a maiden worthy
qui sera, ce dit, vierge e mere,
who will-be this he-says virgin and mother
e qui alaitera son pere,
and who will-suckle her father
e ses mariz lez li sera
and her husband beside her will-be
qui ja point ne la touchera.
who ever at-all not her will-touch
Cete sentence peut saveir
This sentence can know
qui veaut Albumasar aveir,
who wishes Albumasar to-have
qu'el gist ou livre toute preste;
for-it lies in-the book all ready

don chascun an font une feste
whereof each year make a feast
genz crestienes en septembre,
folk Christian in September
qui tel nativité remembre.
which such nativity recalls
Mais tout quanque j'ai dit desus,
But all whatever I-have said above
ce set nostre sires Jesus,
this knows our lord Jesus
ai je pour ome labouré;
have I for man labored
pour le chaitif cet labour ai;
for the wretch this labor I-have
cist est la fins de toute m'euvre,
this-one is the end of all my-work
cist seus contre mes regles euvre,
this-one alone against my rules works
ne se tient de riens a paiez,
nor himself holds of anything for paid
li desleiaus, li reneiez;
the disloyal the renegade
n'est riens qui li puisse soufire.
not-is anything which him can suffice
Que vaut? Que pourrait l'en plus dire?
What avails What could one more say
Les eneurs que je li ai faites
The honors that I to-him have done
ne pourraient estre retraites,
not could be recounted

e il me refait tant de hontes
and he to-me does-in-turn so-many of shames
que ce n'est mesure ne contes.
that this not-is measure nor count
Beaus douz prestres, beaus chapelains,
Fair sweet priest fair chaplain
est il donques dreiz que je l'ains,
is it then right that I him-love
ne que plus li port reverence,
nor that more to-him I-bear reverence
quant je le truis de tel prouvance?
when I him find of such proof
Si m'aïst Deus li crucefis,
So me-help God the crucified
mout me repent don ome fis.
much myself I-repent that man I-made
Mais, par la mort que cil sofri
But by the death that he suffered
cui Judas le baisier ofri
to-whom Judas the kiss offered
e que Longis feri de lance!
and whom Longinus struck with lance
Je li conterai sa cheance
I to-him will-tell his fortune
devant Deu qui le me bailla,
before God who him to-me gave
quant a s'image le tailla,
when to his-image him he-shaped
puis qu'il me fait tant de contraire.
since that-he to-me does so-much of harm

Fame sui, si ne me puis taire,
Woman I-am so not myself I-can silence
ainz vueil des ja tout reveler;
rather I-wish from now all to-reveal
car fame ne peut riens celer;
for woman not can anything conceal
n'onques ne fu meauz laidengiez.
nor-ever not he-was better reviled
Mar s'est de mei tant estrangiez:
To-ill himself-is from me so-much estranged
si vice i seront recité,
his vices there will-be recited
e dirai de tout verité.
and I-will-tell of all truth

Man's Vices and the Pains of Hell

XXXVIII

Nature lists man's vices, from pride and murder to sodomy, and asks how he will face his maker. She describes the pains of hell: Ixion's wheel, Tantalus, Sisyphus, the Belides, and Tityus. She leaves his sins to God, except those Love complains of, and sends greetings to Love's host, all but False Seeming, and says she suspects Abstinence.

Orguilleus est, murtriers e lierres,
Proud he-is murderer and thief
fel, couveiteus, avers, trichierres,
cruel covetous miserly cheat
desesperez, glouz, mesdisanz,
despairing glutton slanderer

e haïneus, e despisanz,
and hateful and despising
mescreanz, envieus, mentierres,
misbelieving envious liar
parjurs, faussaires, fos, vantierres,
perjured forger fool boaster
e inconstanz, e foleiables,
and inconstant and foolish
ydolatres, desagreables,
idolater disagreeable
traïtres, e faus ypocrites,
traitor and false hypocrite
e pareceus, e sodomites;
and lazy and sodomite
briement tant est chaitis e nices
briefly so-much he-is wretched and silly
qu'il est sers a trestouz les vices,
that-he is serf to all the vices
e trestouz en sei les herberge.
and all in himself them lodges
Vez de queus fers li las s'enferge.
See with what irons the wretch himself-fetters
Vait il bien pourchaçant sa mort
Goes he well procuring his death
quant a teus mauvaistiez s'amort?
when to such wickednesses himself-he-clings

E puis que toutes choses deivent
And since that all things ought
retourner la don eus receivent
return there whence they receive
le comencement de leur estre,
the beginning of their being
quant on vendra devant son maistre,
when man will-come before his master
que toujourz, tant come il peüst,
whom always as-much as he could
servir e enourer deüst,
serve and honor he-ought
e sei de mauvaistié garder,
and himself from wickedness guard
coment l'osera regarder?
how him-will-he-dare to-look-at
E cil qui juiges en sera,
And he who judge thereof will-be
de quel ueil le regardera,
with what eye him will-look-at
quant vers lui s'iert si mal prouvez
when toward him himself-will-be so badly proved
qu'il iert en teus defauz trouvez,
that-he will-be in such defects found
li las, qui le cueur tant a lent
the wretch who the heart so-much has slow
qu'il n'a de bien faire talent?
that-he not-has of well doing desire

Ainz font au pis grant e meneur
Rather do at-the worst great and lesser
qu'il peuent, sauve leur eneur;
that-they can save their honor
e l'ont ainsinc juré, ce semble,
and it-have thus sworn this seems
par un acort trestuit ensemble.
by one accord all together
Si n'i est ele pas souvent
Yet not-there is it at-all often
a chascun sauve par couvent;
to each safe by covenant
ainz en receivent maint grant peine,
rather thereof receive many-a great pain
ou mort, ou grant honte mondaine.
or death or great shame worldly
Mais li las, que peut il penser,
But the wretch what can he think
s'il veaut ses pechiez recenser,
if-he wishes his sins to-recount
quant il vendra devant le juige
when he will-come before the judge
qui toutes choses peise e juige,
who all things weighs and judges
e tout a dreit, senz faire tort,
and all at right without doing wrong
ne riens n'i ganchist ne n'estort?
nor anything not-there swerves nor not-twists

Quel guerredon peut il atendre
What recompense can he expect
fors la hart a lui mener pendre
except the rope to him to-lead to-hang
au doulereus gibet d'enfer,
to-the sorrowful gibbet of-hell
ou sera pris e mis en fer,
where he-will-be taken and put in iron
rivez en aneaus pardurables,
riveted in rings everlasting
devant le prince des deables?
before the prince of-the devils
Ou sera bouliz en chaudieres,
Or will-be boiled in cauldrons
ou rostiz devant e darrieres
or roasted before and behind
ou sus charbons ou sus greïlles,
either on coals or on grills
ou tourneiez a granz chevilles,
or turned with great pegs
come Ixion, a trenchanz roes,
like Ixion on cutting wheels
que maufé tournent a leur poes.
which devils turn with their paws
Ou mourra de seif es palus
Or will-die of thirst in-the marshes
e de fain avec Tantalus,
and of hunger with Tantalus
qui toujourz en l'eve se baigne,
who always in the-water himself bathes

mais, combien que seif le destreigne,
but however-much that thirst him constrain
ja n'aprouchera de sa bouche
ever not-will-approach to his mouth
l'eve qui au menton li touche.
the-water which at-the chin to-him touches
Quant plus la suit e plus s'abaisse,
When more it he-follows and more itself-lowers
e fain si fort le recompresse
and hunger so strongly him oppresses-in-turn
qu'il n'en peut estre assoagiez,
that-he not-thereof can be relieved
ainz meurt de fain touz enragiez;
rather dies of hunger all enraged
n'il ne repeut la pome prendre
nor-he not can-in-turn the apple take
qu'il veit toujourz a son nés pendre;
which-he sees always at his nose hang
car, quant plus a son bec l'enchauce,
for when more with his beak it-he-pursues
e la pome plus se rehauce.
and the apple more itself raises
Ou rolera la meule a terre
Or will-roll the millstone to ground
de la roche, e puis l'ira querre
from the rock and then it-will-go to-seek
e de rechief la rolera,
and once again it will-roll
ne jamais ce ne cessera,
nor ever this not will-cease

si con tu fais, las Sisyfus,
so as thou dost wretched Sisyphus
qui pour ce faire mis i fus.
who for this to-do put there wast
Ou le tonel senz fonz ira
Or the cask without bottom will-go
emplir, ne ja ne l'emplira,
to-fill nor ever not it-will-fill
si con font les Belidienes
so as do the Belides
pour leur folies ancienes.
for their follies ancient
Si resavez, beaus Genius,
So know-in-turn-you fair Genius
coment le gisier Ticius
how the gizzard (of-)Tityus
s'efforcent voutoir de mangier,
themselves-strive vultures of eating
ne riens nes en peut estrangier.
nor anything not-them thence can drive-away
Mout ra laienz d'autres granz peines
Many there-are-in-turn within of-other great pains
e felonesses e vilaines,
both wicked and vile
ou sera mis, espeir, li on
where will-be put perhaps the man
pour sofrir tribulacion
for to-suffer tribulation
a grant douleur, a grant haschiee,
with great grief with great torment

tant que j'en serai bien venchiee.
until that I-thereof will-be well avenged
Par fei li juiges devant diz,
By faith the judge before said
qui tout juige en faiz e en diz,
who all judges in deeds and in words
s'il fust tant seulement piteus,
if-he were so only merciful
bons fust, espeir, e deliteus
good would-be perhaps and delightful
li presteïz aus usuriers;
the lending to-the usurers
mais il est toujourz dreituriers,
but he is always righteous
par quei trop fait a redouter.
by which exceedingly he-is to fear
Mal se fait en pechié bouter.
Ill oneself does in sin to-thrust
Senz faille, de touz les pechiez
Without fail of all the sins
don li chaitis est entechiez,
whereof the wretch is stained
a Deu les lais, bien s'en chevisse,
to God them I-leave well himself-thereof let-him-manage
quant li plaira si l'en punisse;
when to-him it-will-please so him-thereof let-him-punish
mais pour ceus don Amours se plaint,
but for those whereof Love himself complains
car j'en ai bien oï le plaint,
for I-thereof have well heard the complaint

je meïsmes, tant con je puis,
I myself as-much as I can
m'en plaing e m'en dei plaindre, puis
myself-thereof I-complain and myself-thereof ought complain since
qu'il me reneient le treü
that-they to-me deny the tribute
que trestuit ome m'ont deü
which all men to-me-have owed
e toujourz deivent e devront,
and always owe and will-owe
tant com mes oustiz recevront.
as-long as my tools they-will-receive
Genius li bien empalez,
Genius the well spoken
en l'ost au deu d'Amours alez,
into the-host of-the god of-Love go
qui mout de mei servir se peine,
who much of me serving himself pains
e tant m'aime, j'en sui certaine,
and so-much me-loves I-thereof am certain
que par son franc cueur debonaire
that by his free heart gracious
plus se veaut vers mes euvres traire
more himself wishes toward my works to-draw
que ne fait fers vers aïmant;
than — does iron toward lodestone
dites lui que saluz li mant,
tell him that greetings to-him I-send
e a dame Venus m'amie,
and to lady Venus my-friend

puis a toute la baronie,
then to all the baronage
fors seulement a Faus Semblant, 19345
except only to False Seeming
pour qu'il s'aut jamais assemblant
provided that-he himself-go ever associating
avec les felons orguilleus,
with the wicked proud
les ypocrites perilleus,
the hypocrites perilous
des queus l'escriture recete
of-the which the-scripture relates
que ce sont li pseudo prophete. 19350
that these are the pseudo prophets
Si rai je mout soupeçoneuse
So in-turn-have I very suspect
Astenance d'estre orguilleuse,
Abstinence of-being proud
e d'estre a Faus Semblant semblable,
and of-being to False Seeming like
tout semble ele umble e charitable.
although seems she humble and charitable

Nature's Message, and Genius Departs

XXXIX

Nature will pardon False Seeming and Abstinence only if they help true lovers. She sends Genius to excommunicate those who oppose her and to give plenary pardon to those who multiply their lineages, dictates her sentence, and receives absolution and penance. Genius puts on secular clothes and flies to the host, where False Seeming has fled and Abstinence runs off at the sight of a priest.

Faus Semblanz, s'il plus est trouvez
False Seeming if-he more is found
avec teus traïteurs prouvez,
with such traitors proved
ja ne seit en ma saluance,
ever not be-he in my greeting
ne li ne s'amie Astenance:
neither him nor his-friend Abstinence
trop font teus genz a redouter;
exceedingly are such folk to fear
bien les deüst Amours bouter
well them ought Love push
hors de son ost, s'il li pleüst,
out of his host if-it him pleased
se certainement ne seüst
if certainly not he-knew
qu'il li fussent si necessaire
that-they to-him were so necessary
qu'il ne peüst senz aus riens faire;
that-he not could without them anything do

mais s'il sont avocat pour eus
but if-they are advocates for them
en la cause aus fins amoureus,
in the cause of-the true lovers
don leur mal seient alegié,
whereby their ills be relieved
cet barat leur pardone gié.
this fraud to-them pardon I
Alez, amis, au deu d'Amours
Go friend to-the god of-Love
porter mes plainz e mes clamours,
to-carry my complaints and my clamors
non pas pour ce qu'il dreit m'en face,
not at-all for this that-he right to-me-thereof do
mais qu'il se confort e soulace
but that-he himself comfort and solace
quant il orra cete nouvele,
when he will-hear this news
qui mout li devra estre bele
which much to-him will-have-to be fair
e a noz anemis grevaine,
and to our enemies grievous
e laist ester, ne li seit peine,
and let-him-leave be not to-him be-it pain
le soussi que mener l'en vei.
the care that lead him-thereby I-see

Dites li que la vous envei
Tell him that there you I-send
pour touz ceus escomenier
for all those to-excommunicate
qui nous veulent contrarier;
who us wish to-oppose
e pour assoudre les vaillanz
and for to-absolve the worthy
qui de bon cueur sont travaillanz
who with good heart are laboring
aus regles dreitement ensivre
at-the rules rightly to-follow
qui sont escrites en mon livre,
which are written in my book
e forment a ce s'estudient
and greatly to this themselves-apply
que leur lignages monteplient,
that their lineages they-multiply
e qui pensent de bien amer,
and who think of well loving
car jes dei touz amis clamer
for I-them ought all friends call
pour leur ames metre en delices;
for their souls to-put in delights
mais qu'il se gardent bien des vices
provided that-they themselves guard well from-the vices
que j'ai ci devant racontez;
which I-have here before recounted
qu'il effacent toutes bontez.
for-they efface all goodnesses

Pardon qui bien seit soufisanz
Pardon which well be sufficient
leur donez, non pas de dis anz,
to-them give not at-all of ten years
nou priseraient un denier,
not-it they-would-prize a penny
mais a toujourz pardon plenier
but for always pardon plenary
de trestout quanque fait avront
of all whatever done they-will-have
quant bien confessier s'en savront.
when well to-confess themselves-thereof they-will-know
Et quant en l'ost sereiz venuz,
And when into the-host you-will-be come
ou vous sereiz mout chiers tenuz,
where you will-be very dear held
puis que saluez les m'avreiz
after that greeted them for-me-you-will-have
si con saluer les savreiz,
so as to-greet them you-will-know-how
publiez leur en audience
publish to-them in audience
cet pardon e cete sentence
this pardon and this sentence
que je vueil que ci seit escrite.»
which I wish that here be written
Lors escrit cil, e cele dite,
Then writes he and she dictates
puis la seele e la li baille,
then it seals and it to-him gives

e li prie que tost s'en aille;
and him prays that soon himself-thence he-go
mais qu'ele seit anceis assoste
provided that-she be before absolved
de ce qui son penser li oste.
of this which her thinking from-her removes
Si tost come ot esté confesse
So soon as had been confessed
dame Nature la deesse,
lady Nature the goddess
si con la lei veaut e li us,
so as the law wills and the usage
li vaillanz prestres Genius
the worthy priest Genius
tantost l'assout e si li done
at-once her-absolves and so to-her gives
penitence avenant e bone,
penance fitting and good
selonc la grandeur dou forfait
according-to the greatness of-the misdeed
qu'il pensait qu'ele eüst forfait;
which-he thought that-she had misdone
enjoinst li qu'ele demourast
enjoined her that-she remain
dedenz sa forge e labourast
within her forge and labor
si come ainz labourer soulait
so as before to-labor she-was-wont
quant de neient ne se doulait,
when of nothing not herself she-grieved

e son servise adès feïst
and her service always do
tant qu'autre conseil i meïst
until that-other counsel there put
li reis qui tout peut adrecier
the king who all can set-right
e tout faire e tout depecier.
and all make and all break-apart
«Sire», dist ele, «volentiers.
Lord said she willingly
— E je m'en vois endementiers»,
And I myself-thence go meanwhile
fait Genius, «plus que le cours,
says Genius more than the run
pour faire aus fins amanz secours;
for to-give to-the true lovers succor
mais que desafublez me seie
provided that unclothed myself I-be
de cete chasuble de seie,
of this chasuble of silk
de cete aube e de cet rochet.»
of this alb and of this rochet
Lors va tout pendre a un crochet,
Then goes all to-hang on a hook
e vest sa robe seculiere
and puts-on his robe secular
qui meins encombreuse li iere,
which less cumbersome to-him was

si con s'il alast queroler;
so as if-he went to-carol
e prent eles pour tost voler.
and takes wings for soon to-fly
Lors remaint Nature en sa forge,
Then remains Nature in her forge
prent ses marteaus e fiert e forge
takes her hammers and strikes and forges
trestout ausinc come devant;
all just as before
e Genius plus tost que vent
and Genius more swiftly than wind
ses eles bat e plus n'atent.
his wings beats and more not-waits
En l'ost s'en est venuz atant,
Into the-host himself-thence is come thereupon
mais Faus Semblant n'i treuve pas:
but False Seeming not-there he-finds at-all
partiz s'en iert plus que le pas
departed himself-thence was more than the pace
des lors que la vieille fu prise
from then that the old-woman was taken
qui m'ouvri l'uis de la pourprise
who for-me-opened the-door of the enclosure
e tant m'ot fait avant aler
and so-much me-had made forward go
qu'a Bel Acueil me lut paler.
that-to Fair Welcome to-me it-was-allowed to-speak

Il n'i vost onques plus atendre,
He not-there wished ever more to-wait
ainz s'en foï senz congié prendre.
rather himself-thence fled without leave taking
Mais, senz faille, c'est chose atainte,
But without fail this-is thing attained
il treuve Astenance Contrainte,
he finds Abstinence Constrained
qui de tout son poeir s'apreste
who with all her power herself-prepares
de courre après a si grant heste,
of running after with so great haste
quant el veit le prestre venir,
when she sees the priest come
qu'enviz la peüst l'en tenir;
that-hardly her could one hold
car o prestre ne se meïst,
for with priest not herself she-would-put
pour quei nus autres la veïst,
provided that any other her saw
qui li donast quatre besanz,
who to-her gave four bezants
se Faus Semblanz ne fust presenz.
if False Seeming not were present

Genius Arrayed, and the Sentence

XL

Genius greets the barons, Love vests him as a bishop, and Venus puts a burning candle in his hand. From a scaffold he reads Nature's sentence: those who scorn her works are excommunicated, and those who labor for her will go flowering into paradise. He curses those who will not use the tools Nature gave them, which God himself carved.

Genius, senz plus de demeure,
Genius without more of delay
en icele meïsmes eure,
in that same hour
si come il dut touz les salue;
so as he ought all them greets
e l'achaison de sa venue,
and the-cause of his coming
senz riens metre en oubli, leur conte.
without anything putting in oblivion to-them tells
Je ne vous quier ja faire conte
I not to-you seek ever to-make account
de la grant joie qu'il li firent
of the great joy that-they to-him made
quant ces nouveles entendirent;
when these news they-heard
ainz vueil ma parole abregier
rather I-wish my word to-abridge
pour voz oreilles alegier,
for your ears to-relieve
car maintes feiz cil qui preesche,
for many times he who preaches

quant briement ne se despeesche,
when briefly not himself he-dispatches
en fait les auditeurs aler
thereby makes the hearers go
par trop prolixement paler.
by too prolixly speaking
Tantost li deus d'Amours afuble
At-once the god of-Love cloaks
a Genius une chasuble;
on Genius a chasuble
anel li baille e croce e mitre
ring to-him gives and crosier and miter
plus clere que cristal ne vitre:
more clear than crystal or glass
n'i quierent autre parement,
not-there they-seek other adornment
tant ont grant entalentement
so-much they-have great eagerness
d'oïr cele sentence lire.
of-hearing that sentence read
Venus, qui ne cessait de rire,
Venus who not ceased of laughing
ne ne se poait tenir queie,
nor not herself could hold quiet
tant par estait jolie e gaie,
so very was merry and gay
pour plus enforcier la natheme,
for more to-strengthen the anathema
quant il avra feni son theme,
when he will-have finished his theme

li met ou poing un ardent cierge,
to-him puts in-the fist a burning candle
qui n'estait pas de cire vierge.
which not-was at-all of wax virgin
Genius, senz plus terme metre,
Genius without more term putting
s'est lors, pour lire meauz la letre,
himself-is then for to-read better the letter
selonc les faiz devant contez,
according-to the deeds before told
seur un grant eschaufaut montez;
upon a great scaffold mounted
e li baron sistrent par terre,
and the barons sat on ground
n'i voudrent autres sieges querre;
not-there they-wished other seats to-seek
e cil sa chartre leur despleie,
and he his charter to-them unfolds
e sa main entour sei tourneie
and his hand around himself turns
e fait signe e dit qu'il se taisent;
and makes sign and says that-they themselves keep-silent
e cil, cui ses paroles plaisent,
and they whom his words please
s'entreguignent e s'entreboutent:
each-other-wink and each-other-nudge
atant s'apaisent, si escoutent,
thereupon themselves-quiet so listen

e par teus paroles comence
and by such words begins
la difinitive sentence:
the definitive sentence
«De l'auctorité de Nature,
By the-authority of Nature
qui de tout le monde a la cure,
who of all the world has the care
come vicaire e conestable
as vicar and constable
a l'empereeur pardurable
to the-emperor everlasting
qui siet en la tour souveraine
who sits in the tower sovereign
de la noble cité mondaine,
of the noble city worldly
don il fist Nature menistre,
whereof he made Nature minister
qui touz les biens i amenistre
who all the goods there administers
par l'influence des esteles,
by the-influence of-the stars
car tout est ordené par eles
for all is ordained by them
selonc les dreiz emperiaus
according-to the rights imperial
don Nature est oficiaus,
whereof Nature is official

qui toutes choses a fait naistre
who all things has made be-born
puis que cist mondes vint en estre,
since that this world came into being
e leur dona terme ensement
and to-them gave limit likewise
de grandeur e d'acreissement;
of size and of-increase
n'onques ne fist riens pour neient
nor-ever not made anything for nothing
souz le ciel qui va tourneiant
under the heaven which goes turning
entour la terre senz demeure
around the earth without delay
si haut desouz come deseure,
so high below as above
ne ne cesse ne nuit ne jour,
nor not ceases neither night nor day
mais toujourz tourne senz sejour,
but always turns without rest
seient tuit escomenié
be all excommunicated
li desleial, li renié,
the disloyal the renegades
e condanné senz nul respit,
and condemned without any respite
qui les euvres ont en despit,
who the works have in scorn

seit de grant gent, seit de menue,
be-it of great folk be-it of small
par cui Nature est soutenue.
by which Nature is sustained
E cil qui de toute sa force
And he who with all his force
de Nature garder s'efforce,
of Nature keeping himself-strives
e qui de bien amer se peine, 19535
and who of well loving himself pains
senz nule pensee vilaine,
without any thought churlish
mais qui leiaument i travaille,
but who loyally there labors
flouriz en paradis s'en aille;
flowering into paradise himself-thence he-may-go
mais qu'il se face bien confès,
provided that-he himself make well confessed
j'en preing seur mei trestout son fais 19540
I-thereof take upon me all his burden
de tel poeir con jou puis prendre,
of such power as I-it can take
ja pardon n'en portera mendre.
ever pardon not-thereof he-will-carry lesser
Mar leur ait Nature doné,
To-ill to-them has Nature given
aus faus don j'ai ci sarmoné,
to-the false whereof I-have here preached
grefes, tables, marteaus, enclumes, 19545
styluses tablets hammers anvils

selonc ses leis e ses coustumes,
according-to her laws and her customs
e sos a pointes bien agües
and plowshares with points well sharp
a l'usage de ses charrues,
for the-use of her plows
e jaschieres, non pas perreuses,
and fallows not at-all stony
mais planteïves e erbeuses,
but fertile and grassy
qui d'arer e de trefoïr
which of-plowing and of digging
ont mestier, qui en veaut joïr,
have need who thereof wishes to-enjoy
quant il n'en veulent labourer
when they not-therewith wish to-labor
pour li servir e enourer,
for her to-serve and honor
ainz veulent Nature destruire
rather wish Nature to-destroy
quant ses enclumes veulent fuire,
when her anvils they-wish to-flee
e ses tables e ses jaschieres,
and her tablets and her fallows
qu'el fist precieuses e chieres,
which-she made precious and dear
pour les choses continuer,
for the things to-continue
que Mort ne les peüst tuer.
that Death not them could kill

Bien deüssent aveir grant honte
Well ought have great shame
cil desleial don je vous conte
those disloyal whereof I to-you tell
quant il ne deignent la main metre
when they not deign the hand to-put
en tables pour escrivre letre,
on tablets for to-write letter
ne pour faire empreinte qui pere;
nor for to-make imprint which appears
mout sont d'entencion amere,
much they-are of-intention bitter
qu'eus devendront toutes moussues,
for-they will-become all mossy
s'eus sont en oiseuse tenues;
if-they are in idleness held
quant, senz cop de martel ferir,
when without blow of hammer striking
laissent les enclumes perir,
they-let the anvils perish
or s'i peut la roïlle embatre
now itself-there can the rust thrust
senz oïr marteler ne batre;
without hearing hammer nor beat
les jaschieres, qui n'i refiche
the fallows if-one not-there thrusts-again
le soc, redemourront en friche.
the plowshare will-remain-in-turn in fallow
Vis les puisse l'en enfoïr,
Alive them may one bury

quant les oustiz osent foïr
when the tools they-dare to-flee
que Deus de sa main entailla
which God with his hand carved
quant a ma dame les bailla,
when to my lady them he-gave
qui pour ce les li vost baillier
who for this them to-her wished to-give
qu'el seüst auteus entaillier
that-she knew such to-carve
pour doner estres pardurables
for to-give beings everlasting
aus creatures corrompables.
to-the creatures corruptible

Those Who Will Not Plow

XLI

If all men refused for sixty years, Genius says, mankind would end, and he cannot answer why God would will virginity for some and not for all. He curses those who will not write on Nature's tablets, forge on her anvils, or plow straight furrows, and those who follow Orpheus. He urges the barons to stir, leap, and put all their tools to work.

Mout euvrent mal, e bien le semble,
Much they-work ill and well it seems
car, se trestuit li ome ensemble
for if all the men together
seissante anz foïr les voulaient,
sixty years to-flee them wished

jamais ome n'engendreraient;
ever man not-they-would-engender
e se ce plaist a Deu, senz faille,
and if this pleases to God without fail
don veaut il que li mondes faille,
then wishes he that the world fail
ou les terres demourront nues
or the lands will-remain naked
a peupleier aus bestes mues,
to people for-the beasts dumb
s'il nouveaus omes ne faisait,
if-he new men not made
se refaire les li plaisait,
if to-remake them to-him pleased
ou ceus feïst resouciter
or those he-made revive
pour la terre arriers abiter.
for the earth again to-inhabit
E se cil vierge se tenaient
And if those virgin themselves held
seissante anz, de rechief faudraient,
sixty years once again they-would-fail
si que, se ce li devait plaire,
so that if this to-him ought please
toujourz les avrait a refaire.
always them he-would-have to remake

E s'il iert qui dire vousist
And if-it were who to-say would-wish
que Deus le vouleir en tousist
that God the will thereof took-away
a l'un par grace, a l'autre non;
from the-one by grace from the-other not
pour ce qu'il a si bon renon,
for this that-he has so good renown
n'onques ne cessa de bien faire,
nor-ever not ceased of well doing
don li redevrait il bien plaire
then to-him ought-in-turn it well please
que chascuns autretel feïst
that each likewise did
si qu'autel grace en li meïst.
so that-such grace in him he-put
Si ravrai ma conclusion
So I-will-have-in-turn my conclusion
que tout aille a perdicion.
that all go to perdition
Je ne sai pas a ce respondre,
I not know at-all to this to-answer
se fei n'i veaut creance espondre;
if faith not-there wishes belief to-expound
car Deus en leur comencement
for God in their beginning
les aime touz oniement,
them loves all equally

e done raisonables ames
and gives reasonable souls
ausinc aus omes come aus fames.
as-well to-the men as to-the women
Si crei qu'il voudrait de chascune,
So I-believe that-he would-wish of each
non pas tant seulement de l'une,
not at-all so only of the-one
que le meilleur chemin tenist
that the best road it-held
par quei plus tost a li venist.
by which more soon to him it-came
S'il veaut donques que vierges vive
If-he wishes then that virgin live
aucuns pour ce que meauz le sive,
some-one for this that better him he-follow
des autres pour quei nou vourra?
of-the others for what not-it will-he-wish
Quele raison l'en destourra?
What reason him-thence will-turn-aside
Don semble il qu'il ne li chausist
Then seems it that-it not to-him mattered
se generacion fausist.
if generation failed
Qui voudra respondre respoigne,
Who will-wish to-answer let-him-answer
je ne sai plus de la besoigne;
I not know more of the business

viegnent devin qui en devinent,
let-come diviners who thereof divine
qui de ce deviner ne finent.
who of this divining not cease
Mais cil qui des grefes n'escrivent
But those who with-the styluses not-write
par cui li mortel toujourz vivent
by which the mortals always live
es beles tables precieuses
on-the fair tablets precious
que Nature pour estre oiseuses
which Nature for to-be idle
ne leur avait pas aprestees,
not for-them had at-all prepared
ainz leur avait pour ce prestees
rather to-them had for this lent
que tuit i fussent escrivain,
that all there were writers
con tuit e toutes en vivain;
as all and all-women thereby we-live
cil qui les deus marteaus receivent
those who the two hammers receive
e n'en forgent si come il deivent
and not-therewith forge so as they ought
dreitement seur la dreite enclume;
rightly upon the right anvil
cil que si leur pechiez enfume,
those whom so their sin blinds-with-smoke
par leur orgueil qui les desreie,
by their pride which them disorders

qu'il despisent la dreite reie
that-they despise the right furrow
dou champ bel e planteüreus,
of-the field fair and fertile
e vont come maleüreus
and go as unfortunate
arer en la terre deserte,
to-plow in the land desert
ou leur semence vait a perte,
where their seed goes to loss
ne ja n'i tendront dreite rue,
nor ever not-there will-hold straight street
ainz vont bestournant la charrue,
rather go turning-awry the plow
e conferment leur regles males
and confirm their rules evil
par excepcions anormales,
by exceptions abnormal
quant Orpheüs veulent ensivre,
when Orpheus they-wish to-follow
qui ne sot arer ne escrivre
who not knew to-plow nor write
ne forgier en la dreite forge,
nor forge in the right forge
penduz seit il par mi la gorge!
hanged be he by mid the throat
Quant teus regles leur controuva,
When such rules for-them he-invented
vers Nature mal se prouva.
toward Nature badly himself he-proved

Cil qui tel maistresse despisent,
Those who such mistress despise
quant a rebours ses regles lisent,
when in reverse her rules they-read
e qui pour le dreit sen entendre
and who for the right sense to-understand
par le bon chief nes veulent prendre,
by the good end not-them wish to-take
ainz parvertissent l'escriture
rather pervert the-writing
quant il vienent a la lecture:
when they come to the reading
o tout l'escomeniement,
with all the-excommunication
qui touz les mete a dannement,
which all them put to damnation
puis que la se veulent aerdre,
since that there themselves they-wish to-cling
ainz qu'il muirent puissent il perdre
before that-they die may they lose
e l'aumosniere e les estalles
both the-purse and the stones
don il ont signe d'estre malles!
whereby they have sign of-being males
Perte leur viegne des pendanz
Loss to-them come of-the pendants
a quei l'aumosniere est pendanz!
by which the-purse is hanging

Les marteaus dedenz estachiez
The hammers within attached
puissent il aveir arachiez!
may they have uprooted
Li grefe leur seient tolu,
The styluses from-them be taken
quant escrivre n'en ont volu
when to-write not-therewith they-have wished
dedenz les precieuses tables
within the precious tablets
qui leur estaient couvenables!
which to-them were fitting
E de charrues e de sos
And of plows and of plowshares
s'il n'en erent a dreit, les os
if-they not-therewith plow at right the bones
puissent il aveir depeciez,
may they have broken
senz estre jamais redreciez!
without being ever set-right
Tuit cil qui ceus voudront ensivre
All those who these will-wish to-follow
a grant honte puissent il vivre!
in great shame may they live
Li leur pechiez orz e orribles
The their sin foul and horrible
leur seit doulereus e penibles,
to-them be sorrowful and painful

qui par touz leus fuster les face,
which through all places beat them may-make
si que l'en les veie en la face!
so that one them see in the face
Pour Deu, seigneur, vous qui vivez,
For God lords you who live
gardez que teus genz n'ensivez;
take-care that such folk not-you-follow
seiez es euvres natureus
be in-the works natural
plus vistes que nus escureus,
more quick than any squirrel
e plus legiers e plus mouvanz
and more light and more moving
que ne puet estre oiseaus ou venz;
than — can be bird or wind
ne perdez pas cet bon pardon:
not lose at-all this good pardon
trestouz voz pechiez vous pardon,
all your sins to-you I-pardon
pour tant que bien i travailliez.
for so-much that well there you-labor
Remuez vous, tripez, sailliez,
Stir yourselves hop leap
ne vous laissiez pas refredir
not yourselves let at-all grow-cold
par trop voz membres entedir;
by too-much your limbs grow-numb

metez touz voz oustiz en euvre;
put all your tools in work
assez s'eschaufe qui bien euvre. 19700
much himself-warms who well works

Plow, Barons: The Three Sisters

XLII

Genius tells the barons to plow, spur their horses, goad their oxen, and rest only to begin again. Cadmus sowed a serpent's teeth and peopled Thebes, and they should sow as well. Clotho and Lachesis help them, but Atropos cuts every thread, so they must multiply faster than she cuts. She feeds Cerberus with bodies and souls, and the three Furies live on his leavings.

Arez, pour Deu, baron, arez,
Plow for God barons plow
e voz lignages reparez;
and your lineages repair
se ne pensez forment d'arer,
if not you-think greatly of-plowing
n'est riens qui les puist reparer.
not-is anything which them can repair
Secourciez vous bien par devant, 19705
Tuck-up yourselves well by front
ausinc com pour cuillir le vent;
just as for to-catch the wind
ou, s'il vous plaist, tuit nu seiez,
or if-it you pleases all naked be
mais trop freit ne trop chaut n'aiez;
but too cold nor too hot not-have

levez aus deus mains toutes nues
lift with-the two hands all naked
les manchereaus de voz charrues;
the handles of your plows
forment aus braz les soutenez
strongly with-the arms them sustain
e dou soc bouter vous penez
and with-the plowshare to-thrust yourselves pain
reidement en la dreite veie,
stiffly in the right way
pour meauz afonder en la reie.
for better to-sink in the furrow
E les chevaus devant alanz,
And the horses before going
pour Deu ne les laissiez ja lenz:
for God not them let ever slow
asprement les esperonez
sharply them spur
e les plus granz cos leur donez
and the most great blows to-them give
que vous onques doner pourreiz,
that you ever give will-be-able
quant plus parfont arer vourreiz.
when more deep to-plow you-will-wish
E les beus aus testes cornues
And the oxen with-the heads horned
acouplez aus jous des charrues,
couple to-the yokes of-the plows
resveilliez les aus aguillons;
awaken them with-the goads

a noz bienfaiz vous acuillons.
to our benefits you we-welcome
Se bien les piquiez e souvent,
If well them you-prick and often
meauz en arereiz par couvent.
better thereby you-will-plow by covenant
E quant avreiz aré assez
And when you-will-have plowed enough
tant que d'arer sereiz lassez,
so-much that of-plowing you-will-be tired
que la besoigne a ce vendra
that the business to this will-come
que reposer vous couvendra,
that rest you will-behoove
car chose senz reposement
for thing without resting
ne peut pas durer longuement,
not can at-all last long
ne ne pourreiz recomencier
nor not you-will-be-able begin-again
tantost pour l'euvre ravancier,
at-once for the-work to-advance
dou vouleir ne seiez pas las.
of-the will not be at-all weary
Cadmus, au dit dame Palas,
Cadmus at-the word (of-)lady Pallas
de terre ara plus d'un arpent,
of land plowed more than-an acre
e sema les denz d'un sarpent,
and sowed the teeth of-a serpent

don chevalier armé saillirent,
whence knights armed sprang
qui tant entr'aus se combatirent
who so-much among-themselves themselves fought
que tuit en la place moururent,
that all in the place died
fors cinc qui si compaignon furent,
except five who his companions were
e li voudrent secours doner
and to-him wished succor to-give
quant il dut les murs maçoner
when he was-to the walls build
de Thebes, don il fu fondierres.
of Thebes whereof he was founder
Cist assistrent o lui les pierres,
These set with him the stones
e li peuplerent sa cité,
and for-him peopled his city
qui est de grant antiquité.
which is of great antiquity
Mout fist Cadmus bone semence,
Much made Cadmus good sowing
qui son peuple ainsinc li avance:
which his people thus for-him advances
se vous ausinc bien comenciez,
if you as well begin
voz lignages mout avanciez.
your lineages much you-advance

Si ravez vous deus avantages
So have-in-turn you two advantages
mout granz a sauver voz lignages:
very great to save your lineages
se le tierz estre ne volez,
if the third to-be not you-wish
mout avez les sens afolez.
much you-have the senses maddened
Si n'avez qu'un seul nuisement:
Yet not-you-have but-one sole harm
defendez vous proeusement;
defend yourselves valiantly
d'une part estes assailli:
on-one side you-are assailed
trei champion sont mout failli,
three champions are very craven
e bien ont deservi a batre
and well have deserved to beat
s'il ne peuent le quart abatre.
if-they not can the fourth beat-down
Treis sereurs sont, se nou savez,
Three sisters there-are if not-it you-know
don les deus a secours avez;
whereof the two for succor you-have
la tierce seulement vous grieve,
the third only you grieves
qui toutes les vies abrieve.
who all the lives shortens

Sachiez que mout vous reconforte
Know that much you comforts
Cloto, qui la quenoille porte,
Clotho who the distaff carries
e Lachesis, qui les fils tire;
and Lachesis who the threads draws
mais Atropos ront e descire
but Atropos breaks and tears
quanque ces deus peuent filer.
whatever these two can spin
Atropos vous bee a guiler:
Atropos you aims to trick
cete, qui parfont ne fourra,
this-one who deep not will-dig
touz voz lignages enfourra;
all your lineages will-bury
e vait espiant vous meïsmes.
and goes spying you yourselves
Onc peeur beste ne veïsmes.
Ever worse beast not we-saw
N'avez nul anemi graigneur.
Not-you-have any enemy greater
Seigneur, merci; merci, seigneur;
Lords mercy mercy lords
souviegne vous de voz bons peres
may-remind you of your good fathers
e de voz ancienes meres;
and of your ancient mothers
selonc leur faiz les voz ligniez;
according-to their deeds the yours align

gardez que vous ne forligniez.
take-care that you not degenerate
Qu'ont il fait? Prenez vous i garde.
What-have they done Take you there heed
S'il est qui leur proece esgarde,
If-it is who their prowess regards
il se sont si bien defendu
they themselves are so well defended
qu'il vous ont cet estre rendu;
that-they to-you have this being rendered
se ne fust leur chevalerie,
if not were their chivalry
vous ne fussiez pas ore en vie;
you not would-be at-all now in life
mout orent de vous grant pitié.
much they-had of you great pity
Par amour e par amitié
By love and by friendship
pensez des autres qui vendront,
think of-the others who will-come
qui voz ligniees maintendront.
who your lineages will-maintain
Ne vous laissiez pas desconfire;
Not yourselves let at-all defeat
grefes avez: pensez d'escrire.
styluses you-have think of-writing
N'aiez pas les braz enmouflez,
Not-have at-all the arms mittened
martelez, forgiez e souflez;
hammer forge and blow

aidiez Cloto e Lachesis,
help Clotho and Lachesis
si que, se des fils cope sis
so that if of-the threads cuts six
Atropos, qui tant est vilaine,
Atropos who so-much is churlish
qu'il en resaille une dozaine.
that-it thence leap-in-turn a dozen
Pensez de vous monteplier,
Think of yourselves multiplying
si pourreiz ainsinc conchier
so you-will-be-able thus befoul
la felonesse, la ruvesche,
the wicked the perverse
Atropos, qui tout empeesche.
Atropos who all hinders
Cete lasse, cete chaitive,
This wretch this wretched
qui contre les vies estrive,
who against the lives strives
e des morz a le cueur si baut,
and of-the deaths has the heart so glad
nourrist Cerberus le ribaut.
nourishes Cerberus the rascal
Qui tant desierre leur mourie
Who so-much desires their dying
qu'il en frit touz de lecherie,
that-he thereof fries all with gluttony

e de fain enragiez mourust
and of hunger enraged would-die
se la garce nou secourust;
if the wench not-him succored
car, s'el ne fust, il ne peüst
for if-she not were he not could
jamais trouver qui le peüst.
ever find who him could-feed
Cete de lui paistre ne cesse, 19815
This-one of him feeding not ceases
e, pour ce que soëf le paisse,
and for this that softly him she-feed
cist mastins li pent aus mameles,
this mastiff to-her hangs at-the breasts
qu'ele a tribles, non pas jumeles;
which-she has triple not at-all twin
ses treis groinz en son sein li muce,
his three snouts in her bosom to-her hides
e les groigneie e tire e suce; 19820
and them grunts and pulls and sucks
n'onc ne fu ne ja n'iert sevrez;
nor-ever not he-was nor ever not-will-be weaned
si ne quiert il estre abevrez
so not seeks he to-be watered
d'autre lait, ne ne li demande
with-other milk nor not of-her asks
estre peüz d'autre viande
to-be fed with-other food
fors seulement de cors e d'ames; 19825
except only with bodies and with-souls

e el li giete omes e fames
and she to-him throws men and women
a monceaus en sa trible gueule.
in heaps into his triple maw
Cete la li paist toute seule,
This-one it to-him feeds all alone
e toujourz emplir la li cuide;
and always to-fill it for-him she-thinks
mais el la treuve toujourz vuide,
but she it finds always empty
combien que de l'emplir se peine.
however-much that of it-filling herself she-pains
De son relief sont en grant peine
Of his leavings are in great pain
les treis ribaudes felonesses,
the three wanton-women wicked
des felonies vencherresses,
of-the felonies avengers
Alecto e Thesiphoné,
Alecto and Tisiphone
car de chascune le non ai;
for of each the name I-have
la tierce ra non Megera,
the third has-in-turn name Megaera
qui touz, s'el peut, vous mangera.
who all if-she can you will-eat

The Judges of Hell, and the Lamb's Park

XLIII

The Furies torment the dead before Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus. Genius bids the barons fight the vices Nature named, love loyally, and confess, and he tells them to repeat his sermon everywhere. Those who do will follow the Lamb, son of the virgin ewe, into a park where white sheep graze flowers as fresh at evening as at morning.

Ces treis en enfer vous atendent;
These three in hell you await
ceus lient, batent, fustent, pendent,
those they-bind beat cudgel hang
hurtent, hercent, escorchent, foulent,
strike harrow flay trample
neient, ardent, greïllent, boulent
drown burn grill boil
devant les treis prevoz laienz,
before the three provosts within
en plein consistoire seianz,
in full consistory sitting
ceus qui firent les felonies
those who did the felonies
quant il orent es cors les vies.
when they had in-the bodies the lives

Cist par leur tribulacions
These by their tribulations
estortent les confessions
extort the confessions
de touz les maus qu'il onques firent
of all the evils that-they ever did
des icele eure qu'il nasquirent.
from that hour that-they were-born
Devant aus touz li peuples tremble.
Before them all the people trembles
Si sui je trop coarz, ce semble,
So am I too cowardly this seems
se ces prevoz nomer ci n'os:
if these provosts to-name here not-I-dare
c'est Radamantus e Minos,
this-is Rhadamanthus and Minos
e li tierz, Eacus leur freres.
and the third Aeacus their brother
Jupiter a ces treis fu peres.
Jupiter to these three was father
Cist trei, si con l'en les renome,
These three so as one them names
furent au siecle si preudome,
were in-the world so worthy
e joustice si bien maintindrent
and justice so well maintained
que juige d'enfer en devindrent;
that judges of-hell thereby they-became

tel guerredon leur en rendi
such recompense to-them thereof rendered
Pluto, qui tant les atendi
Pluto who so-long them awaited
que les ames des cors partirent,
that the souls from-the bodies parted
ou cel ofice deservirent.
where that office they-deserved
Pour Deu, seigneur, que la n'ailliez, 19865
For God lords that there not-you-go
contre les vices batailliez
against the vices battle
que Nature, nostre maistresse,
which Nature our mistress
me vint ui conter a ma messe.
to-me came today to-tell at my mass
Touz les me dist, onc puis ne sis;
All them to-me she-told ever since not I-sat
vous en trouvereiz vint e sis, 19870
you thereof will-find twenty and six
plus nuisanz que vous ne cuidiez.
more harmful than you — think
E se vous estes bien vuidiez
And if you are well emptied
de l'ordure de touz ces vices,
of the-filth of all these vices
vous n'enterreiz jamais es lices
you not-will-enter ever into-the lists
des treis garces devant nomees, 19875
of-the three wenches before named

qui tant ont males renomees,
who so-much have evil renowns
ne ne craindreiz les juigemenz
nor not you-will-fear the judgments
des prevoz pleins de dannemenz.
of-the provosts full of damnations
Ces vices conter vous voudraie,
These vices to-tell to-you I-would-wish
mais d'outrage m'entremetraie.
but with-excess I-would-busy-myself
Assez briement les vous espose
Quite briefly them to-you expounds
li jolis Romanz de la Rose;
the merry Romance of the Rose
s'il vous plaist la les regardez,
if-it you pleases there them look-at
pour ce que d'aus meauz vous gardez.
for this that from-them better yourselves you-guard
Pensez de mener bone vie,
Think of leading good life
aut chascuns embracier s'amie,
let-go each to-embrace his-friend
e son ami chascune embrace
and her friend each-woman embrace
e baise e festeie e soulace.
and kiss and feast and solace
Se leiaument vous entramez,
If loyally you each-other-love
ja n'en devreiz estre blamez.
ever not-thereof you-will-have-to be blamed

E quant assez avreiz joé,
And when enough you-will-have played
si con je vous ai ci loé,
so as I to-you have here advised
pensez de vous bien confessier,
think of yourselves well confessing
pour bien faire e pour mal laissier,
for well to-do and for evil to-leave
e reclamez le deu celestre
and invoke the god celestial
que Nature reclaime a maistre:
whom Nature invokes as master
cil en la fin vous secourra
he in the end you will-succor
quant Atropos vous enfourra.
when Atropos you will-bury
Cil est saluz de cors e d'ame.
He is salvation of body and of-soul
C'est li beaus miroers ma dame.
This-is the fair mirror (of-)my lady
Ja ma dame riens ne seüst
Ever my lady anything not would-know
se ce bel miroer n'eüst.
if this fair mirror not-she-had
Cil la gouverne, cil la regle;
He her governs he her rules
ma dame n'a point d'autre regle;
my lady not-has at-all of-other rule

quanqu'ele set il li aprist
whatever-she knows he her taught
quant a chamberiere la prist.
when as chambermaid her he-took
Or vueil, seigneur, que cet sarmon
Now I-wish lords that this sermon
mot a mot, si con jou sarmon,
word for word so as I-it preach
e ma dame ainsinc le vous mande,
and my lady thus it to-you sends
que chascuns si bien i entende,
that each so well there attend
car l'en n'a pas toujourz son livre,
for one not-has at-all always his book
si rest uns granz enuiz d'escrivre,
so is-in-turn a great trouble of-writing
que tout par cueur le reteigniez
that all by heart it you-retain
si qu'en quelque leu qu'ous veigniez,
so that-in whatever place that-you come
par bours, par chasteaus, par citez
through boroughs through castles through cities
e par viles le recitez,
and through towns it recite
e par iver e par esté,
and through winter and through summer
a ceus qui ci n'ont pas esté.
to those who here not-have at-all been

Bon fait retenir la parole
Good makes to-retain the word
quant ele vient de bone escole,
when it comes from good school
e meilleur la fait raconter;
and better it makes to-relate
mout en peut l'en en pris monter.
much thereby can one in worth mount
Ma parole est mout vertueuse;
My word is very powerful
ele est cent tanz plus precieuse
it is a-hundred times more precious
que safir, rubiz ne balai.
than sapphire ruby nor balas
Beau seigneur, ma dame en sa lei
Fair lords my lady in her law
a mestier de preescheeurs
has need of preachers
pour chastier les pecheeurs
for to-chastise the sinners
qui de ses regles se desveient,
who from her rules themselves stray
que tenir e garder devaient.
which hold and keep they-ought
E se vous ainsinc preeschiez,
And if you thus preach
ja ne sereiz empeeschiez,
ever not you-will-be hindered
selonc mon dit e mon acort,
according-to my word and my accord

mais que li faiz au dit s'acort,
provided that the deed with-the word itself-accord
d'entrer ou parc dou champ joli
from-entering into-the park of-the field merry
ou les berbiz conduit o li,
where the sheep leads with him
saillant devant par les erbiz,
leaping before through the pastures
li fiz de la vierge berbiz,
the son of the virgin ewe
o toute sa blanche toison,
with all his white fleece
emprès cui, non pas a foison,
after whom not at-all in abundance
mais a compaignie escherie,
but in company scanty
par l'estreite sente serie,
by the-narrow path peaceful
qui toute est flourie e erbue,
which all is flowered and grassy
tant est po marchiee e batue,
so-much it-is little trodden and beaten
s'en vont les berbietes blanches,
themselves-thence go the little-ewes white
bestes debonaires e franches,
beasts gracious and noble
qui l'erbete broustent e paissent,
which the-little-grass browse and graze
e les flouretes qui la naissent.
and the little-flowers which there spring

Mais sachiez qu'eus ont la pasture
But know that-they have the pasture
de si merveilleuse nature
of so marvelous nature
que les delitables flouretes
that the delightful little-flowers
qui la naissent fresches e netes,
which there spring fresh and clean
toutes en leur printens puceles,
all in their springtime maidens
tant sont jennes, tant sont nouveles,
so they-are young so they-are new
come esteles reflambeianz
as stars blazing
par les erbetes verdeianz
through the little-grasses greening
au matinet a la rousee,
in-the early-morning at the dew
tant ont toute jour ajournee
so-much have all day dawned
de leur propres beautez naïves
of their own beauties native
fines couleurs, fresches e vives,
fine colors fresh and vivid
n'i sont pas au seir envieillies,
not-there are at-all at-the evening grown-old
ainz i peuent estre cuillies
rather there can be gathered
iteus le seir come le main,
such the evening as the morning

qui veaut au cuillir metre main.
who wishes at-the gathering to-put hand
N'eus ne sont pas, sachiez de certes,
Nor-they not are at-all know for sure
ne trop closes ne trop ouvertes,
neither too closed nor too open
ainz flambeient par les erbages
rather they-blaze through the grasses
ou meilleur point de leur aages;
in-the best point of their ages
car li solauz laienz luisanz,
for the sun within shining
qui ne leur est mie nuisanz,
which not to-them is at-all harmful
ne ne degaste les rousees
nor not wastes the dews
don eus sont toutes arousees,
wherewith they are all bedewed
les tient adès en beautez fines,
them keeps always in beauties fine
tant leur adoucist les racines.
so-much to-them it-sweetens the roots

The Pasture That Never Fades

XLIV

The sheep never exhaust the grass, and their skins are never sold nor their fleeces spent on cloth; the shepherd wears their wool without plucking them. The park has one endless day, with no past or future, lit by a sun brighter than in Saturn's golden age. Saturn was castrated by his son Jupiter, and Genius calls castration a great sin against Nature.

Si vous di que les berbietes 19975
So to-you I-say that the little-ewes
ne des erbes ne des flouretes
neither of-the grasses nor of-the little-flowers
jamais tant brouster ne pourront,
ever so-much browse not they-will-be-able
car toujourz brouster les vourront,
for always to-browse them they-will-wish
que toujourz nes veient renaistre,
that always not-them they-see be-reborn
tant les sachent brouster ne paistre. 19980
however-much them they-may-know to-browse or graze
Plus vous di, nou tenez a fables,
More to-you I-say not-it hold for fables
qu'eus ne sont mie corrompables,
that-they not are at-all corruptible
combien que les berbiz les broustent,
however-much that the sheep them browse
cui les pastures riens ne coustent,
to-whom the pastures anything not cost

car leur peaus ne sont pas vendues
for their skins not are at-all sold
au darrenier, ne despendues
at-the last nor spent
leur toisons, pour faire dras langes,
their fleeces for to-make cloths woolen
ne couvertoirs a genz estranges;
nor coverlets for folk strange
ja ne seront d'eus estrangiees,
ever not they-will-be from-them estranged
ne les chars en la fin mangiees,
nor the flesh in the end eaten
ne corrompues ne maumises,
nor corrupted nor spoiled
ne de maladie seurprises.
nor by sickness surprised
Mais, senz faille, que que je die,
But without fail whatever that I say
dou bon pasteur ne dout je mie,
of-the good shepherd not doubt I at-all
qui devant sei paistre les meine,
who before himself to-graze them leads
qu'il ne seit vestuz de leur laine:
that-he — be clothed with their wool
si nes despueille il ne ne plume
yet not-them strips he nor not plucks
qui leur coust le pris d'une plume;
which them cost the price of-a feather

mais il li plaist e bon li semble
but it him pleases and good to-him seems
que sa robe la leur resemble.
that his robe the theirs resemble

Plus dirai, mais ne vous enuit,
More I-will-say but not you it-may-weary
qu'onques n'i virent naistre nuit;
that-ever not-there they-saw be-born night
si n'ont il qu'un jour seulement,
so not-have they but-one day only
mais il n'a point d'avesprement,
but it not-has at-all of-evening
ne matins n'i peut comencier,
nor morning not-there can begin
tant se sache l'aube avancier;
however-much itself may-know the-dawn advance
car li seirs au matin s'assemble
for the evening with-the morning itself-joins
e li matins le seir resemble.
and the morning the evening resembles
Autel vous di de chascune eure:
The-same to-you I-say of each hour
toujourz en un moment demeure
always in one moment remains
cil jourz, qui ne peut anuitier,
that day which not can grow-dark
tant sache a lui la nuit luitier;
however-much may-know with it the night to-wrestle
n'il n'a pas temporel mesure,
nor-it not-has at-all temporal measure

cil jourz tant beaus, qui toujourz dure,
that day so fair which always lasts
e de clarté presente rit;
and with brightness present laughs
il n'a futur ne preterit,
it not-has future nor preterite
car, se bien la verité sent,
for if well the truth one-feels
tuit li trei tens i sont present,
all the three times there are present
li queus presenz le jour compasse;
the which present the day measures
mais ce n'est pas presenz qui passe
but this not-is at-all present which passes
en partie pour defenir,
in part for to-end
ne don seit partie a venir;
nor whereof be part to come
qu'onc preteriz presenz n'i fu.
for-ever preterite present not-there was
E si vous redi que li fu-
And so to-you I-say-again that the future
turs n'i ravra jamais presence,
— not-there will-have-in-turn ever presence
tant est d'estable parmanance;
so-much it-is of-stable permanence
car li solauz resplendissanz,
for the sun resplendent
qui toujourz leur est parissanz,
which always to-them is appearing

fait le jour en un point estable,
makes the day in one point stable
tel qu'onc en printens pardurable
such that-ever in springtime everlasting
si bel ne vit ne si pur nus,
so fair not saw nor so pure any
neïs quant regnait Saturnus,
even when reigned Saturn
qui tenait les dorez aages,
who held the golden ages
cui Jupiter fist tant d'outrages,
to-whom Jupiter did so-many of-outrages
ses fiz, e tant le tourmenta
his son and so-much him tormented
que les coillons li souplanta.
that the testicles from-him he-cut-off
Mais certes, qui le veir en conte,
But certainly who the truth thereof tells
mout fait a preudome grant honte
much does to worthy-man great shame
e grant domage qui l'escoille;
and great harm who him-castrates
car, qui des coillons le despoille,
for who of-the testicles him strips
ja seit ce neïs que je taise
although be this even that I keep-silent
sa grant honte e sa grant mesaise,
his great shame and his great distress
au meins, de ce ne dout je mie,
at-the least of this not doubt I at-all

li tost il l'amour de s'amie,
from-him takes he the-love of his-friend
ja si bien n'iert a li liez;
ever so well not-he-will-be to her bound
ou, s'il est espeir mariez,
or if-he is perhaps married
puis que si mal va ses afaires,
since that so badly goes his affair
pert il, ja tant n'iert debonaires,
loses he ever so-much not-he-will-be gracious
l'amour de sa leial moillier.
the-love of his loyal wife
Granz pechiez est d'ome escoillier.
Great sin is of-man castrating
Enseurquetout cil qui l'escoille
Above-all he who him-castrates
ne li tost pas senz plus la coille,
not from-him takes at-all without more the testicle
ne s'amie que tant a chiere,
nor his-friend whom so-much he-has dear
don jamais n'avra bele chiere,
whence ever not-he-will-have fair face
ne sa moillier, car c'est du meins,
nor his wife for this-is of-the least
mais hardement e meurs humains,
but boldness and ways human
qui deivent estre en vaillanz omes;
which ought be in worthy men
car escoillié, certains en somes,
for castrated-men certain thereof we-are

sont coart, parvers e chenins,
are cowardly perverse and doggish
pour ce qu'il ont meurs femenins.
for this that-they have ways feminine
Nus escoilliez certainement
Any castrated-man certainly
n'a point en sei de hardement,
not-has at-all in himself of boldness
se n'est espeir en aucun vice,
if not-it-is perhaps in some vice
pour faire aucune grant malice;
for to-do some great malice
car a faire granz deablies
for at doing great devilries
sont toutes fames trop hardies.
are all women exceedingly bold
Escoillié en ce les resemblent,
Castrated-men in this them resemble
pour ce que leur meurs s'entresemblent.
for this that their ways each-other-resemble
Enseurquetout li escoillierres,
Above-all the castrator
tout ne seit il murtriers ne lierres,
although not be he murderer nor thief
ne n'ait fait nul mortel pechié,
nor not-have done any mortal sin

au meins a il de tant pechié
at-the least has he of so-much sinned
qu'il a fait grant tort a Nature
that-he has done great wrong to Nature
de li tolir s'engendreüre.
of from-her taking her-engendering
Nus escuser ne l'en savrait,
Any to-excuse not him-thereof would-know
ja si bien pensé n'i avrait,
ever so well thought not-there he-would-have
au meins gié; car se j'i pensaie,
at-the least I for if I-there thought
e la verité recensaie,
and the truth recounted
ainz pourraie ma langue user
sooner I-could my tongue wear-out
que l'escoilleeur escuser
than the-castrator excuse
de tel pechié, de tel forfait,
of such sin of such misdeed
tant a vers Nature forfait.
so-much he-has toward Nature misdone

Jupiter and the End of the Golden Age

XLV

Jupiter, once king, proclaimed that everyone should take his pleasure; he divided the land, gave venom to serpents, and taught hunting, fowling, and cooking. He shortened springtime and divided the year into four seasons and ended the golden age, and the ages turned to silver, brass, and iron, to the joy of the gods of hell, who keep the black sheep penned.

Mais quelconques pechiez ce seit,
But whatever sin this be
Jupiter force n'i faisait,
Jupiter force not-there made
mais que, senz plus, a ce venist
provided that without more to this he-came
que le regne en sa main tenist.
that the realm in his hand he-held
E quant il fu reis devenuz
And when he was king become
e sires dou monde tenuz,
and lord of-the world held
si bailla ses comandemenz,
so he-gave his commandments
ses leis, ses establissemenz,
his laws his establishments
e fist tantost tout a delivre,
and made at-once all at freedom
pour les genz enseignier a vivre,
for the folk to-teach to live

son ban crier en audience,
his proclamation cry in audience
don je vous dirai la sentence:
whereof I to-you will-tell the sense
«Jupiter, qui le monde regle,
Jupiter who the world rules
comande e establist pour regle
commands and establishes for rule
que chascuns pense d'estre aaise;
that each think of-being at-ease
e s'il set chose qui li plaise,
and if-he knows thing which him pleases
qu'il la face, s'il la peut faire,
that-he it do if-he it can do
pour soulaz a son cueur atraire.»
for solace to his heart to-attract
Onc autrement ne sarmona,
Ever otherwise not he-preached
comunaument abandona
commonly he-abandoned
que chascuns endreit sei feïst
that each as-to himself did
quanque delitable veïst;
whatever delightful he-saw
car deliz, si come il disait,
for delight so as he said

c'est la meudre chose qui seit
this-is the best thing which is
e li souverains biens en vie
and the sovereign good in life
don chascuns deit aveir envie.
whereof each ought have desire
E pour ce que tuit l'ensivissent,
And for this that all him-followed
e qu'il a ses euvres preïssent
and that-they from his works took
essemple de vivre, faisait
example of living did
a son cors quanqu'il li plaisait
to his body whatever-it him pleased
danz Jupiter li renveisiez,
lord Jupiter the jolly
par cui deliz iert tant preisiez.
by whom delight was so-much prized
E, si con dit en Georgiques
And so as says in Georgics
cil qui nous escrist Bucoliques,
he who for-us wrote Bucolics
car es livres grezeis trouva
for in-the books Greek he-found
coment Jupiter se prouva,
how Jupiter himself proved
avant que Jupiter venist
before that Jupiter came
n'iert nus qui charrue tenist;
not-was any who plow held

nus n'avait onques champ aré,
any not-had ever field plowed
ne cerfoï ne reparé.
nor dug nor repaired
N'onques n'avait assise bone
Nor-ever not-had set boundary
la simple gent paisible e bone;
the simple folk peaceful and good
comunaument entr'aus queraient
commonly among-them they-sought
les biens qui de leur gré venaient.
the goods which of their will came
Cist comanda partir la terre,
This-one commanded to-divide the land
don nus sa part ne savait querre,
whereof any his share not knew to-seek
e la devisa par arpenz.
and it divided by acres
Cist mist le venin es sarpenz;
This-one put the venom in-the serpents
cist aprist les lous a ravir,
this-one taught the wolves to ravish
tant fist malice en haut gravir;
so-much he-made malice on high climb
cist les chesnes mieleus trencha,
this-one the oaks honeyed cut
les ruisseaus vineus estancha.
the streams winy stanched
Cist fist le feu par tout esteindre,
This-one made the fire through all quench

tant semilla pour genz destreindre,
so-much schemed-he for folk to-constrain
e le leur fist querir es pierres,
and it them made seek in-the stones
tant fu soutiz e baratierres.
so-much he-was subtle and fraudster
Cist fist diverses arz nouveles;
This-one made divers arts new
cist mist nons e nombre aus esteles,
this-one put names and number to-the stars
cist laz e reiz e gluz fist tendre,
this-one snares and nets and lime made stretch
pour les sauvages bestes prendre,
for the wild beasts to-take
e leur huia les chiens prumiers,
and at-them set-on the dogs first
don nus n'iert avant coustumiers.
whereof any not-was before accustomed
Cist donta les oiseaus de preie
This-one tamed the birds of prey
par malice qui genz aspreie.
by malice which folk torments
Assauz mist en leu de batailles
Assaults he-put in place of battles
entre esperviers, perdriz et cailles,
between sparrowhawks partridges and quails
e fist tourneiemenz es nues
and made tourneys in-the clouds
d'ostoirs, de faucons e de grues,
of-goshawks of falcons and of cranes

e les fist au loirre venir;
and them made to-the lure come
e pour leur grace retenir,
and for their grace to-retain
qu'il retournassent a sa main,
that-they return to his hand
les put il a seir e a main.
them fed he at evening and at morning
Ainsinc tant fist li damoiseaus
Thus so-much did the young-lord
est on sers aus felons oiseaus,
is man serf to-the wicked birds
e s'est en leur servage mis,
and himself-is in their servitude put
pour ce qu'il ierent anemis,
for this that-they were enemies
come ravisseeurs orribles,
as ravishers horrible
aus autres oisillons paisibles,
to-the other little-birds peaceful
qu'il ne peut par l'air aconsivre,
which-he not can through the-air overtake
ne senz leur chars ne voulait vivre,
nor without their flesh not wished to-live
ainz en voulait estre mangierres,
rather thereof wished to-be eater
tant iert delicieus lechierres,
so-much he-was delicate glutton
tant ot les volatilles chieres.
so-much he-had the fowl dear

Cist mist les fuirez es tesnieres
This-one put the ferrets in-the burrows
e fist les conins assaillir,
and made the rabbits assail
pour aus faire es reiseaus saillir.
for them to-make into-the nets leap
Cist fist, tant par ot le cors chier,
This-one made so very be-had the body dear
escharder, rostir, escorchier
scale roast skin
les peissons des mers e des fleuves;
the fishes of-the seas and of-the rivers
e fist ses sausses toutes neuves,
and made his sauces all new
d'espices de diverses guises,
of-spices of divers kinds
ou il ra maintes erbes mises.
where he has-in-turn many herbs put
Ainsinc sont arz avant venues,
Thus are arts forward come
car toutes choses sont vaincues
for all things are vanquished
par travail, par povreté dure,
by toil by poverty hard
par quei les genz sont en grant cure.
by which the folk are in great care
Car li mal les engins esmeuvent
For the ills the wits stir
par les angoisses qu'il i treuvent.
by the anguishes that-they there find

Ainsinc le dit Ovides, qui
Thus it says Ovid who
ot assez tant come il vesqui
had enough as-long as he lived
de bien, de mal, d'eneur, de honte,
of good of evil of-honor of shame
si come il meïsmes raconte.
so as he himself relates
Briement, Jupiter n'entendi,
Briefly Jupiter not-intended
quant a terre tenir tendi,
when to land holding he-aimed
fors muer l'estat de l'empire
except to-change the-state of the-empire
de bien en mal, de mal en pire.
from good to evil from evil to worse
Mout ot en lui mol jousticier.
Much was in him soft justiciar
Cil fist printens apeticier,
He made springtime shrink
e mist l'an en quatre parties,
and put the-year in four parts
si come eus sont ores parties:
so as they are now divided
estez, printens, autonne, ivers,
summer springtime autumn winter
ce sont li quatre tens divers
these are the four seasons diverse
que touz printens tenir soulait;
which all springtime to-hold was-wont

mais Jupiter plus nou voulait,
but Jupiter more not-it wished
qui, quant au regne s'adreça,
who when to-the realm himself-directed
les aages d'or depeça
the ages of-gold broke-up
e fist les aages d'argent,
and made the ages of-silver
qui puis furent d'arain. car gent
which then were of-brass for folk
ne finerent puis d'empirer,
not ceased then of-worsening
tant se voudrent mal atirer.
so-much themselves they-wished badly to-dispose
Or sont d'arain en fer changié,
Now they-are from-brass into iron changed
tant ont leur estat estrangié,
so-much they-have their state estranged
don mout sont lié li deu des sales
whereof much are glad the gods of-the halls
toujourz tenebreuses e sales,
always dark and dirty
qui seur les omes ont envie
who upon the men have envy
tant come il les veient en vie.
as-long as they them see in life
Cist ront en leur teit estachiees,
These have-in-turn in their fold tethered
don jamais n'ierent relaschiees,
whence ever not-they-will-be released

les neires berbiz doulereuses,
the black sheep sorrowful
lasses, chaitives, mourineuses,
weary wretched diseased
qui ne voudrent aler la sente
which not wished to-go the path
que li blans aignelez presente,
which the white little-lamb presents
par quei toutes fussent franchies,
by which all were freed
e leur neires toisons blanchies,
and their black fleeces whitened
quant le grant chemin ample tindrent
when the great road wide they-held
par quei la herbergier se vindrent,
by which there to-lodge themselves came
o compaignie si pleniere
with company so full
qu'el tenait toute la charriere.
that-it held all the cart-road

The White Sheep and the Black

XLVI

No black sheep has wool worth anything, but cloth of the white sheep's fleece would clothe kings and angels, and the shepherd lets no black beast into his park. The white Lamb leads his sheep there and keeps them from the wolf. Genius compares this park with the square garden the lover saw, whose images stood outside it, while all the world is portrayed outside the park.

Mais ja beste qui laienz aille
But ever beast which within goes
n'i portera toison qui vaille,
not-there will-carry fleece which may-be-worth
ne don l'en puist neïs drap faire,
nor whereof one can even cloth make
se n'est aucune orrible haire,
if not-it-is some horrible hair-shirt
qui plus est agüe e poignanz,
which more is sharp and pricking
quant ele est aus costez joignanz,
when it is to-the sides joining
que ne serait uns peliçons
than — would-be a pelisse
de peaus de veluz hericons.
of skins of hairy hedgehogs
Mais qui voudrait charpir la laine,
But who would-wish to-card the wool
tant est mole e soeve e plaine,
so-much it-is soft and sweet and smooth
pour qu'il en eüst tel foison,
provided that-he thereof had such abundance

e faire dras de la toison
and make cloths of the fleece
qui serait prise es blanches bestes,
which would-be taken from-the white beasts
bien s'en vestiraient aus festes
well themselves-therewith would-clothe at-the feasts
empereeurs ou reis, veire anges,
emperors or kings indeed angels
s'il se vestaient de dras langes.
if-they themselves clothed with cloths woolen
Pour quei, bien le poez saveir,
For which well it you-can know
qui teus robes pourrait aveir
who such robes could have
mout serait vestuz noblement;
very would-be clothed nobly
e pour ice meïsmement
and for this especially
les devrait il tenir plus chieres
them ought he hold more dear
que de teus bestes n'i a guieres.
for of such beasts not-there is much
Ne li pasteurs, qui n'est pas nices,
Nor the shepherd who not-is at-all silly
qui le bestail garde e les lices,
who the flock keeps and the lists
en ce beau parc, c'est chose veire,
in this fair park this-is thing true

ne lairait entrer beste neire
not would-let enter beast black
pour riens qu'en li seüst prier,
for anything that-one him might-know to-pray
tant li plaist les blanches trier,
so-much him pleases the white to-sort
qui bien quenoissent leur bergier,
which well know their shepherd
pour ce vont o lui herbergier,
for this go with him to-lodge
e bien sont par lui queneües,
and well are by him known
par quei meauz en sont receües
by which better thereby they-are received
si vous di que li plus piteus,
so to-you I-say that the most merciful
li plus beaus, li plus deliteus
the most fair the most delightful
de toutes les bestes vaillanz,
of all the beasts worthy
c'est li blans aignelez saillanz,
this-is the white little-lamb leaping
qui les berbiz au parc ameine
who the sheep to-the park brings
par son travail e par sa peine,
by his toil and by his pain
car bien set, se nule en desveie,
for well he-knows if any thence strays
que li lous seulement la veie,
that the wolf only her see

qui nule autre chose ne trace
who any other thing not tracks
ne mais qu'ele isse de la trace
nor but that-she go-out of the track
a l'aignel qui mener les pense,
of the-lamb who to-lead them thinks
qu'il l'emportera senz defense,
that-he her-will-carry-off without defense
e la mangera toute vive;
and her will-eat all alive
ne l'en peut garder riens qui vive.
nor her-thence can guard anything which lives
Seigneur, cist aigneaus vous atent.
Lords this lamb you awaits
Mais de lui nous tairons atant,
But of him ourselves we-will-silence thereupon
fors que nous prions Deu le pere
except that we pray God the father
qu'il, par la requeste sa mere,
that-he by the request (of-)his mother
li doint si les berbiz conduire
to-him grant so the sheep to-lead
que li lous ne leur puisse nuire;
that the wolf not them can harm
e que par pechié ne failliez
and that by sin not you-fail
que joer en ce parc n'ailliez,
that to-play in this park you-go
qui tant est beaus, tant delitables,
which so is fair so delightful

d'erbes, de fleurs tant bien flairables,
with-grasses with flowers so well fragrant
de violetes e de roses,
with violets and with roses
e de trestoutes bones choses.
and with all good things
Car, qui dou bel jardin carré,
For who of-the fair garden square
clos au petit guichet barré,
closed with-the little wicket barred
ou cil amanz vit la querole
where that lover saw the carol
ou Deduiz o ses genz querole,
where Mirth with his folk carols
a ce beau parc que je devise,
to this fair park which I describe
tant par est beaus a grant devise,
so very is fair at great wish
faire voudrait comparaison,
to-make would-wish comparison
il ferait trop grant mespreison
he would-make exceedingly great error
s'il ne la fait tel ou semblable
if-he not it makes such or like
come il ferait de veir a fable;
as he would-make of truth to fable
car qui dedenz ce parc serait
for who within this park would-be
asseür jurer oserait,
safely to-swear would-dare

ou meïst, senz plus, l'ueil laienz,
or put without more the-eye within
que li jardins serait neienz
that the garden would-be nothing
au regart de cete closture,
at-the regard of this enclosure
qui n'est pas faite en carreüre,
which not-is at-all made in squareness
ainz est si ronde e si soutille
rather is so round and so subtle
qu'onques ne fu beriz ne bille
that-ever not was beryl nor ball
de fourme si bien arondie.
of form so well rounded
Que voulez vous que je vous die?
What wish you that I to-you say
Palons des choses qu'il vit lores
Let-us-speak of-the things that-he saw then
e par dedenz e par defores,
both by within and by without
e par briés moz nous en passon,
and by brief words ourselves thence let-us-pass
pour ce que trop ne nous lasson:
for this that too-much not ourselves we-weary
il vit dis laides imagetes
he saw ten ugly little-images
hors dou jardin, ce dit pourtraites.
outside of-the garden this he-says portrayed
Mais qui dehors ce parc querrait,
But who outside this park would-seek

touz figurez i trouverrait
all figured there would-find
enfer e trestouz les deables,
hell and all the devils
mout laiz e mout espoentables,
very ugly and very frightful
e touz defauz e touz outrages
and all faults and all outrages
qui font en enfer leur estages,
which make in hell their dwellings
e Cerberus, qui tout enserre;
and Cerberus who all locks-in
s'i trouverrait toute la terre
so-there would-find all the earth
o ses richeces ancienes,
with its riches ancient
e toutes choses terrienes;
and all things earthly
e verrait proprement la mer,
and would-see properly the sea
e touz peissons qui ont amer,
and all fishes which have at-sea
e trestoutes choses marines,
and all things marine
eves douces, troubles e fines,
waters sweet troubled and fine
e les choses granz e menues
and the things great and small
es eves douces contenues;
in-the waters sweet contained

e l'air e touz ses oisillons
and the-air and all its little-birds
e mouschetes e papillons,
and little-flies and butterflies
e tout quanque par l'air resone;
and all whatever through the-air resounds
e le feu qui touz avirone
and the fire which all surrounds
les meubles e les tenemenz
the movables and the holdings
de touz les autres elemenz.
of all the other elements
S'i verrait toutes les esteles
So-there would-see all the stars
cleres e reluisanz e beles,
clear and shining and fair
seient erranz, seient fichiees,
be-they wandering be-they fixed
en leur esperes estachiees.
in their spheres attached
Qui la serait toutes ces choses
Who there would-be all these things
verrait de ce bel parc forcloses
would-see from this fair park shut-out
ausinc apertement pourtraites
as openly portrayed
com proprement aperent faites.
as properly they-appear made

The Garden and the Park

XLVII

All the lover saw in the garden, its carol, its pine, and its fountain, is trifles and will perish, but the park's joys are everlasting. The garden's fountain is the perilous one that killed Narcissus, dark and troubled, with crystals that show only half of things. The park's fountain, whose water ends all thirst and death, flows from three conduits that are one.

Or au jardin nous en ralons
Now to-the garden ourselves thence let-us-go-back
e des choses dedenz palons.
and of-the things within let-us-speak
Il vit, ce dit, seur l'erbe fresche
He saw this he-says upon the-grass fresh
Deduit qui demenait sa tresche,
Mirth who led his round-dance
e ses genz o lui querolanz
and his folk with him caroling
seur les flouretes bien olanz;
upon the little-flowers well smelling
e vit, ce dit li damoiseaus,
and saw this says the young-lord
erbes, arbres, bestes, oiseaus,
grasses trees beasts birds
e ruisselez e fonteneles
and little-streams and little-fountains
bruire e fremir par les graveles,
rustle and murmur through the gravels
e la fontaine souz le pin;
and the fountain under the pine

e se vante que puis Pepin
and himself boasts that since Pepin
ne fu teus pins; e la fontaine
not was such pine and the fountain
restait de trop grant beauté pleine.
in-turn-was of exceedingly great beauty full
Pour Deu, seigneur, prenez ci garde:
For God lords take here heed
qui bien la verité regarde,
who well the truth regards
les choses ici contenues,
the things here contained
ce sont trufles e fanfelues.
these are trifles and baubles
Ci n'a chose qui seit estable,
Here not-is thing which be stable
quanqu'il i vit est corrompable.
whatever-he there saw is corruptible
Il vit queroles qui faillirent,
He saw carols which failed
e faudront tuit cil qui les firent.
and will-fail all those who them made
Ausinc feront toutes les choses
Likewise will-do all the things
qu'il vit par tout laienz encloses;
which-he saw through all within enclosed
car la nourrice Cerberus,
for the nurse (of-)Cerberus

a cui ne peut riens embler us
from whom not can anything steal practice
humains que tout ne face user,
human that all not she-make wear-out
quant el veaut de sa force user,
when she wishes of her force to-use
e senz lasser toujourz en use,
and without tiring always thereof uses
Atropos, qui riens ne refuse,
Atropos who anything not refuses
par darriers touz les espiot,
by behind all them spied
fors les deus, se nul en i ot;
except the gods if any thereof there was
car, senz faille, choses divines
for without fail things divine
ne sont pas a la mort enclines.
not are at-all to the death inclined
Mais or palons des beles choses
But now let-us-speak of-the fair things
qui sont en ce bel parc encloses:
which are in this fair park enclosed
je vous en di generaument,
I to-you thereof speak generally
car taire m'en vueil erraument;
for to-keep-silent myself-thereof I-wish forthwith
e qui voudrait a dreit aler,
and who would-wish at right to-go
n'en sai je proprement paler,
not-thereof know I properly to-speak

que nus cueurs ne pourrait penser,
for any heart not could think
ne bouche d'ome recenser
nor mouth of-man recount
les granz beautez, les granz values
the great beauties the great values
des choses laienz contenues,
of-the things within contained
ne les beaus jeus, ne les granz joies
nor the fair games nor the great joys
e pardurables e veroies
both everlasting and true
que li queroleeur demeinent
which the carolers lead
qui dedenz la pourprise mainent.
who within the enclosure dwell
Trestoutes choses delitables
All things delightful
e veraies e pardurables
and true and everlasting
ont cil qui laienz se deduisent:
have those who within themselves delight
e bien est dreiz, car touz biens puisent
and well is right for all goods they-draw
a meïsmes une fontaine,
at same a fountain
qui tant est precieuse e saine
which so-much is precious and wholesome
e bele e clere e nete e pure,
and fair and clear and clean and pure

qui toute arouse la closture,
which all waters the enclosure
de cui ruissel les bestes beivent
of whose stream the beasts drink
qui la veulent entrer e deivent,
which there wish to-enter and ought
quant des neires sont dessevrees,
when from-the black they-are separated
que, puis qu'eus en sont abevrees,
that since that-they thereof are watered
jamais seif aveir ne pourront,
ever thirst have not they-will-be-able
e vivront tant come eus vourront
and will-live as-long as they will-wish
senz estre malades ne mortes.
without being sick nor dead
De bone eure entrerent es portes,
In good hour entered-they into-the gates
de bone eure l'aignelet virent
in good hour the-little-lamb they-saw
que par l'estreit sentier sivirent
whom by the-narrow path they-followed
en la garde au sage bergier,
in the keeping of-the wise shepherd
qui les vost o lui herbergier.
who them wished with him to-lodge
Ne jamais nus on ne mourrait
Nor ever any man not would-die
qui beivre une feiz en pourrait.
who drink one time thereof could

Ce n'est pas cele desouz l'arbre,
This not-is at-all that under the-tree
qu'il vit en la pierre de marbre.
which-he saw in the stone of marble
L'en li devrait faire la moe
One at-him ought make the grimace
quant il cele fontaine loe.
when he that fountain praises
C'est la fontaine perilleuse,
This-is the fountain perilous
tant amere e tant venimeuse
so bitter and so venomous
qu'el tua le bel Narcisus
that-it killed the fair Narcissus
quant il se mirait iqui sus.
when he himself mirrored there above
Il meïsmes n'a pas vergoigne
He himself not-has at-all shame
dou requenoistre, ainz le tesmoigne;
of-the acknowledging rather it witnesses
e sa cruauté pas ne cele
and its cruelty at-all not conceals
quant perilleus mirail l'apele,
when perilous mirror it-he-calls
e dit que quant il s'i mira
and says that when he himself-there mirrored
maintes feiz puis en soupira,
many times then thereof he-sighed
tant s'i trouva grief e pesant.
so-much himself-there he-found grieved and heavy

Vez quel douceur en l'eve sent!
See what sweetness in the-water he-feels
Deus! com bone fontaine e sade
God how good fountain and savory
ou li sain devienent malade!
where the healthy become sick
E come il s'i fait bon virer
And how it itself-there makes good to-turn
pour sei dedenz l'eve mirer!
for oneself within the-water to-mirror
El sourt, ce dit il, a granz ondes
It springs this says he with great waves
par deus doiz creuses e parfondes.
by two conduits hollow and deep
Mais el n'a mie, bien le sai,
But it not-has at-all well it I-know
ses doiz ne ses eves de sei;
its conduits nor its waters of itself
n'est nule chose qu'ele tiegne
not-is any thing that-it holds
qui trestout d'ailleurs ne li viegne.
which all from-elsewhere not to-it comes
Puis si redit, que c'est senz fins,
Then so says-again-he for this-is without end
qu'ele est plus clere qu'argenz fins.
that-it is more clear than-silver fine
Vez de queus trufles il vous plaide:
See of what trifles he to-you pleads

ainz est veir si trouble e si laide
rather it-is truly so troubled and so ugly
que chascuns qui sa teste i boute
that each who his head there thrusts
pour sei mirer, il n'i veit goute.
for himself to-mirror he not-there sees drop
Tuit s'i forsennent e s'angoissent,
All themselves-there madden and themselves-anguish
pour ce que point ne s'i quenoissent.
for this that at-all not themselves-there they-know
Au fonz, ce dit, a cristaus doubles,
At-the bottom this he-says there-are crystals double
que li solauz, qui n'est pas troubles,
which the sun which not-is at-all troubled
fait luire quant ses rais i giete
makes shine when its rays there it-throws
si clers que cil qui les aguiete
so bright that he who them watches
veit toujourz la meitié des choses
sees always the half of-the things
qui sont en ce jardin encloses;
which are in this garden enclosed
e peut le remanant voeir
and can the remainder see
s'il se veaut d'autre part soeir,
if-he himself wishes on-other side to-sit
tant sont cler, tant sont vertueus.
so-much they-are clear so-much they-are powerful
Certes ainz sont trouble e nueus.
Certainly rather they-are troubled and cloudy

Pour quei ne font il demontrance,
For what not make they demonstration
quant li solauz ses rais i lance,
when the sun its rays there launches
de toutes les choses ensemble?
of all the things together
Par fei, qu'il ne peuent, ce semble,
By faith for-they not can this seems
pour l'ocurté qui les obnuble;
for the-darkness which them clouds
qu'il sont si trouble e si obnuble
for-they are so troubled and so clouded
qu'il ne peuent par aus soufire
that-they not can by themselves suffice
a celui qui laienz se mire,
to him who within himself mirrors
quant leur clarté d'ailleurs aquierent.
since their brightness from-elsewhere they-acquire
Se li rai dou soleil n'i fierent
If the rays of-the sun not-there strike
si qu'il les puissent encontrer,
so that-they them can meet
il n'ont poeir de riens montrer.
they not-have power of anything showing
Mais cele que je vous devise,
But that which I to-you describe
c'est fontaine bele a devise.
this-is fountain fair at wish

Or levez un po les oreilles,
Now raise a little the ears
si m'en orreiz dire merveilles.
so me-thereof you-will-hear tell marvels
Cele fontaine que j'ai dite,
That fountain which I-have told
qui tant est bele e tant profite
which so-much is fair and so-much profits
pour guerir, tant sont savourees,
for to-heal so-much they-are savory
toutes bestes enlangourees,
all beasts languishing
rent toujourz par treis doiz soutives
renders always by three conduits subtle
eves douces, cleres e vives.
waters sweet clear and living
Si sont si près a près chascune
So they-are so near to near each
que toutes s'assemblent a une,
that all themselves-gather to one
si que, quant toutes les verreiz,
so that when all them you-will-see
e une e treis en trouverreiz,
both one and three thereof you-will-find
s'ous voulez au conter esbatre,
if-you wish at-the counting to-amuse
ne ja n'en i trouverreiz quatre,
nor ever not-thereof there you-will-find four

mais toujourz treis e toujourz une:
but always three and always one
c'est leur proprieté comune.
this-is their property common

The Fountain of Life and the Carbuncle

XLVIII

This fountain springs from itself beneath a little olive tree that bears the fruit of salvation. In it shines a three-faceted carbuncle, a sun that makes the endless day and lets those who look into the water see all the park and themselves. Genius asks the barons to judge between the garden and the park.

N'onc tel fontaine ne veïsmes,
Nor-ever such fountain not we-saw
car ele sourt de sei meïsmes.
for it springs from itself same
Ce ne font pas autres fontaines,
This not do at-all other fountains
qui sourdent par estranges veines.
which spring by outside veins
Cete tout par sei se conduit,
This-one all by itself itself conducts
n'a mestier d'estrange conduit,
not-has need of-outside conduit
e se tient en sei toute vive
and itself holds in itself all living
plus ferme que roche naïve.
more firm than rock native

N'a mestier de pierre de marbre,
Not-has need of stone of marble
ne d'aveir couverture d'arbre,
nor of-having covering of-tree
car d'une sourse vient si haute
for from-a source comes so high
l'eve, qui ne peut faire faute,
the-water which not can make fault
qu'arbres ne peut si haut ataindre
that-tree not can so high attain
que sa hautece ne seit graindre,
that its height not be greater
fors que, senz faille, en un pendant,
except that without fail on a slope
si come el s'en vient descendant,
so as it itself-thence comes descending
la treuve une olivete basse,
there finds a little-olive low
souz cui toute l'eve s'en passe;
under which all the-water itself-thence passes
e quant l'olivete petite
and when the-little-olive small
sent la fontaine que j'ai dite,
feels the fountain which I-have told
qui li atrempe ses racines
which to-it tempers its roots
par ses eves douces e fines,
by its waters sweet and fine

si en prent tel nourrissement
so thereof it-takes such nourishment
qu'ele en receit acreissement
that-it thereof receives increase
e de fueille e de fruit s'encharge;
and with leaf and with fruit itself-loads
si devient si haute e si large
so becomes so high and so wide
qu'onques li pins qu'il vous conta
that-ever the pine which-he to-you told
si haut de terre ne monta,
so high from earth not mounted
ne ses rains si bien n'estendi,
nor its branches so well not-stretched
ne si bel ombre ne rendi.
nor so fair shade not rendered
Cele olive tout en estant
That olive all in standing
ses rains seur la fontaine estent.
its branches over the fountain stretches
Ainsinc la fontaine s'enombre,
Thus the fountain itself-shades
e, pour le reisant dou bel ombre,
and for the coolness of-the fair shade
les besteletes la se mucent,
the little-beasts there themselves hide

qui les douces rousees sucent
which the sweet dews suck
que li douz reisanz fait espandre
which the sweet coolness makes spread
par les fleurs e par l'erbe tendre.
over the flowers and over the-grass tender
Si pendent a l'olive, escrites
So hang on the-olive written
en un rolet, letres petites,
on a little-scroll letters small
qui dient a ceus qui les lisent,
which say to those who them read
qui souz l'olive en l'ombre gisent:
who under the-olive in the-shade lie
«Ci cueurt la fontaine de vie
Here runs the fountain of life
par desouz l'olive foillie
by beneath the-olive leafy
qui porte le fruit de salu.»
which bears the fruit of salvation
Queus fu li pins qui l'a valu?
What was the pine which it-has equaled
Si vous di qu'en cete fontaine,
So to-you I-say that-in this fountain
ce creront fole gent a peine,
this will-believe foolish folk with difficulty
e le tendront pluseur a fables,
and it will-hold several for fables

luist uns carboncles merveillables
shines a carbuncle marvelous
seur toutes merveilleuses pierres,
above all marvelous stones
trestouz roonz e a treis quierres;
all round and with three facets
e siet en mi si hautement
and sits in middle so high
que l'en le veit apertement
that one it sees openly
par tout le parc reflambeier.
through all the park blaze
Ne ses rais ne peut desveier
Nor its rays not can turn-aside
ne venz, ne pluie, ne nublece,
neither wind nor rain nor cloudiness
tant est beaus e de grant noblece.
so-much it-is fair and of great nobility
Si sachiez que chascune quierre,
So know that each facet
teus est la vertu de la pierre,
such is the virtue of the stone
vaut autant con les autres deus,
is-worth as-much as the other two
teus sont entr'eus les forces d'eus;
such are among-them the powers of-them
ne les deus ne valent que cele,
nor the two not are-worth but that-one
combien que chascune seit bele;
however-much that each be fair

ne nus ne les peut deviser,
nor any not them can divide
tant i sache bien aviser,
however-much there he-may-know well to-look
ne si joindre par avisees
nor so join by considerations
qu'il ne les truisse devisees.
that-he not them find divided
Mais nus solauz ne l'enlumine;
But any sun not it-illumines
qu'il est d'une couleur si fine,
for-it is of-a color so fine
si clers e si resplendissanz,
so bright and so resplendent
que li solauz esclarcissanz
that the sun brightening
en l'autre eve les cristaus doubles
in the-other water the crystals double
lez lui serait ocurs e troubles.
beside it would-be dark and troubled
Briement, que vous aconteraie?
Briefly what to-you would-I-tell
Autres solauz laienz ne raie
Other sun within not shines
que cil carboncles flambeianz.
than this carbuncle blazing
C'est li solauz qu'il ont laienz,
This-is the sun that-they have within

qui plus de resplendeur abonde
which more in splendor abounds
que nus solauz qui seit ou monde.
than any sun which be in-the world
Cist la nuit en essil enveie,
This-one the night into exile sends
cist fait le jour que dit avaie,
this-one makes the day which told I-had
qui dure pardurablement,
which lasts everlastingly
senz fin e senz comencement,
without end and without beginning
e se tient en un point de gré,
and itself holds in one point of will
senz passer signe ne degré,
without passing sign nor degree
ne minuit ne quelque partie
nor midnight nor some part
par quei puisse estre eure partie.
by which may be hour divided
Si ra si merveilleus poeir
So it-has-in-turn so marvelous power
que cil qui la le vont voeir,
that those who there it go to-see
si tost con cele part se virent
so soon as that way themselves they-turn
e leur faces en l'eve mirent,
and their faces in the-water mirror
toujourz, de quelque part qu'il seient,
always from whatever part that-they be

toutes les choses dou parc veient,
all the things of-the park see
e les quenoissent proprement,
and them know properly
e aus meïsmes ensement;
and them themselves likewise
e puis que la se sont veü,
and since that there themselves are seen
jamais ne seront deceü
ever not they-will-be deceived
de nule chose qui puisse estre,
of any thing which may be
tant i devienent sage maistre.
so-much there they-become wise masters
Autre merveille vous lirai:
Other marvel to-you I-will-read
que de cetui soleil li rai
that of this sun the rays
ne troublent pas ne ne retardent
not trouble at-all nor not retard
les eauz de ceus qui les regardent,
the eyes of those who them look-at
ne ne les font essaboïr,
nor not them make be-dazzled
mais renforcier e resjoïr
but strengthen and rejoice
e revigourer leur veüe,
and reinvigorate their sight
par sa bele clarté veüe,
by its fair brightness seen

pleine d'atrempee chaleur,
full of-tempered heat
qui, par merveilleuse valeur,
which by marvelous worth
tout le parc d'oudeur replenist
all the park with-odor fills
par la grant douceur qui en ist.
by the great sweetness which thence issues
E, pour ce que trop ne vous tiegne,
And for this that too-long not you I-hold
d'un brief mot vueil qu'il vous souviegne
by-a brief word I-wish that-it you remind
que qui la fourme e la matire
that who the form and the matter
dou parc verrait bien pourrait dire
of-the park would-see well could say
qu'onques en si bel paradis
that-ever in so fair paradise
ne fu fourmez Adans jadis.
not was formed Adam formerly
Pour Deu, seigneur, donc que vous semble
For God lords then what to-you seems
dou parc e dou jardin ensemble?
of-the park and of-the garden together
Donez en raisnables sentences
Give thereof reasonable sentences
e d'accidenz e de sustances;
both of-accidents and of substances

dites par vostre leiauté
say by your loyalty
li queus est de graigneur beauté,
the which is of greater beauty
e regardez des deus fontaines
and regard of-the two fountains
la quele rent eves plus saines,
the which renders waters more wholesome
plus vertueuses e plus pures;
more powerful and more pure
e des doiz juigiez les natures,
and of-the conduits judge the natures
les queles sont plus vertueuses;
the which are more powerful
juigiez des pierres precieuses,
judge of-the stones precious
e puis dou pin, e de l'olive
and then of-the pine and of the-olive
qui cueuvre la fontaine vive.
which covers the fountain living
Je m'en tieng a voz juigemenz,
I myself-thereof hold to your judgments
se vous, selonc les erremenz
if you according-to the proceedings
que leüz vous ai ça darriere,
which read to-you I-have here behind
donez sentence dreituriere;
give sentence righteous
car bien vous di senz flaterie:
for well to-you I-say without flattery

haut e bas ne m'i met je mie;
high and low not myself-there put I at-all
car, se tort i vouliez faire,
for if wrong there you-wished to-do
dire faus ou verité taire,
say false or truth silence
tantost, ja nou vous quier celer,
at-once ever not-it from-you I-seek to-conceal
ailleurs en voudraie apeler.
elsewhere thereof I-would-wish to-appeal
E, pour vous plus tost acorder,
And for you more soon to-bring-to-accord
je vous vueil briement recorder,
I to-you wish briefly to-recall
selonc ce que vous ai conté,
according-to this that to-you I-have told
leur grant vertu, leur grant bonté:
their great virtue their great goodness
cele les vis de mort enivre,
that-one the living with death intoxicates
mais cete fait les morz revivre.
but this-one makes the dead live-again

The Sermon Ends

XLIX

Genius sums up: honor Nature, labor, restore what you owe, keep from killing, and you will drink from the fountain of life and dance forever beneath the olive. He throws down the candle, and Venus spreads its flame through the world. The barons answer "Amen," Genius vanishes, and the host rises to assault the castle.

Seigneur, sachiez certainement,
Lords know certainly
se vous vous menez sagement
if you yourselves conduct wisely
e faites ce que vous devreiz,
and do this that you will-have-to
de cete fontaine bevreiz.
of this fountain you-will-drink
E pour tout mon enseignement
And for all my teaching
retenir plus legierement,
to-retain more easily
car leçon a briés moz leüe
for lesson in brief words read
plus est de legier retenue,
more is with ease retained
je vous revueil briement retraire
I to-you wish-in-turn briefly to-relate
trestout quanque vous devez faire.
all whatever you ought do

Pensez de Nature enourer,
Think of Nature honoring
servez la par bien labourer.
serve her by well laboring
E se de l'autrui riens avez,
And if of the-other's anything you-have
rendez le, se vous le savez,
render it if you it know-how
e se vous rendre ne poez
and if you render not can
les biens despenduz ou joez,
the goods spent or gambled
aiez en bone volenté
have thereof good will
quant des biens avreiz a plenté.
when of-the goods you-will-have in plenty
D'ocision nus ne s'aprouche,
To-killing any not himself-approach
netes aiez e mains e bouche;
clean have both hands and mouth
seiez leial, seiez piteus,
be loyal be merciful
lors ireiz ou champ deliteus,
then you-will-go into-the field delightful
par trace l'aignelet sivant,
by track the-little-lamb following
en pardurableté vivant,
in everlastingness living
beivre de la bele fontaine,
to-drink of the fair fountain

qui tant est douce e clere e saine
which so-much is sweet and clear and wholesome
que jamais mort ne recevreiz
that ever death not you-will-receive
si tost con de l'eve bevreiz,
so soon as of the-water you-will-drink
ainz ireiz par jolieté
rather you-will-go by merriment
chantant en pardurableté
singing in everlastingness
motez, conduiz e chançonetes
motets conductus and little-songs
par l'erbe vert seur les flouretes,
through the-grass green upon the little-flowers
souz l'olivete querolant.
under the-little-olive caroling
Que vous vois je ci flajolant?
Why to-you go I here piping
Dreiz est que mon fretel restuie,
Right is that my pipe I-store-away
car beaus chanters souvent enuie;
for fair singing often wearies
trop vous pourraie ui mais tenir,
too-long you I-could today more hold
ci vous vueil mon sarmon fenir.
here to-you I-wish my sermon to-finish

Or i parra que vous fereiz
Now there will-appear what you will-do
quant en haut encroé sereiz,
when on high perched you-will-be
pour preeschier seur la bretesche.»
for to-preach upon the bretèche
Genius ainsinc leur preesche,
Genius thus to-them preaches
e les resbaudist e soulace.
and them cheers and solaces
Lors giete le cierge en la place,
Then throws the candle into the place
don la flambe toute enfumee
whence the flame all smoky
par tout le monde est alumee.
through all the world is kindled
N'est dame qui s'en puist defendre,
Not-is lady who herself-thence can defend
tant la sot bien Venus espandre,
so-much it knew well Venus to-spread
e la cuilli si haut li venz
and it caught so high the wind
que toutes les fames vivanz
that all the women living
leur cors, leur cueurs e leur pensees
their bodies their hearts and their thoughts
ont de cete oudeur encensees.
have with this odor incensed

Amours de la chartre leüe
Love of the charter read
ra si la nouvele espandue
has-in-turn so the news spread
que jamais n'iert on de vaillance
that ever not-will-be man of worth
qui ne s'acort a la sentence.
who not himself-accord to the sentence
Quant Genius ot tout leü,
When Genius had all read
li baron, de joie esmeü,
the barons with joy moved
car onc mais, si come il disaient,
for ever before so as they said
si bon sarmon oï n'avaient,
so good sermon heard not-they-had
n'onc puis qu'il furent conceü
nor-ever since that-they were conceived
si grant pardon n'orent eü,
so great pardon not-they-had had
n'onques n'oïrent ensement
nor-ever not-they-heard likewise
si dreit escomeniement,
so right excommunication
pour ce que le pardon ne perdent,
for this that the pardon not they-lose

tuit a la sentence s'aerdent
all to the sentence themselves-cling
e respondent tost e viaz:
and answer soon and quickly
«Amen, amen, fiaz, fiaz».
Amen amen fiat fiat
Si con la chose iert en ce point,
So as the thing was at this point
n'i ot puis de demeure point:
not-there was then of delay at-all
chascuns qui le sarmon amot
each who the sermon loved
le note en son cueur mot a mot;
it notes in his heart word for word
car mout leur sembla saluable
for very to-them seemed salutary
pour le bon pardon charitable,
for the good pardon charitable
e mout l'ont volentiers oï.
and very it-have willingly heard
E Genius s'esvanoï,
And Genius himself-vanished
qu'onques ne sorent qu'il devint.
that-ever not they-knew what-he became
Don crient en l'ost plus de vint:
Then cry in the-host more than twenty
«Or a l'assaut senz plus atendre!
Now to the-assault without more waiting
Qui bien set la sentence entendre,
Who well knows the sentence to-understand

mout sont nostre anemi grevé.»
much are our enemies harmed
Lors se sont tuit en piez levé,
Then themselves are all on feet raised
prest de continuer la guerre,
ready of continuing the war
pour tout prendre e metre par terre.
for all to-take and to-put on ground

Venus Threatens Shame, and the Image

L

Venus demands surrender; Shame and Fear refuse, and Venus swears to burn the castle and open the roses to all, clerk and lay. She tucks up her skirts, draws her bow, and aims her brand at a loophole between two silver pillars that hold an image, more beautiful than Pygmalion's as a lion surpasses a mouse.

Venus, qui d'assaillir est preste,
Venus who of-assaulting is ready
prumierement leur amoneste
first them admonishes
qu'il se rendent; e il que firent?
that-they themselves surrender and they what did
Honte e Peeur li respondirent:
Shame and Fear to-her answered
«Certes, Venus, ce est neienz,
Certainly Venus this is nothing
ja ne metreiz les piez çaienz.
ever not you-will-put the feet in-here

Non veir, s'il n'i avait que mei»,
Not indeed if-it not-there were but me
dist Honte, «point ne m'en esmai.»
said Shame at-all not myself-thereof I-dismay
Quant la deesse entendi Honte:
When the goddess heard Shame
«Vie! orde garce, a vous que monte», 20720
Away filthy wench to you what amounts
dist ele, «de mei contrester?
said she of me resisting
Vous verreiz ja tout tempester
You will-see now all storm
se li chasteaus ne m'est renduz;
if the castle not to-me-is rendered
par vous n'iert il ja defenduz.
by you not-will-be it ever defended
Encontre nous le defendreiz! 20725
Against us it you-will-defend
Par la char Deu! vous le rendreiz,
By the flesh (of-)God you it will-render
ou je vous ardrai toutes vives
or I you will-burn all alive
come doulereuses chaitives.
as sorrowful wretches
Tout le pourpris vueil embraser,
All the enclosure I-wish to-set-ablaze
tours e tourneles araser; 20730
towers and turrets to-raze
je vous eschauferai les naches,
I to-you will-heat the buttocks

j'ardrai pilers, murs e estaches;
I-will-burn pillars walls and stakes
vostre fossé seront empli,
your ditches will-be filled
je ferai toutes metre en pli
I will-make all put in fold
voz barbacanes la dreciees,
your barbicans there raised
ja si haut nes avreiz dreciees
ever so high not-them you-will-have raised
que nes face par terre estendre;
that not-them I-make on ground stretch
e Bel Acueil laira tout prendre
and Fair Welcome will-let all take
boutons e roses a bandon,
buds and roses at liberty
une eure en vente, autre eure en don.
one hour in sale other hour in gift
Ne vous ne sereiz ja si fiere
Nor you not will-be ever so proud
que touz li mondes ne s'i fiere.
that all the world not itself-there thrust
Tuit iront a procession,
All will-go in procession
senz faire i point d'excepcion,
without making there at-all of-exception
par les rosiers e par les roses,
through the rosebushes and through the roses
quant j'avrai les lices descloses.
when I-will-have the lists opened

E pour Jalousie bouler
And for Jealousy to-trick
ferai je par tout defouler
will-make I through all trample
e les praiaus e les erbages,
both the lawns and the grasses
tant eslargirai les passages.
so-much I-will-widen the passages
Tuit i cueudront senz nul delai
All there will-gather without any delay
boutons e roses clerc e lai,
buds and roses clerks and lay
religieus e seculer;
religious and secular
n'est nus qui s'en puist reculer,
not-is any who himself-thence can draw-back
tuit i feront leur penitence;
all there will-do their penance
mais ce n'iert pas senz diference:
but this not-will-be at-all without difference
li un vendront repostement,
the ones will-come secretly
li autre trop apertement;
the others too openly
mais li repostement venu
but the secretly come
seront a preudome tenu;
will-be for worthy-men held
li autre en seront diffamé,
the others thereof will-be defamed

ribaut e bordelier clamé,
rascals and brothel-goers called
tout n'i aient il pas tel courpe
although not-there have they at-all such fault
come ont aucun que nus n'encourpe.
as have some whom any not-blames
Si rest veirs qu'aucun mauvais ome,
So is-in-turn true that-some wicked men
que Deus e sainz Peres de Rome
whom God and saint Peter of Rome
confonde e aus e leur affaire!
confound both them and their affair
Lairont les roses pour pis faire,
Will-leave the roses for worse to-do
e leur donra chapeaus d'ortie
and to-them will-give garlands of-nettle
deables, qui si les ortie;
devil who so them nettles
car Genius, de par Nature,
for Genius on behalf-of Nature
pour leur vilté, pour leur ordure,
for their vileness for their filth
les a touz en sentence mis
them has all in sentence put
avec noz autres anemis.
with our other enemies
Honte, se je ne vous engin,
Shame if I not you trick
po pris mon arc e mon engin,
little I-prize my bow and my contrivance

qu'ailleurs ja ne m'en clamerai.
for-elsewhere ever not myself-thereof I-will-appeal
Certes, Honte, ja n'amerai
Certainly Shame ever not-I-will-love
ne vous ne Raison vostre mere,
neither you nor Reason your mother
qui tant est aus amanz amere.
who so-much is to-the lovers bitter
Qui vostre mere e vous crerait
Who your mother and you would-believe
jamais par amour n'amerait».
ever by love not-would-love
Venus a plus dire ne tent,
Venus to more saying not aims
qu'il li soufisait bien de tant.
for-it her sufficed well of so-much
Lors s'est Venus haut secourciee;
Then herself-is Venus high tucked-up
bien sembla fame courrouciee;
well she-seemed woman angered
l'arc tent e le brandon encoche,
the-bow stretches and the brand notches
e quant el l'ot bien mis en coche,
and when she it-had well put in notch
jusqu'a l'oreille l'arc enteise,
until-to the-ear the-bow she-draws
qui n'iert pas plus lons d'une teise,
which not-was at-all more long than-a fathom
puis avise, com bone archiere,
then aims as good archer

par une petitete archiere
by a very-little loophole
qu'ele vit en la tour reposte,
which-she saw in the tower hidden
par devant, non pas par en coste,
by front not at-all by on side
que Nature ot par grant maistrise
which Nature had by great mastery
entre deus pilerez assise.
between two little-pillars set
Cil pileret d'argent estaient,
Those little-pillars of-silver were
mout gent, e d'argent soutenaient
very fine and of-silver supported
une image en leu de chaasse,
an image in place of reliquary
qui n'iert trop haute ne trop basse,
which not-was too high nor too low
trop grosse ou trop graille; non pas,
too big or too slender not at-all
mais toute tailliee a compas
but all cut by compass
de braz, d'espaules e de mains,
of arms of-shoulders and of hands
qu'il n'i faillait ne plus ne mains.
that-it not-there lacked neither more nor less
Mout ierent gent li autre membre;
Very were fine the other limbs

mais plus olant que pome d'ambre
but more fragrant than apple of-amber
avait dedenz un saintuaire,
it-had within a sanctuary
couvert d'un precieus suaire,
covered with-a precious shroud
le plus gentill e le plus noble
the most noble and the most noble
qui fust jusqu'en Constantinoble.
which were as-far-as-in Constantinople
E se nus, usant de raison,
And if any using of reason
voulait faire comparaison
wished to-make comparison
d'image a autre bien pourtraite,
of-image to other well portrayed
autel la peut faire de cete
such it can make of this-one
a l'image Pygmalion
to the-image (of-)Pygmalion
come de souriz a lion.
as of mouse to lion

Pygmalion's Image

LI

Pygmalion, a carver, made an ivory image so beautiful that he fell in love with it. He laments loving a deaf and dumb image, then reasons that he is less foolish than Narcissus, since he can embrace and kiss his love, though she is cold as a post. He begs her pardon on his knees, but she feels nothing.

Pygmalions, uns entaillierres,
Pygmalion a carver
pourtraianz en fuz e en pierres,
portraying in woods and in stones
en metauz, en os e en cires,
in metals in bones and in waxes
e en toutes autres matires
and in all other matters
qu'en peut a tel euvre trouver,
which-one can for such work find
pour son grant engin esprouver,
for his great skill to-prove
car onc de lui nus ne l'ot meudre,
for ever than him any not it-had better
ausinc com pour grant los acueudre,
just as for great praise to-gather
se vost a pourtraire deduire,
himself wished at portraying to-amuse
si fist une image d'ivuire,
so made an image of-ivory

e mist au faire tel entente
and put at-the making such attention
qu'el fu si plaisant e si gente
that-it was so pleasing and so gentle
qu'el semblait estre autresinc vive
that-it seemed to-be likewise alive
con la plus bele riens qui vive.
as the most fair thing which lives
N'onques Helene ne Lavine
Nor-ever Helen nor Lavinia
ne furent de couleur si fine
not were of color so fine
ne de si bone façon nees,
nor of so good fashion born
tout fussent eus bien façonees,
although were they well fashioned
ne de beauté n'orent la disme.
nor of beauty not-they-had the tithe
Touz s'esbaïst en sei meïsme
All himself-astonishes in himself same
Pygmalions quant la regarde;
Pygmalion when her he-looks-at
es vous qu'il ne s'en done garde
behold you that-he not himself-thereof gives heed
qu'Amours en ses reiseaus le lace
that-Love in his nets him laces
si fort qu'il ne set que il face;
so hard that-he not knows what he may-do
a sei meïsmes s'en complaint,
to himself same himself-thereof complains

mais ne peut estanchier son plaint.
but not can stanch his complaint
«Las! que faz je»? dist il, «dor gié?
Alas what do I said he sleep I
Mainte image ai fait e forgié
Many-an image I-have made and forged
qu'en ne savait prisier leur pris,
that-one not knew to-prize their worth
n'onc d'eus amer ne fui seurpris.
nor-ever of-them loving not I-was surprised
Or sui par cete mal bailliz;
Now am-I by this-one badly treated
par li m'est touz li sens failliz.
by her to-me-is all the sense failed
Las! don me vint cete pensee?
Alas whence to-me came this thought
Coment fu tel amour pensee?
How was such love thought
J'ain une image sourde e mue,
I-love an image deaf and dumb
qui ne se crole ne remue,
which not itself shakes nor moves
ne ja de mei merci n'avra.
nor ever of me mercy not-will-have
Tel amour coment me navra?
Such love how me wounded
Qu'il n'est nus qui paler en oie
For-it not-is any who speak thereof may-hear
qui touz esbaïr ne s'en doie.
who all be-astonished not himself-thereby ought

Or sui je li plus fos dou sicle.
Now am I the most foolish of-the world
Que puis je faire en cet article?
What can I do in this matter
Par fei, s'une reïne amasse,
By faith if-a queen I-loved
merci touteveis esperasse,
mercy nevertheless I-would-hope
pour ce que c'est chose possible;
for this that this-is thing possible
mais cete amour est si orrible
but this love is so horrible
qu'el ne vient mie de Nature;
that-it not comes at-all from Nature
trop mauvaisement m'i nature,
exceedingly badly me-there she-forms
Nature en mei mauvais fill a;
Nature in me wicked son has
quant me fist, forment s'avilla.
when me she-made greatly herself-debased
Si ne l'en dei je pas blasmer
Yet not her-thereof ought I at-all blame
se je vueil folement amer;
if I wish foolishly to-love
ne m'en dei prendre s'a moi non.
nor myself-thereof ought take if-to me not
Puis que Pygmalions oi non,
Since that Pygmalion I-had name
e poi seur mes deus piez aler,
and I-could upon my two feet go

n'oï de tel amour paler.
not-I-heard of such love speak
Si n'ain je pas trop folement,
Yet not-love I at-all too foolishly
car, se l'escriture ne ment,
for if the-writing not lies
maint ont plus folement amé.
many have more foolishly loved
N'ama jadis ou bois ramé,
Not-loved formerly in-the wood branching
a la fontaine clere e pure,
at the fountain clear and pure
Narcisus sa propre figure,
Narcissus his own figure
quant cuida sa seif estanchier?
when he-thought his thirst to-quench
N'onques ne s'en pot revenchier;
Nor-ever not himself-thereof could avenge
puis en fu morz, selonc l'estoire,
then thereof he-was dead according-to the-story
qui encore est de grant memoire.
which still is of great memory
Don sui je meins fos toutevois,
Then am I less foolish nevertheless
car, quant je vueil, a cete vois
for when I wish to this-one I-go
e la preing e l'acole e baise,
and her take and her-embrace and kiss
s'en puis meauz soufrir ma mesaise;
so-thereby I-can better suffer my distress

mais cil ne poait aveir cele
but he not could have that-one
qu'il voait en la fontenele.
which-he saw in the little-fountain
D'autre part, en maintes contrees
On-other part in many countries
ont maint maintes dames amees,
have many many ladies loved
e les servirent quanqu'il porent,
and them served whatever-they could
n'onques un seul baisier n'en orent,
nor-ever a single kiss not-thereof they-had
si s'en sont il forment pené.
yet themselves-therein are they greatly pained
Donc m'a meauz Amours assené?
Then me-has better Love provided
Non a; car a quelque doutance
Not has for in some doubt
ont cil touteveis esperance
have those nevertheless hope
e dou baisier e d'autre chose;
both of-the kiss and of-other thing
mais l'esperance m'est forclose
but the-hope to-me-is shut-out
quant au delit que cil entendent
as to-the delight which those intend
qui les deduiz d'Amours atendent;
who the delights of-Love await

car, quant je me vueil aaisier
for when I myself wish to-ease
e d'acoler e de baisier,
both of-embracing and of kissing
je truis m'amie autresinc reide
I find my-friend likewise stiff
come est un peus, e si trés freide
as is a stake and so very cold
que, quant pour li baisier i touche,
that when for her to-kiss there I-touch
toute me refreidist la bouche.
all to-me grows-cold the mouth
Ha! trop ai palé rudement.
Ah too I-have spoken rudely
Merci, douce amie, en demant,
Mercy sweet friend thereof I-ask
e pri que l'amende en preigniez,
and pray that the-amends thereof you-take
car de tant con vous me deigniez
for of so-much as you me deign
doucement regarder e rire,
sweetly to-look-at and smile
ce me deit bien, ce crei, soufire;
this me ought well this I-believe suffice
car douz regarz e ris piteus
for sweet looks and smiles merciful
sont aus amanz mout deliteus.
are to-the lovers very delightful

Pygmalions lors s'agenoille,
Pygmalion then himself-kneels
qui de lermes sa face moille
who with tears his face wets
son gage tent, si li amende;
his pledge offers so to-her makes-amends
mais el n'a cure de l'amende,
but she not-has care of the-amends
n'ele n'entent riens ne ne sent
nor-she not-hears anything nor not feels
ne de lui ne de son present;
neither of him nor of his present
si que cil craint perdre sa peine
so that he fears to-lose his pains
qui de tel chose amer se peine.
who of such thing loving himself pains
N'il n'en reset son cueur aveir,
Nor-he not-thence knows-again his heart to-have
car Amours tost sen e saveir;
for Love takes-away sense and knowledge
si que trestouz s'en desconforte.
so that all himself-thereof discomforts
Ne set s'ele est ou vive ou morte.
Not knows-he if-she is either alive or dead
Soavet aus mains la detaste,
Softly with-the hands her he-feels

e creit ausinc con ce fust paste
and believes just as this were paste
que ce seit sa char qui li fuie,
that this be her flesh which from-him flees
mais c'est sa main qu'il i apuie.
but this-is his hand which-he there presses

Pygmalion Dresses and Weds His Image

LII

Pygmalion dresses the image in fine robes, jewels, and a crown, puts rings on its fingers, and weds it, calling on Hymen and Juno. He sings, plays every instrument, and dances with it, though it will neither sing nor answer, then lays it in his bed and kisses it in vain.

Ainsinc Pygmalions estrive,
Thus Pygmalion strives
n'en son estrif n'a pais ne trive;
nor-in his strife not-has peace nor truce
en un estat point ne demeure,
in one state at-all not he-remains
or aime, or het, or rit, or pleure,
now loves now hates now laughs now weeps
or est liez, or est a mesaise,
now he-is glad now he-is at distress
or se tourmente, or se rapaise.
now himself torments now himself calms

Puis li revest en maintes guises
Then her he-clothes in many fashions
robes faites par granz maistrises
robes made by great masteries
de blans dras de soeve laine,
of white cloths of soft wool
d'escalate, de tiretaine,
of-scarlet of linsey
de vert, de pers e de brunete,
of green of blue and of brunette
de couleur fresche, fine e nete,
of color fresh fine and clean
ou mout a riches pennes mises,
where many there-are rich furs put
erminees, vaires e grises.
ermine vair and gray
Puis les li roste e puis ressaie
Then them from-her removes and then tries
con li siet bien robe de seie,
how to-her sits well robe of silk
cendaus, melequins, atebis,
sendals melequins atabis
indes, vermauz, jaunes e bis,
blue vermilion yellow and brown
samiz, diaspres, cameloz;
samites diapers camlets
pour neient fust uns angeloz,
for nothing were a little-angel
tant iert de contenance simple.
so-much she-was of countenance simple

Autre feiz li met une guimple,
Other time to-her puts a wimple
e par desus un cueuvrechief,
and over above a kerchief
qui cueuvre la guimple e le chief.
which covers the wimple and the head
Mais ne cueuvre pas le visage,
But not covers at-all the face
qu'il ne veaut pas tenir l'usage
for-he not wishes at-all to-hold the-usage
des Sarradins, qui d'estamines
of-the Saracens who with-cloths
cueuvrent les vis aus Sarradines,
cover the faces of-the Saracen-women
quant eus trespassent par la veie,
when they pass by the way
que nus trespassanz ne les veie,
that any passer not them see
tant sont plein de jalouse rage.
so-much they-are full of jealous rage
Autre feiz li reprent courage
Other time to-him takes-again courage
d'oster tout e de metre guindes
of-removing all and of putting ribbons
jaunes, vermeilles, verz e indes,
yellow red green and blue
e treçoers gentez e grailles
and braid-ties gentle and slender
de seie e d'or a menuz pelles:
of silk and of-gold with small pearls

e desus la crespine estache
and above the hairnet he-fastens
une mout precieuse estache,
a very precious clasp
e par desus la crespinete
and over above the little-hairnet
une courone d'or graillete,
a crown of-gold slender
ou mout a precieuses pierres
where many there-are precious stones
en beaus chastons a quatre quierres
in fair settings with four facets
e a quatre demiz compas;
and with four half circles
senz ce que ne vous i cont pas
without this that not to-you there I-tell at-all
l'autre perrerie menue,
the-other jewelry small
qui siet entour espesse e drue.
which sits around thick and dense
E met a ses deus oreilletes
And puts at her two little-ears
deus verges d'or pendanz grailletes;
two rods of-gold hanging slender
e pour tenir sa cheveçaille,
and for to-hold her neckline
deus fermauz d'or au col li baille;
two clasps of-gold at-the neck to-her gives
en mi le piz un en remet,
in mid the breast one thereof puts-again

e de li ceindre s'entremet;
and of her girding himself-busies
mais c'est d'un si trés riche ceint
but this-is with-a so very rich girdle
qu'onques pucele tel ne ceint;
that-ever maiden such not girds
e pent au ceint une aumosniere,
and hangs on-the girdle a purse
qui mout est precieuse e chiere,
which very is precious and dear
e cinc pierres i met petites,
and five stones there puts small
dou rivage de mer eslites,
from-the shore of sea chosen
don puceles aus marteaus jeuent,
wherewith maidens at-the jacks play
quant beles e rondes les treuent.
when fair and round them they-find
E par grant entente li chauce
And with great attention her shoes
en chascun pié soler e chauce,
on each foot shoe and stocking
entailliez jolietement
cut prettily
a deus deie dou pavement.
at two fingers from-the pavement
N'est pas de houseaus estrenee,
Not-she-is at-all with boots gifted
car el n'iert pas de Paris nee.
for she not-was at-all of Paris born

Trop par fust rude chaucemente
Exceedingly very would-be rough footwear
a pucele de tel jouvente.
for maiden of such youth
D'une agueille bien afilee
With-a needle well sharpened
d'or fin, de fil d'or enfilee,
of-gold fine with thread of-gold threaded
li a, pour meauz estre vestues,
to-her he-has for better to-be clothed
ses deus manches estreit cousues.
her two sleeves tight sewn
E li porte fleurs nouveletes,
And to-her brings flowers new
don ces jolies puceletes
whereof these pretty little-maidens
font en printens leur chapelez;
make in springtime their little-garlands
e pelotes e oiselez,
and balls and little-birds
e diverses choses nouveles,
and divers things new
delitables a dameiseles.
delightful to damsels
E chapelez de fleurs li fait;
And little-garlands of flowers for-her makes
mais n'en veïstes nul si fait,
but not-thereof you-saw any so made
car il i met s'entente toute.
for he there puts his-attention all

Anelez d'or es deiz li boute,
Little-rings of-gold on-the fingers to-her puts
e dit, con fins leiaus espous:
and says as true loyal husband
«Bele douce, ci vous espous,
Fair sweet here you I-wed
e devieng vostres e vous moie.
and I-become yours and you mine
Hymeneüs e Juno m'oie;
Hymen and Juno me-may-hear
qu'il vueillent a noz noces estre.
that-they may-wish at our wedding to-be
Je n'i quier plus ne clerc ne prestre.
I not-there seek more neither clerk nor priest
Ne de prelaz mitres ne croces,
Nor of prelates miters nor crosiers
car cist sont li vrai deu des noces.
for these are the true gods of-the weddings
Lors chante a haute voiz serie,
Then he-sings with high voice clear
touz pleins de grant renvoiserie,
all full of great merriment
en leu de messe chançonetes
in place of mass little-songs
des jolis secrez d'amouretes:
of-the pretty secrets of-love-affairs
e fait ses estrumenz soner,
and makes his instruments sound
qu'en n'i oïst pas Deu toner;
that-one not-there would-hear at-all God thunder

qu'il en a de trop de manieres;
for-he thereof has of exceedingly-many of kinds
e plus en a les mains manieres
and more thereof has the hands skilled
qu'onques n'ot Amphions de Thebes
than-ever had Amphion of Thebes
harpes a, gigues e rubebes,
harps he-has gigues and rebecs
si ra quitarres e leüz
so has-in-turn guitars and lutes
pour sei deporter eleüz,
for himself to-amuse chosen
e refait soner ses orloges
and makes-in-turn sound his clocks
par ses sales e par ses loges
through his halls and through his lodges
a roës trop soutivement,
with wheels exceedingly subtly
de pardurable mouvement.
of everlasting movement
Orgues i ra bien maniables,
Organs there he-has-in-turn well manageable
a une seule main portables,
by one single hand portable
ou il meïsmes soufle e touche,
where he himself blows and touches
e chante avec a pleine bouche
and sings with-it at full mouth
motet ou treble ou teneüre.
motet or treble or tenor

Puis met en cimbales sa cure;
Then puts in cymbals his care
puis prent freteaus, e refretele,
then takes pipes and pipes-again
e chalumeaus, e chalumele,
and reeds and plays-reed
e tabour e fleüte e timbre,
and drum and flute and timbrel
e taboure e fleüte e timbre,
and drums and flutes and timbrels
e citole e trompe e chevrie,
and citole and trumpet and bagpipe
e citole e trompe e chevrie,
and plays-citole and trumpets and pipes
e psalterion e vïele,
and psaltery and viol
e psalterione e vïele;
and plays-psaltery and plays-viol
puis prent sa muse, e puis travaille
then takes his bagpipe and then labors
aus estives de Cornoaille;
at-the pipes of Cornwall
e espingue e sautele e bale
and capers and skips and dances
e fiert dou pié par mi la sale;
and strikes with-the foot through mid the hall
e la prent par la main e dance,
and her takes by the hand and dances

mais mout a au cueur grant pesance
but much he-has at-the heart great sorrow
qu'el ne veaut chanter ne respondre,
that-she not wishes to-sing nor answer
ne pour prier ne pour semondre.
neither for praying nor for urging
Puis la rembrace, si la couche
Then her embraces-again so her lays
entre ses braz dedenz sa couche,
between his arms within his bed
e la rebaise e la racole,
and her kisses-again and her embraces-again
mais ce n'est pas de bone escole
but this not-is at-all of good school
quant deus persones s'entrebaisent,
when two persons each-other-kiss
e li baisier aus deus ne plaisent.
and the kisses to-the two not please
Ainsinc s'ocit, ainsinc s'afole,
Thus himself-kills thus himself-maddens
seurpris en sa pensee fole,
seized in his thought foolish
Pygmalions li deceüz,
Pygmalion the deceived
pour sa sourde image esmeüz.
for his deaf image moved
Quanqu'il peut la pere e atourne,
Whatever-he can her adorns and decks
car touz a li servir s'atourne,
for all to her serving himself-turns

n'el n'apert pas quant ele est nue
nor-she not-appears at-all when she is naked
meins bele que s'ele ert vestue.
less fair than if-she were clothed

Pygmalion's Prayer, and the Image Lives

LIII

At a feast in Venus's temple Pygmalion renounces chastity and prays that the image may become a living woman. Venus grants it, and he returns to find her alive; she offers him her love, and they thank the gods. She bears Paphus, after whom Paphos is named, father of Cinyras, who was tricked into lying with his daughter Myrrha.

Lors avint qu'en cele contree
Then it-happened that-in that country
ot une feste celebree
there-was a feast celebrated
ou mout avenait de merveilles;
where many happened of marvels
e vint touz li peuples aus veilles
and came all the people to-the vigils
d'un temple que Venus i ot.
of-a temple which Venus there had
Li vallez, qui mout s'i fiot,
The young-man who much himself-there trusted
pour sei de s'amour conseillier,
for himself about his-love to-counsel
vint a cele feste veillier.
came at that feast to-keep-vigil

Lors se plaint aus deus e demente
Then himself complains to-the gods and laments
de l'amour qui si le tourmente:
of the-love which so him torments
«Bel deu», dist il, «se tout poez,
Fair gods said he if all you-can
s'il vous plaist, ma requeste oez;
if-it you pleases my request hear
e tu, qui dame iés de ce temple,
and thou who lady art of this temple
sainte Venus, de grace m'emple;
holy Venus with grace me-fill
qu'ausinc iés tu mout courroucice
for-likewise art thou much angered
quant Chasteez est essauciee,
when Chastity is exalted
s'en ai grant peine deservie
so-thereof I-have great pain deserved
de ce que je l'ai tant servie.
of this that I her-have so-much served
Or m'en repent senz plus d'esloignes,
Now myself-thereof I-repent without more of-delays
e pri que tu le me pardoignes;
and pray that thou it to-me pardon
si m'otreie par ta pitié,
so me-grant by thy pity
par ta douceur, par t'amitié,
by thy sweetness by thy-friendship
par couvent que m'en fuie eschif,
by covenant that myself-thence I-flee shy

se Chasteé des or n'eschif,
if Chastity from now not-I-shun
que la bele qui mon cueur m'emble,
that the fair who my heart from-me-steals
qui si bien ivuire resemble,
who so well ivory resembles
devieigne ma leial amie,
become my loyal friend
qui de fame ait cors, ame e vie.
who of woman have body soul and life
E se de ce faire te hastes,
And if of this doing thyself thou-hastest
se je sui jamais trouvez chastes,
if I am ever found chaste
j'otrei que je seie penduz,
I-grant that I be hanged
ou a granz haches pourfenduz;
or with great axes cloven
ou que dedenz sa gueule trible
or that within his maw triple
tout vif me trangloutisse e trible,
all alive me swallow and grind
ou me lit en corde ou en fer
or me bind in rope or in iron
Cerberus, li portiers d'enfer.
Cerberus the porter of-hell

Venus, qui la priere oï
Venus who the prayer heard
dou vallet, forment s'esjoï
of-the young-man greatly herself-rejoiced
pour ce que Chasteé laissait
for this that Chastity he-left
e de li servir s'apressait,
and of her serving himself-pressed
come on de bone repentance,
as man of good repentance
prez de faire en sa penitence
ready of doing in his penance
touz nuz entre les braz s'amie,
all naked between the arms (of-)his-friend
s'il la peut ja baillier en vie,
if-he her can ever hold in life
a l'image enveia lors ame,
to the-image sent then soul
si devint si trés bele dame
so it-became so very fair lady
qu'onques en toute la contree
that-ever in all the country
n'avait l'en si bele encontree.
not-had one so fair met
N'est plus au temple sejournez,
Not-he-is more at-the temple sojourned
a son image est retournez
to his image is returned
Pygmalions a mout grant heste,
Pygmalion with very great haste

puis qu'il ot faite sa requeste,
since that-he had made his request
car plus ne se poait tarder
for more not himself could delay
de li tenir e regarder.
of her holding and looking-at
A li s'en cueurt les sauz menuz
To her himself-thence runs the leaps small
tant qu'il est jusque la venuz.
until that-he is up-to there come
Dou miracle riens ne savait,
Of-the miracle anything not he-knew
mais es deus grant fiance avait,
but in-the gods great trust he-had
e quant de plus près la regarde,
and when from more near her he-looks-at
plus art ses cueurs e frit e larde.
more burns his heart and fries and roasts
Lors veit qu'ele est vive e charnue,
Then sees that-she is alive and fleshly
si li debaille la char nue
so to-her he-bares the flesh naked
e veit les beaus crins blondeianz
and sees the fair locks blonde
come ondes ensemble ondeianz;
like waves together undulating
e sent les os e sent les veines,
and feels the bones and feels the veins
qui de sanc ierent toutes pleines,
which with blood were all full

e le pous debatre e mouveir:
and the pulse beat and move
ne set se c'est mençonge ou veir.
not knows-he if this-is lie or true
Arriers se trait, n'en set que faire,
Back himself draws not-thereof he-knows what to-do
ne s'ose mais près de li traire,
not himself-dares more near to her to-draw
qu'il a peeur d'estre enchantez.
for-he has fear of-being enchanted
Qu'est-ce?» dist il, «sui je tentez?
What-is-this said he am I tempted
Veille je pas? Nenin, ainz songe;
Wake I not No rather I-dream
mais onc ne vi si apert songe.
but ever not I-saw so plain dream
Songe! par fei, non faz, ainz veille.
Dream by faith not I-do rather I-wake
Don vient donques cete merveille?
Whence comes then this marvel
Est ce fantosme ou anemis
Is this phantom or enemy
qui s'est en mon image mis?
who himself-is in my image put
Lors li respondi la pucele,
Then to-him answered the maiden
qui tant iert avenant e bele,
who so-much was comely and fair
e tant avait blonde la come:
and so-much had blond the hair

«Ce n'est anemis ne fantosme,
This not-is enemy nor phantom
douz amis, ainz sui vostre amie,
sweet friend rather I-am your friend
preste de vostre compaignie
ready of your company
receveir, e m'amour vous ofre,
to-receive and my-love to-you I-offer
s'il vous plaist receveir tel ofre».
if-it you pleases to-receive such offer
Cil ot que la chose est a certes,
He hears that the thing is in earnest
e veit les miracles apertes,
and sees the miracles plain
si se trait près e s'asseüre.
so himself draws near and himself-reassures
Pour ce que c'est chose seüre,
For this that this-is thing sure
a li s'otreie volentiers,
to her himself-grants willingly
con cil qui siens iert touz entiers.
as he who hers was all entire
A ces paroles s'entralient,
At these words each-other-ally
de leur amour s'entremercient,
of their love each-other-thank
n'est joie qu'il ne s'entrefacent;
not-is joy that-they not each-other-make
par grant amour lors s'entrembracent,
by great love then each-other-embrace

con dui coulombel s'entrebaisent;
as two doves each-other-kiss
mout s'entraiment, mout s'entreplaisent.
much each-other-love much each-other-please
Aus deus andui graces rendirent
To-the gods both thanks rendered
qui tel courteisie leur firent,
who such courtesy to-them did
especiaumente a Venus,
especially to Venus
qui leur ot aidié meauz que nus.
who them had helped better than any
Or est Pygmalions aaise,
Now is Pygmalion at-ease
or n'est il riens qui li desplaise,
now not-is it anything which him displeases
car riens qu'il vueille el ne refuse;
for anything that-he may-wish she not refuses
s'il opose, el se rent concluse,
if-he objects she herself renders concluded
s'ele comande, il obeïst:
if-she commands he obeys
pour riens ne la contredeïst
for anything not her he-would-contradict
d'acomplir li tout son desir.
of-accomplishing for-her all her desire
Or peut o s'amie gesir,
Now he-can with his-friend lie
qu'el n'en fait ne dangier ne plainte.
for-she not-thereof makes neither difficulty nor complaint

Tant ont joé qu'ele est enceinte
So-much they-have played that-she is pregnant
de Paphus, don dit renomee
of Paphus whence says renown
que l'isle en fu Paphos nomee,
that the-isle thereof was Paphos named
don li reis Cynaras nasqui,
whence the king Cinyras was-born
preudon, fors en un seul cas, qui
worthy-man except in one single case who
touz bons eürs eüst eüz
all good fortunes would-have had
s'il n'eüst esté deceüz
if-he not-had been deceived
par Mirra, sa fille, la blonde,
by Myrrha his daughter the blond
que la vieille, que Deus confonde,
whom the old-woman whom God confound
qui de pechié doutance n'a,
who of sin fear not-has
par nuit en son lit li mena.
by night into his bed to-him led
La reïne iert a une feste:
The queen was at a feast
la pucele saisist en heste
the maiden seizes in haste
li reis, senz ce que mot seüst
the king without this that word he-knew
qu'o sa fille gesir deüst.
that-with his daughter lie he-should

Ci ot trop estrange semille,
Here there-was exceedingly strange trick
le rei lait gesir o sa fille.
the king she-lets lie with his daughter
Quant les ot ensemble aünez,
When them she-had together united
li beaus Adonis en fu nez,
the fair Adonis thereof was born
puis qu'el fu en arbre muee.
after that-she was into tree changed
Mais ses peres l'eüst tuee,
But her father her-would-have killed
quant il aperçut le tripot;
when he perceived the trick
mais onques avenir n'i pot,
but ever arrive not-there he-could
quant ot fait aporter le cierge;
when he-had made bring the candle
car cele qui n'iere mais vierge
for she who not-was more virgin
eschapa par inele fuite,
escaped by swift flight
qu'il l'eüst autrement destruite.
for-he her-would-have otherwise destroyed
Mais c'est trop loing de ma matire,
But this-is too far from my matter
pour c'est bien dreiz qu'arriers m'en tire;
for this-is well right that-back myself-thence I-draw

bien orreiz que ce senefie
well you-will-hear what this signifies
ainz que cete euvre seit fenie.
before that this work be finished

Venus Fires the Castle

LIV

The image between the pillars surpasses Pygmalion's, and the lover vows to visit those relics with scrip and staff. Venus shoots her brand, the castle burns, and Danger, Fear, and Shame flee. Courtesy, with Pity and Franchise, urges Fair Welcome to accept the lover, quoting Vergil's "Love conquers all," and Fair Welcome grants him the rose.

Ne vous vueil or plus ci tenir,
Not you I-wish now more here to-hold
a mon propos dei revenir,
to my purpose I-ought return
qu'autre champ me couvient arer.
for-other field me behooves to-plow
Qui voudrait donques comparer
Who would-wish then to-compare
de ces deus images ensemble
of these two images together
les beautez, si come il me semble,
the beauties so as it to-me seems
tel similitude i peut prendre,
such likeness there can take

qu'autant con la souriz est mendre
that-as-much as the mouse is less
que li lions, e meins cremue,
than the lion and less feared
de cors, de force e de value,
of body of strength and of value
autant, sachiez en leiauté,
as-much know in loyalty
ot cele image meins beauté
had that image less beauty
que n'a cele que tant ci pris.
than has that which so-much here I-prize
Bien avisa dame Cypris
Well aimed lady Cypris
cele image que je devise,
that image which I describe
entre les pilerez assise,
between the little-pillars set
enz en la tour, dreit ou mileu.
in in the tower right in-the middle
Onques encore ne vi leu
Ever yet not I-saw place
que si volentiers regardasse,
which so willingly I-would-look-at
veire a genoillons l'aourasse;
indeed on kneelings it-I-would-worship
e le saintuaire e l'archiere,
both the sanctuary and the-loophole
ja nou laissasse pour l'archiere,
ever not-it I-would-leave for the-loophole

ne pour l'arc, ne pour le brandon,
nor for the-bow nor for the brand
e que n'i entrasse a bandon.
and that there I-would-enter at liberty
Mon poeir au meins en feïsse,
My power at-the least thereof I-would-do
a quelque chief que j'en venisse,
to whatever end that I-thereof came
se trouvasse qui le m'ofrist,
if I-found who it to-me-offered
ou, senz plus, qui le me sofrist.
or without more who it to-me allowed
Si m'i sui je par Deu voez,
So myself-there am I by God vowed
aus reliques que vous oez,
by-the relics that you hear
que, se Deu plaist, jes requerrai
that if God pleases I-them will-seek
si tost con tens e leu verrai,
so soon as time and place I-will-see
d'escharpe e de bourdon garniz.
with-scrip and with staff furnished
Que Deus me gart d'estre escharniz
That God me keep from-being mocked
e destourbez pour nule chose
and hindered for any thing
que ne joïsse de la rose!
that — I-enjoy of the rose

Venus n'i va plus atardant:
Venus not-there goes more delaying
le brandon plein de feu ardant
the brand full of fire burning
tout empené laisse voler,
all feathered lets fly
pour ceus dou chastel afoler;
for those of-the castle to-wound
mais sachiez qu'onc nule ne nus,
but know that-ever any-woman nor any-man
tant le traist soutilment Venus,
so-much it shot subtly Venus
ne l'orent poeir de choisir,
not it-had power of discerning
tant i gardassent a loisir.
however-much there they-looked at leisure
Quant li brandons s'en fu volez,
When the brand itself-thence was flown
es vous ceus dedenz afolez;
behold you those within maddened
li feus pourprent tout le pourpris;
the fire seizes all the enclosure
bien se durent tenir pour pris.
well themselves they-ought hold for taken
Tuit s'escrient: «Traï? traï?
All themselves-cry-out Betrayed betrayed
Tuit somes mort! aï! aï!
All we-are dead ah ah
Fuions nous en hors dou païs».
Let-us-flee us thence out of-the country

Chascuns giete ses clés laïs.
Each throws his keys there
Dangiers, li orribles maufez,
Danger the horrible devil
quant il se senti eschaufez,
when he himself felt heated
s'en fuit plus tost que cers en lande.
himself-thence flees more soon than hart in heath
N'i ra nul d'aus qui l'autre atende;
Not-there is-in-turn any of-them who the-other await
chascuns, les pans a la ceinture,
each the skirts at the girdle
met au foïr toute sa cure.
puts at-the fleeing all his care
Fuit s'en Peeur, Honte s'eslaisse,
Flees herself-thence Fear Shame herself-rushes
tout embrasé le chastel laisse;
all ablaze the castle she-leaves
n'onc puis ne vost riens metre a pris
nor-ever then not she-wished anything to-put at worth
que Raison li eüst apris.
which Reason her had taught
Estes vous venir Courteisie;
Behold you come Courtesy
la preuz, la bele, la preisie,
the worthy the fair the praised
quant el vit la desconfiture,
when she saw the defeat
pour son fill oster de l'ardure,
for her son to-remove from the-burning

avec li Pitié e Franchise,
with her Pity and Franchise
saillirent dedenz la pourprise,
leapt within the enclosure
n'onc pour l'ardure nou laissierent,
nor-ever for the-burning not-it they-left
jusqu'a Bel Acueil ne cessierent.
until-to Fair Welcome not they-ceased
Courteisie prent la parole,
Courtesy takes the word
prumiere a Bel Acueil parole,
first to Fair Welcome speaks
car de bien dire n'iert pas lente:
for of well saying not-she-was at-all slow
«Beaus fiz, mout ai esté dolente.
Fair son much I-have been grieving
Mout ai tristece au cueur eüe
Much I-have sadness at-the heart had
don tant avez prison tenue.
whereby so-long you-have prison held
Maus feus e male flambe l'arde,
Evil fire and evil flame him-burn
qui vous avait mis en tel garde!
who you had put in such keeping
Or estes, Deu merci, delivres,
Now you-are God mercy free
quant la fors, o ses Normanz ivres,
since there outside with his Normans drunk

en ces fossez est morz gisanz
in these ditches is dead lying
Male Bouche li mesdisanz;
Wicked Tongue the slanderer
voeir ne peut ne escouter.
see not he-can nor listen
Jalousie n'esteut douter;
Jealousy not-it-is-needful to-fear
l'en ne deit pas pour Jalousie
one not ought at-all for Jealousy
laissier a mener bone vie,
leave to lead good life
ne soulacier priveement
nor take-solace privately
a son ami, meïsmement
with one's friend especially
quant a ce vient qu'el n'a poeir
when to this it-comes that-she not-has power
de la chose oïr ne voeir;
of the thing hearing nor seeing
n'il n'est qui dire la li puisse,
nor-it not-is who tell it to-her can
n'el n'a poeir que ci vous truisse.
nor-she not-has power that here you she-find
E li autre desconseillié
And the others helpless
foï s'en sont tuit esseillié,
fled themselves-thence are all exiled

li felon, li outrecuidié:
the wicked the presumptuous
trestuit ont le pourpris vuidié.
all have the enclosure emptied
Beaus trés douz fiz, pour Deu merci,
Fair very sweet son for God mercy
ne vous laissiez pas bruler ci;
not yourself let at-all burn here
nous vous prions par amitié,
we you pray by friendship
e je e Franchise e Pitié,
both I and Franchise and Pity
que vous a ce leial amant
that you to this loyal lover
otreiez qu'il de vous ament,
grant that-he of you may-amend
qui lonc tens a pour vous maus trait,
who long time has for you ills drawn
n'onques ne vous fist un faus trait
nor-ever not to-you did a false stroke
li frans, qui onques ne guila.
the noble who ever not tricked
Recevez lui e quanqu'il a:
Receive him and whatever-he has
veire l'ame neïs vous ofre:
indeed the-soul even to-you he-offers
pour Deu, ne refusez tel ofre,
for God not refuse such offer
beaus douz fiz, ainz la recevez,
fair sweet son rather it receive

par la fei que vous me devez,
by the faith that you to-me owe
e par Amours qui s'en efforce,
and by Love who himself-therein strives
qui mout i a mise grant force.
who much there has put great force
Beaus fiz, Amours vaint toutes choses,
Fair son Love conquers all things
toutes sont souz sa clef encloses.
all are under his key enclosed
Virgiles neïs le conferme
Vergil even it confirms
par sentence courteise e ferme.
by sentence courteous and firm
Quant Bucoliques cerchereiz,
When Bucolics you-will-search
«Amours vaint tout» i trouvereiz;
Love conquers all there you-will-find
«e nous la devons receveir».
and we it ought receive
Certes il dit e bien e veir.
Certainly he says both well and true
En un seul vers tout ce nous conte;
In one single verse all this to-us he-tells
n'i peüst conter meilleur conte.
not-there could tell better tale
Beaus fiz, secourez cel amant,
Fair son succor that lover
que Deus ambedeus vous ament!
that God both you may-amend

Otreiez li la rose en don.
Grant him the rose in gift
— Dame, je la li abandon», 21340
Lady I it to-him I-give-over
fait Bel Acueil, «mout volentiers,
says Fair Welcome very willingly
cuillir la peut endementiers
pluck it he-can meanwhile
que nous ne somes ci que dui.
that we not are here but two
Pieç'a que receveir le dui,
Long-ago that receive him I-ought
car bien vei qu'il aime senz guile.» 21345
for well I-see that-he loves without guile

The Pilgrim's Gear

LV

The lover sets out for the loophole like a pilgrim with his scrip, which holds two little hammers, and his staff, both Nature's gifts. He has used his staff to test fords and has never drowned. He leaves the wide roads to others and keeps to the little paths.

Je, qui l'en rent merciz cent mile,
I who him-thereof render thanks a-hundred thousand
tantost, come bons pelerins,
at-once as good pilgrim
hastis, fervenz e enterins,
hasty fervent and whole
de cueur, come fins amoureus,
of heart as true lover

emprès cet otrei savoureus,
after this grant savory
vers l'archiere acueil mon veiage,
toward the-loophole I-take my journey
pour fournir mon pelerinage;
for to-accomplish my pilgrimage
e port o mei, par grant effort,
and carry with me by great effort
escharpe e bourdon reide e fort,
scrip and staff stiff and strong
tel qu'il n'a mestier de ferrer
such that-it not-has need of shoeing
pour journeier ne pour errer.
for journeying nor for traveling
L'escharpe est de bone faiture,
The-scrip is of good making
d'une pel souple senz cousture;
of-a skin supple without seam
mais sachiez qu'el n'iere pas vuide:
but know that-it not-was at-all empty
deus martelez par grant estuide,
two little-hammers by great study
car nus n'euvre, si con mei semble,
for any not-works so as to-me seems
diligemment e tost ensemble,
diligently and soon together
Nature, qui la me bailla,
Nature who it to-me gave
des lors que primes la tailla,
from then that first it she-cut

soutilment forgiez i avait,
subtly forged there had
con cele qui forgier savait
as she who to-forge knew
meauz qu'onques Dedalus ne sot.
better than-ever Daedalus — knew
Si crei que pour ce faiz les ot
So I-believe that for this made them she-had
qu'el pensait que j'en ferreraie
for-she thought that I-therewith would-shoe
mes palefreiz quant j'erreraie.
my palfreys when I-would-travel
Si ferai je certainement,
So will-do I certainly
se j'en puis aveir l'aisement,
if I-thereof can have the-opportunity
car, Deu merci, bien forgier sai.
for God mercy well to-forge I-know
Si vous di bien que plus chiers ai
So to-you I-say well that more dear I-have
mes deus martelez e m'escharpe
my two little-hammers and my-scrip
que ma citole ne ma harpe.
than my citole nor my harp
Mout me fist grant eneur Nature
Much to-me did great honor Nature
quant m'arma de cete armeüre,
when me-she-armed with this armor

e m'en enseigna si l'usage
and me-thereof taught so the-usage
qu'el m'en fist bon ouvrier e sage.
that-she me-thereof made good workman and wise
Ele meïsmes le bourdon
She herself the staff
m'avait apareillié pour don,
for-me-had prepared for gift
e vost au doler la main metre
and wished at-the hewing the hand to-put
ainz que je fusse mis a letre;
before that I were put to letters
mais dou ferrer ne li chalut,
but of-the shoeing not to-her it-mattered
n'onques pour ce meins n'en valut.
nor-ever for this less not-thereof it-was-worth
E puis que je l'oi receü,
And since that I it-had received
près de mei l'ai toujourz eü,
near to me it-I-have always had
si que nou perdi onques puis,
so that not-it lost-I ever since
ne nou perdrai pas, se je puis;
nor not-it I-will-lose at-all if I can
car n'en voudraie estre delivres
for not-thereof I-would-wish to-be rid
pour cinc cenz feiz cent mile livres.
for five hundred times a-hundred thousand pounds
Beau don m'en fist, pour ce le gart;
Fair gift me-thereof she-made for this it I-keep

e mout sui liez quant le regart,
and much am-I glad when it I-regard
e la merci de son present,
and her I-thank for her present
liez e jolis quant je le sent.
glad and merry when I it feel
Maintes feiz m'a puis conforté
Many times me-it-has since comforted
en mainz leus ou je l'ai porté.
in many places where I it-have carried
Bien me sert; e savez de quei?
Well me it-serves and know-you of what
Quant sui en aucun leu requei,
When I-am in some place secluded
e je chemine, je le boute
and I travel I it thrust
es fosses ou je ne vei goute,
into-the ditches where I not see drop
ausinc com pour les guez tenter,
just as for the fords to-test
si que je me puis bien vanter
so that I myself can well boast
que n'i ai garde de neier,
that not-there I-have fear of drowning
tant sai bien les guez essaier;
so-much I-know well the fords to-test
e fier par rives e par fonz;
and I-strike by banks and by bottoms
mais j'en retruis de si parfonz,
but I-thereof find-in-turn of so deep

e qui tant ont larges les rives,
and which so-much have wide the banks
qu'il me greverait meins deus lives
that-it me would-grieve less two leagues
seur la marine esbaneier
upon the shore to-amuse
e le rivage costeier;
and the bank to-coast
e meins m'i pourraie lasser
and less myself-there I-could tire
que si perilleus guez passer,
than so perilous fords to-pass
car trop les ai granz essaiez;
for exceedingly them I-have great tested
e si n'i sui je pas neiez;
and yet not-there am I at-all drowned
car, si tost con je les tentaie,
for so soon as I them tested
e d'entrer enz m'entremetaie,
and of-entering in myself-I-busied
e teus les avaie esprouvez
and such them I-had proved
que jamais fonz n'i fust trouvez
that ever bottom not-there were found
par perche ne par aviron,
by pole nor by oar
je m'en alaie a l'environ,
I myself-thence went to the-around
e près des rives me tenaie,
and near the banks myself I-held

tant que hors en la fin venaie.
until that out in the end I-came
Mais jamais issir n'en peüsse,
But ever go-out not-thence I-could
se les armeüres n'eüsse
if the arms not-I-had
que Nature m'avait donees.
which Nature to-me-had given
Mais or laissons ces veies lees
But now let-us-leave these ways wide
a ceus qui les vont volentiers,
to those who them go willingly
e nous les deduisanz sentiers,
and we the delightful paths
non pas les chemins aus charretes,
not at-all the roads for-the carts
mais les jolies senteletes,
but the pretty little-paths
joli e renveisié tenons,
merry and jolly let-us-hold
qui les jolietez menons.
who the merriments lead

Old Roads and New Paths

LVI

Old roads, he admits, yield more, and Juvenal and Ovid say rich old women reward a young man well. But old women, deceived before, spot deceit at once, unlike young girls, who trust flatterers as a bird or quail answers the fowler's call. Whoever likes one or the other should try both, for contraries explain each other, and one cannot know ease without having known distress.

Si rest plus de gaaing rentiers
Yet is-in-turn more of gain yielding
veauz chemins que nouveaus sentiers,
old road than new paths
e plus i treuve l'en d'aveir,
and more there finds one of-wealth
don l'en peut grant profit aveir.
whereof one can great profit have
Juvenaus meïsmes afiche
Juvenal himself affirms
que, qui se met en vieille riche,
that who himself puts in old-woman rich
s'il veaut a grant estat venir,
if-he wishes to great estate to-come
ne peut plus brief chemin tenir:
not can more brief road hold
s'el prent son servise de gré,
if-she takes his service of will
tantost le boute en haut degré.
at-once him thrusts in high degree

Ovides meïsmes aferme
Ovid himself affirms
par sentence esprouvee e ferme
by sentence proved and firm
que qui se veaut a vieille prendre
that who himself wishes to old-woman to-take
mout en peut grant loier atendre.
much thereof can great reward expect
Tantost est grant richece aquise
At-once is great riches acquired
par mener tel marcheandise.
by leading such merchandise
Mais bien se gart qui vieille prie
But well himself let-guard who old-woman woos
qu'il ne face riens ne ne die
that-he not do anything nor not say
qui ja puisse aguiet resembler,
which ever may ambush resemble
quant il li veaut s'amour embler;
when he from-her wishes her-love to-steal
ou leiaument neïs aquerre,
or loyally even to-acquire
quant Amours en ses laz l'enserre;
when Love in his snares him-locks
car les dures vieilles chenues,
for the hard old-women hoary
qui de jennece sont venues,
who from youth are come

ou jadis ont esté flatees
where formerly they-have been flattered
e seurprises e baratees,
and surprised and cheated
quant plus ont esté deceües,
when more they-have been deceived
plus tost se sont aperceües
more soon themselves are perceived
des baraterresses faveles
of-the cheating tales
que ne sont les tendres puceles,
than — are the tender maidens
qui des aguiez point ne se doutent
who of-the ambushes at-all not themselves fear
quant les fleüteeurs escoutent,
when the flute-players they-listen-to
ainz creient que baraz e guile
rather believe that fraud and guile
seit ausinc veirs come evangile;
be as true as gospel
car onc n'en furent eschaudees.
for ever not-thereby they-were scalded
Mais les dures vieilles ridees,
But the hard old-women wrinkled
malicieuses e recuites,
malicious and twice-cooked
sont en l'art de barat si duites,
are in the-art of fraud so trained

don eus ont toute la science
whereof they have all the knowledge
par tens e par experience,
by time and by experience
que, quant li flajoleeur vienent,
that when the pipers come
qui par faveles les detienent,
who by tales them detain
e aus oreilles leur tabourent,
and at-the ears to-them drum
quant de leur grace aveir labourent,
when of their grace having they-labor
e soupirent e s'umelient,
and sigh and themselves-humble
joignent leur mains e merci crient,
join their hands and mercy cry
e s'enclinent e s'agenoillent,
and themselves-bow and themselves-kneel
e pleurent si que tuit se moillent,
and weep so that all themselves wet
e devant eus se crucefient,
and before them themselves crucify
pour ce que plus en aus se fient,
for this that more in them themselves they-trust
e leur prometent par feintises
and to-them promise by feints
cueurs e cors, aveirs et servises,
hearts and bodies wealth and services

e leur fiancent e leur jurent
and to-them pledge and to-them swear
les sainz qui sont, seront e furent,
the saints who are will-be and were
e les vont ainsinc decevant
and them go thus deceiving
par parole ou il n'a que vent,
by word where it not-has but wind
ainsinc con fait li oiselierres,
just as does the fowler
qui tent a l'oisel come lierres,
who aims at the-bird like thief
e l'apele par douz sonez,
and it-calls by sweet little-sounds
muciez entre les boissonez,
hidden among the little-bushes
pour lui faire a son brei venir,
for it to-make to his snare come
tant que pris le puisse tenir.
until that taken it he-can hold
Li fos oiseaus de lui s'aprime,
The foolish bird to him itself-approaches
qui ne set respondre au sofime
which not knows to-answer to-the sophism
qui l'a mis en decepcion
which it-has put in deception
par figure de diccion,
by figure of diction
si con fait li cailliers la caille,
so as does the quail-catcher the quail

pour ce que dedenz la reiz saille;
for this that within the net it-leap
e la caille le son escoute,
and the quail the sound listens-to
si s'en apresse, e puis se boute
so itself-thence approaches and then itself thrusts
souz la reiz que cil a tendue
under the net which he has stretched
seur l'erbe en printens fresche e drue;
upon the-grass in springtime fresh and thick
se n'est aucune caille vieille,
if not-it-is some quail old
qui venir au caillier ne vueille,
which come to-the quail-catcher not may-wish
tant est eschaudee e batue,
so-much it-is scalded and beaten
qu'ele a bien autre reiz veüe,
for-it has well other net seen
don el s'est espeir eschapee
whence it itself-is perhaps escaped
quant ele i dut estre hapee
when it there was-to be snatched
par entre les erbes petites.
by between the grasses small
Ausinc les vieilles devant dites,
Likewise the old-women before said
qui jadis ont esté requises,
who formerly have been courted
e des requereeurs seurprises,
and by-the suitors surprised

par les paroles qu'eles oient
by the words which-they hear
e les contenances qu'eus voient
and the demeanors which-they see
de loing les aguiez aperceivent,
from far the ambushes perceive
par quei plus enviz les receivent.
by which more hardly them they-receive
Ou, s'il le font neïs a certes,
Or if-they it do even in earnest
pour aveir d'Amours les desertes,
for to-have of-Love the rewards
come cil qui sont pris ou laz
as those who are taken in-the snare
don tant est plaisanz li soulaz,
whereof so-much is pleasing the solace
e li travail tant delitable
and the toil so delightful
que riens ne leur est si greable
that anything not to-them is so agreeable
come est cete esperance grieve
as is this hope grievous
qui tant leur plaist e tant leur grieve,
which so-much them pleases and so-much them grieves
sont eles en grant soupeçon
are they in great suspicion
d'estre prises a l'ameçon;
of-being taken at the-hook

e oreillent e s'estudient
and listen and themselves-study
se cil veir ou fables leur dient;
if they truth or fables to-them say
e vont paroles soupesant,
and go words weighing
tant redoutent barat present,
so-much they-fear fraud present
pour ceus qu'eus ont jadis passez,
for those which-they have formerly passed
don il leur membre encore assez.
whereof it to-them recalls still enough
Toujourz cuide chascune vieille
Always thinks each old-woman
que chascuns deceveir la vueille.
that each to-deceive her wishes
E s'il vous plaist a ce flechir
And if-it you pleases to this to-bend
voz cueurs, pour plus tost enrechir;
your hearts for more soon to-enrich
ou vous qui delit i savez,
or you who delight there know
se regart au delit avez,
if regard to-the delight you-have
bien poez cet chemin tracier,
well you-can this road trace
pour vous deduire e soulacier.
for yourselves to-amuse and solace
E vous qui les jennes voulez,
And you who the young want

que par mei n'i seiez boulez,
that by me not-there you-be deceived
que que mes maistres me comant,
whatever that my master me command
si sont mout bel tuit si comant,
yet are very fair all his commands
bien vous redi pour chose veire,
well to-you I-say-again for thing true
creie m'en qui m'en voudra creire,
let-believe me-thereof who me-thereof will-wish to-believe
qu'il fait bon de tout essaier
that-it makes good of all testing
pour sei meauz es biens esgaier,
for oneself better in-the goods to-rejoice
ausinc con fait li bons lechierres
just as does the good glutton
qui des morseaus est quenoissierres,
who of-the morsels is connoisseur
e de pluseurs viandes taste,
and of several foods tastes
en pot, en rost, en souz, en paste,
in pot in roast in pickle in pastry
en friture e en galantine,
in fry and in galantine
quant entrer peut en la cuisine,
when enter he-can into the kitchen
e set loer, e set blasmer
and knows to-praise and knows to-blame
li quel sont douz, li quel amer;
the which are sweet the which bitter

car de pluseurs en a goustez.
for of several thereof he-has tasted
Ausinc sachiez, e n'en doutez,
Likewise know and not-thereof doubt
que qui mal essaié n'avra
that who evil tested not-will-have
ja dou bien guieres ne savra;
ever of-the good much not will-know
ne qui ne set d'eneur que monte
nor who not knows of-honor what it-amounts
ja ne savra quenoistre honte;
ever not will-know to-recognize shame
n'onc nus ne sot quel chose est aise
nor-ever any not knew what thing is ease
s'il n'ot avant apris mesaise,
if-he not-had before learned distress
ne n'est pas dignes d'aise aveir
nor not-is at-all worthy of-ease having
qui ne veaut mesaise saveir;
who not wishes distress to-know
e qui bien ne la set sofrir,
and who well not it knows to-suffer
nus ne li devrait aise ofrir.
any not to-him ought ease offer
Ainsinc va des contraires choses:
Thus it-goes with-the contrary things
les unes sont des autres gloses;
the ones are of-the others glosses
e qui l'une en veaut defenir,
and who the-one thereof wishes to-define

de l'autre li deit souvenir,
of the-other to-him ought come-to-mind
ou ja, par nule entencion,
or ever by any intention
n'i metra diffinicion;
not-there he-will-put definition
car qui des deus n'a quenoissance
for who of-the two not-has knowledge
ja n'i quenoistra diference,
ever not-there will-know difference
senz quei ne peut venir en place
without which not can come into place
diffinicion que l'en face.
definition that one may-make

The Pilgrimage to the Relics

LVII

The lover kneels between the pillars, kisses the image, and tries to thrust his staff into the loophole, but a palisade within throws it back. After many blows, like Hercules at Cacus's door, he breaks the palisade and passes the staff through, though the scrip stays outside. He was the first to pass that way, and he describes it for young men who will gather roses.

Tout mon harneis tel con jou port,
All my gear such as I-it carry
se porter le puis jusqu'ou port,
if carry it I-can until-to-the port
voudrai aus reliques touchier,
I-will-wish to-the relics to-touch

se je l'en puis tant aprouchier.
if I it-thereto can so-much bring-near
Lors ai tant fait e tant erré,
Then I-have so-much done and so-much traveled
a tout mon bourdon desferré,
with all my staff unshod
qu'entre les deus beaus pilerez,
that-between the two fair little-pillars
con viguereus e legerez,
as vigorous and nimble
m'agenoillai senz demourer;
myself-I-knelt without delaying
car mout oi grant fain d'aourer
for much I-had great hunger of-worshiping
le bel saintuaire enourable
the fair sanctuary honorable
de cueur devot e piteable;
with heart devout and pious
car touz iert ja tombez par terre;
for all was already fallen on ground
qu'au feu ne peut riens tenir guerre
for-to-the fire not can anything hold war
que tout par terre mis n'eüst,
that all on ground put not-it-had
senz ce que de riens i neüst.
without this that in anything there it-harmed
Trais en sus un po la courtine
I-drew on high a little the curtain
qui les reliques encourtine;
which the relics curtains

de l'image lors m'apressai
to the-image then myself-I-approached
que dou saintuaire près sai;
which to-the sanctuary near I-know
mout la baisai devotement,
much it I-kissed devoutly
e, pour estuier sauvement,
and for to-store safely
vos mon bourdon metre en l'archiere,
I-wished my staff to-put in the-loophole
ou l'escharpe pendait darriere.
where the-scrip hung behind
Bien l'i cuidai lancier de bout,
Well it-there I-thought to-thrust from end
mais il resort, e jou rebout,
but it rebounds and I-it thrust-again
mais riens ne vaut, toujourz recule.
but anything not avails always it-recoils
N'i peut entrer pour chose nule,
Not-there it-can enter for thing any
car un paliz dedenz trouvai,
for a palisade within I-found
que je bien sent, mais pas nou vei,
which I well feel but at-all not-it I-see
don l'archiere iert dedenz hourdee,
wherewith the-loophole was within barricaded
des lors qu'el fu primes fondee,
from then that-it was first founded
auques près de la bordeüre:
somewhat near to the border

s'en iert plus fort e plus seüre.
so-thereby it-was more strong and more secure
Forment m'i couvint assaillir,
Strongly me-there it-behooved to-assail
souvent hurter, souvent failir.
often strike often fail
Se behourder m'i veïssiez,
If joust me-there you-had-seen
pour quei bien garde i preïssiez, 21620
provided that well heed there you-took
d'Herculès vous peüst membrer,
of-Hercules you could remind
quant il vost Cacus desmembrer.
when he wished Cacus to-dismember
Treis feiz a sa porte assailli,
Three times at his gate assailed
treis feiz hurta, treis feiz failli,
three times struck three times failed
treis feiz s'assist en la valee, 21625
three times himself-sat in the valley
touz las, pour raveir s'alenee,
all weary for to-have-again his-breath
tant ot sofert peine e travail.
so-much he-had suffered pain and toil
E je, qui ci tant me travail
And I who here so-much myself toil
que trestouz en tressu d'angoisse,
that all thereby I-sweat with-anguish
quant ce paliz tantost ne froisse, 21630
when this palisade at-once not I-break

sui bien, ce cuit, autant lassez
am well this I-think as-much tired
come Herculès, ou plus assez.
as Hercules or more much
Tant ai hurté que touteveie
So-much I-have struck that nevertheless
m'aperçui d'une estreite veie,
myself-I-perceived of-a narrow way
par ou bien cuit outre passer;
by where well I-think beyond to-pass
mais le paliz m'esteut casser.
but the palisade me-it-is-needful to-break
Par la sentele que j'ai dite,
By the little-path which I-have told
qui tant iert estreite e petite,
which so-much was narrow and small
par ou le passage quis ai,
by where the passage sought I-have
le paliz au bourdon brisai:
the palisade with-the staff I-broke
sui mei dedenz l'archiere mis;
am myself within the-loophole put
mais je n'i entrai pas demis.
but I not-there entered at-all half
Pesait mei que plus n'i entraie;
Grieved me that more not-there I-entered
mais outre poeir ne poaie.
but beyond power not I-could

Mais pour riens nule ne laissasse
But for thing any not I-would-leave
que le bourdon tout n'i passasse:
that the staff all there I-passed
outre l'ai passé senz demeure;
beyond it-I-have passed without delay
mais l'escharpe dehors demeure,
but the-scrip outside remains
o les martelez rebillanz,
with the little-hammers dangling
qui dehors ierent pendillanz;
which outside were hanging
e si m'en mis en grant destreit,
and so myself-thereby I-put in great strait
tant trouvai le passage estreit;
so-much I-found the passage narrow
car largement ne fust ce pas
for widely not were this at-all
que je trespassasse le pas;
that I passed the pass
e se bien l'estre dou pas sai,
and if well the-being of-the pass I-know
nus n'i avait onques passé;
any not-there had ever passed
car j'i passai touz li prumiers;
for I-there passed all the first
n'encor n'iere pas coustumiers
nor-yet not-was at-all accustomed
li leus de receveir paages.
the place of receiving tolls

Ne sai s'il fist puis d'avantages
Not I-know if-it did since of-advantages
autant'aus autres come a mei;
as-much-to-the others as to me
mais bien vous di que tant l'amai
but well to-you I-say that so-much it-I-loved
que je ne le poi onques creire,
that I not it could ever believe
neïs se ce fust chose veire;
even if this were thing true
car nus de legier chose amee
for any with ease thing loved
ne mescreit, tant seit diffamee;
not disbelieves however-much be-it defamed
ne si ne le crei pas encores.
nor yet not it believe-I at-all still
Mais au meins sai je bien que lores
But at-the least know I well that then
n'iert il ne freiez ne batuz.
not-was it neither worn nor beaten
E pour ce m'i sui embatuz
And for this myself-there I-am thrust
que d'autre entree n'i a point
for of-other entrance not-there is at-all
pour le bouton cuillir a point.
for the bud to-gather at point
Si savreiz con je m'i contin,
So you-will-know how I myself-there conducted
tant qu'a mon gré le bouton tin.
until that-at my will the bud I-held

Le fait orreiz e la maniere,
The deed you-will-hear and the manner
pour ce que, se mestier vous iere,
for this that if need to-you will-be
quant la douce saison vendra,
when the sweet season will-come
seigneur vallet, qu'il couvendra
lords young-men that-it will-behoove
que vous ailliez cuillir les roses,
that you go to-gather the roses
ou les ouvertes ou les closes,
either the open or the closed
que si sagement i ailliez
that so wisely there you-go
que vous au cuillir ne failliez.
that you at-the gathering not fail
Faites si con vous m'orreiz faire,
Do so as you me-will-hear do
se meauz n'en savez a chief traire;
if better not-thereof you-know to end draw
car, se vous plus largetement,
for if you more widely
ou meauz, ou plus soutivement,
or better or more subtly
poez le passage passer
can the passage pass
senz vous destreindre ne lasser,
without yourselves straining nor tiring
si le passez en vostre guise,
so it pass in your fashion

quant vous avreiz la meie aprise.
when you will-have the mine learned
Tant avez au meins d'avantage
So-much you-have at-the least of-advantage
que je vous apreing mon usage
that I you teach my usage
senz riens prendre de vostre aveir:
without anything taking of your wealth
si m'en devez bon gré saveir.
so to-me-thereof you-ought good thanks know

The Rose Plucked

LVIII

Fair Welcome asks him to do no outrage, and the lover takes hold of the rosebush, shakes it, and loosens the bud, spilling a little seed and spreading it open. Among kisses he thanks Love, Venus, and the barons, forgets Reason, and in spite of Wealth and Jealousy plucks the flower of the rose; then it is day, and he wakes.

Quant j'iere ileuc si empressiez,
When I-was there so pressed
tant fui dou rosier apressiez
so-much I-was to-the rosebush come-near
qu'a mon vouleir poi les mains tendre
that-at my will I-could the hands stretch
aus rainseaus pour le bouton prendre.
to-the branches for the bud to-take

Bel Acueil pour Deu me priait
Fair Welcome for God me prayed
que nul outrage fait n'i ait;
that any outrage done not-there be
e je li mis mout en couvent,
and I to-him put much in covenant
pour ce qu'il m'en priait souvent,
for this that-he me-thereof prayed often
que ja nule rien n'i feraie
that ever any thing not-there I-would-do
fors sa volenté e la meie.
except his will and the mine
Par les rains saisi le rosier,
By the branches I-seized the rosebush
qui plus sont franc que nul osier,
which more are supple than any willow
e quant a deus mains m'i poi joindre,
and when with two hands myself-there I-could join
trestout soavet, senz mei poindre,
all softly without myself pricking
le bouton pris a eslochier,
the bud I-took to loosen
qu'enviz l'eüsse senz hochier.
for-hardly it-I-would-have without shaking
Toutes en fis par estouveir
All thereby I-made by necessity
les branches croler e mouveir,
the branches shake and move
senz ja nul des rains depecier,
without ever any of-the branches breaking

car n'i voulaie riens blecier,
for not-there I-wished anything to-wound
e s'i m'en couvint il a force
and yet me-thereof behooved it by force
entamer un po de l'escorce;
to-cut a little of the-bark
qu'autrement aveir ne savaie
for-otherwise to-have not I-knew-how
ce don si grant desir avaie.
this whereof so great desire I-had
A la parfin, tant vous en di,
At the very-end so-much to-you thereof I-say
un po de graine i espandi,
a little of seed there I-spilled
quant j'oi le bouton eslochié;
when I-had the bud loosened
ce fu quant dedenz l'oi tochié
this was when within it-I-had touched
pour les fueilletes reverchier;
for the little-leaves to-search
car je voulaie tout cerchier
for I wished all to-explore
jusques au fonz dou boutonet,
until to-the bottom of-the little-bud
si con mei semble que bon est.
so as to-me seems that good it-is
Si fis lors si meller les graines
So I-made then so mingle the seeds
qu'eus se desmellassent a peines,
that-they themselves would-separate with difficulty

si que tout le boutonet tendre
so that all the little-bud tender
en fis eslargir e estendre.
thereby I-made widen and extend
Vez ci tout quanque j'i forfis.
See here all whatever I-there misdid
Mais de tant fui je bien lors fis
But of so-much was I well then sure
qu'onques nul mal gré ne m'en sot
that-ever any ill will not to-me-thereof knew
li douz, qui nul mal n'i pensot;
the sweet-one who any evil not-there thought
ainz me consent e seufre a faire
rather me allows and suffers to do
quanqu'il set qui me deie plaire.
whatever-he knows which me ought please
Si m'apele il de couvenant,
Yet me-accuses he of covenant
e li faz grant desavenant,
and to-him I-do great unseemliness
e sui trop outrageus, ce dit;
and am exceedingly outrageous this he-says
mais il n'i met nul contredit
but he not-there puts any contradiction
que ne preigne e debaille e cueille
that — I-take and bare and gather
rosier e rains e fleur e fueille.
rosebush and branches and flower and leaf

Quant en si haut degré me vi,
When in so high degree myself I-saw
que j'oi si noblement chevi
that I-had so nobly achieved
que mes procès n'iert mais doutables,
that my suit not-was more doubtful
pour ce que fins e agreables
for this that true and agreeable
fusse vers touz mes bienfaiteurs,
I-were toward all my benefactors
si con deit faire bons deteurs;
so as ought do good debtor
car mout estaie a aus tenuz,
for much I-was to them bound
quant par aus iere devenuz
since by them I-was become
si riches que, pour veir l'afiche,
so rich that for true it-I-affirm
Richece n'estait pas si riche,
Wealth not-was at-all so rich
au deu d'Amours e a Venus,
to-the god of-Love and to Venus
qui m'orent aidié meauz que nus,
who me-had helped better than any
puis a touz les barons de l'ost,
then to all the barons of the-host
don je pri Deu qu'il ja ne l'ost
whom I pray God that-he ever not it-take-away
des secours aus fins amoureus,
from-the succor of-the true lovers

entre les baisiers savoureus
among the kisses savory
rendi graces dis feiz ou vint.
I-rendered thanks ten times or twenty
Mais de Raison ne me souvint,
But of Reason not to-me it-came-to-mind
qui tant en mei gasta de peine.
who so-much on me wasted of pain
Maugré Richece la vilaine,
In-spite-of Wealth the churlish
qui onques de pitié n'usa,
who ever of pity not-used
quant l'entree me refusa
when the-entrance to-me refused
dou senteret qu'ele gardait!
of-the little-path which-she guarded
De cetui pas ne se gardait
Of this passage not herself she-guarded
par ou je sui çaienz venuz
by where I am in-here come
repostement, les sauz menuz.
secretly the leaps small
Maugré mes morteus anemis,
In-spite-of my mortal enemies
qui tant m'orent arriere mis!
who so-much me-had back put
Especiaument Jalousie,
Especially Jealousy
a tout son chapel de soussie,
with all her garland of marigold

qui des amanz les roses garde.
who of-the lovers the roses guards
Mout en fait ore bone garde.
Much thereof makes now good guard
Ainz que d'ileuc me remuasse,
Before that from-there myself I-moved
ou, mon vueil, encor demourasse,
where my will still I-would-remain
par grant jolieté coilli
by great merriment I-gathered
la fleur dou bel rosier foilli.
the flower of-the fair rosebush leafy
Ainsinc oi la rose vermeille.
Thus I-had the rose red
Atant fu jourz, e je m'esveille.
Thereupon was day and I myself-wake