OLD FRENCH SERIES · VOLUME 23

Thibaut de Champagne

Thibaut de Champagne

Les Chansons de Thibaut de Champagne
Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune
Les Chansons de Colin Muset

The Songs, with Conon de Béthune and Colin Muset

---

with a word-for-word interlinear English translation

preserving the original word order



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The Old French text follows Axel Wallensköld's Les Chansons de Thibaut de Champagne (Paris, 1925) and Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune (Paris, 1921), and Joseph Bédier's Les Chansons de Colin Muset (Paris, 1912)

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Each poet's text and spelling are his editor's, Wallensköld's for Thibaut de Champagne and Conon de Béthune and Bédier's for Colin Muset, and none is harmonized to another. Thibaut's songs are the sixty-one his editor holds to be his, without the songs of doubtful attribution in the edition's appendix, and stand under his editor's headings by kind, given here in English; Conon's and Muset's follow their editors' order. ∗∗∗ marks a verse, or the end of one, that the edition counts and does not have, and speech stands between guillemets. The English titles of the songs are this press's.

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THIBAUT DE CHAMPAGNE

Les Chansons de Thibaut de Champagne

The Songs of Thibaut de Champagne

Por conforter ma pesance

I · JASON'S PENANCE

He makes a tune to comfort his heaviness; Jason, who won the fleece, suffered no such penance. Reason calls his prison childish, but he prefers one glance from his lady to another's love, her name to France. He curses whoever turns from love for fear, asks Love for reward, and trusts her good sense.

Por conforter ma pesance
For to-comfort my heaviness
faz un son.
I-make a tune
Bons ert, se il m'en avance,
Good it-will-be if it me-thereby advances
car Jason,
for Jason
cil qui conquist la toison,
he who conquered the fleece
n'ot pas si grief penitance.
not-had at-all so grievous penance
E! é! é!
Eh eh eh

Je meïsmes a moi tence,
I myself with me quarrel
car reson
for reason
me dit que je faz enfance,
me tells that I do childishness
quant prison
when prison
tieng ou ne vaut raençon;
I-hold where not is-worth ransom
si ai mestier d'alejance.
so I-have need of-relief
E! é! é!
Eh eh eh

Ma dame a tel conoissance
My lady has such understanding
et tel renon
and such renown
que g'i ai mis ma fiance
that I-there have put my trust
jusqu'en son.
right-up-to the-top
Meus aim que d'autre amor don
Better I-love than of-other love gift
un regart, quant le me lance.
a glance when it to-me she-casts
E! é! é!
Eh eh eh

Melz aim de li l'acointance
Better I-love of her the-acquaintance
et le douz non
and the sweet name
que le roiaume de France.
than the kingdom of France
Mort Mahon!
Death (of-)Mahomet
Qui d'amer qiert acheson
Who of-loving seeks pretext
por esmai ne pour dotance!
for dismay or for fear
E! é! é!
Eh eh eh

Bien ai en moi remenbrance
Well I-have in me remembrance
a conpaignon;
for companion
touz jorz remir sa senblance
all days I-gaze-on her likeness
et sa façon.
and her fashion
Aiez, Amors, guerredon!
Have Love guerdon
Ne sosfrez ma mescheance!
Not suffer my mischance
E! é! é!
Eh eh eh

Dame, j'ai entencion

Lady I-have intention

que vos avroiz conoissance.

that you will-have understanding

E! é! é!

Eh eh eh

De touz maus n'est nus plesanz

II · THE SWEET ILL

Of all ills, love's alone is pleasant, sweet, and piercing, with such goods that none should leave it. Hearing his lady spoken of, he cannot grieve. Bound in Love's prison, he would rather die than be ransomed. One kinder look from her would give him more joy than any man alive, and no one has so joyous a torment.

De touz maus n'est nus plesanz
Of all ills not-is any pleasing
fors seulement cil d'amer,
except only that of-loving
mès cil est douz et poignanz
but that is sweet and piercing
et deliteus a penser
and delightful to think
et tant set biau conforter,
and so-much it-knows fairly to-comfort
et de granz biens i a tanz
and of great goods there is so-many
que nus ne s'en doit oster.
that anyone not himself-thence ought to-withdraw

Fins amis obedianz,
True friend obedient
vueil a ma dame encliner.
I-wish to my lady to-bow
Je ne puis estre dolanz,
I not can be sorrowful

quant je oi de li parler;
when I hear of her speak
tant me plest a remenbrer,
so-much me it-pleases to remember
que de touz maus m'est garanz
that from all ills to-me-is protector
sa biauté a recorder.
her beauty to recall

Amors, quant vous m'avez mis
Love when you me-have put
lïé en vostre prison,
bound in your prison
melz ameroie estre ocis
rather I-would-love to-be killed
que g'eüsse raençon.
than I-might-have ransom
Tels maus est bien sanz reson
Such ill is well without reason
qui me plest, quant me fet pis,
which me pleases when me it-does worse
ne ja n'en qier garison.
nor ever not-thereof I-seek cure

Quanque il vous est a vis,
Whatever it to-you is to seeming
dame, me senble reson;
lady to-me seems reason

si m'a vostre amor sorpris
so me-has your love seized
et vostre plesant façon,
and your pleasing fashion
et biautez a tel foison
and beauty in such abundance
qui resplent en vostre vis
which shines in your face
et dès les piez jusqu'en son.
and from the feet right-up-to the-top

Se de vos peüsse avoir,
If from you I-might have
dame, un pou plus biau senblant,
lady a little more fair semblance
je ne savroie voloir
I not would-know to-wish
querre Dieu merci si grant,
to-ask God mercy so great
que de joie avroie tant
that of joy I-would-have so-much
que tuit autre honme, pour voir,
that all other men for truth
seroient vers moi dolent.
would-be beside me sorrowful

Dame, ou touz mes biens atent,
Lady where all my goods I-await
sachiez, quant vous puis veoir,
know when you I-can see
nus n'a si joieus torment.
anyone not-has so joyous torment

Je ne voi mès nului qui gieut ne chant

III · NO ONE SINGS

No one now sings or makes merry, so he has long kept silent. Whoever holds back for gossip does not love, and a lover must take good and ill with thanks. He has never tired of loving his lady since he became hers and asks only mercy. Had she sworn his death a hundred times, he must stay in her power.

Je ne voi mès nului qui gieut ne chant
I not see more anyone who plays nor sings
ne volentiers face feste ne joie,
nor willingly makes feast nor joy
et pour ce ai je demoré longuement
and for this have I delayed long
que n'ai chanté ensi com je soloie,
that not-I-have sung thus as I was-wont
ne je n'en ai eü conmandement;
nor I not-thereof have had commandment
et pour ice, se je di folement
and for this if I speak foolishly
en ma chançon de ce que je voudroie,
in my song of that which I would-wish
ne m'en doit on reprendre malement.
not me-thereof ought one to-reprove badly

Grant pechié fet qui fin ami reprent,
Great sin does who true friend reproves
n'il n'aime pas qui pour diz se chastoie;
nor-he not-loves at-all who for sayings himself checks

et la coustume est tels de fin amant:
and the custom is such of true lover
plus pense a li, et il plus se desroie.
more he-thinks on her and he more himself goes-astray
Qui en amor a tot cuer et talent,
Who in love has all heart and desire
il doit sousfrir bien et mal merciant,
he ought to-suffer good and ill thanking
et qui ensi nel fet, il se foloie,
and who thus not-it does he himself befools
ne ja n'avra grant joie en son vivant.
nor ever not-will-have great joy in his lifetime

Se m'aït Deus, onques ne vi nului
So me-may-help God ever not I-saw anyone
tres bien amer qui s'en poïst retraire,
very well to-love who himself-thence could withdraw
et cil est fous et fel et plains d'ennui
and he is fool and felon and full of-trouble
qui autrement veut mener son affaire.
who otherwise wishes to-conduct his affair
Ha! s'avïez esté la ou je fui,
Ah if-you-had been there where I was
douce dame, s'ainz riens d'amors conui,
sweet lady if-ever anything of-love I-knew
vostre fins cuers, qui si pert debonaire,
your true heart which so appears gracious
avroit merci, s'onques riens l'ot d'autrui.
would-have mercy if-ever anything it-had of-another

Quant plus m'enchauce amors, et mains la fui;
When more me-pursues love and less her I-flee
cist maus est bien a touz autres contraire,
this ill is well to all others contrary
car qui aime, ainz Deus ne fist celui
for who loves ever God not made that-one
n'estuit souvent de ses maus joie faire.
not-behooves often of his ills joy to-make
De vos amer onques ne me recrui
From you to-love ever not myself I-wearied
puis cele heure, dame, que vostres fui,
since that hour lady that yours I-was
que mes fins cuers vous fist tant a moi plaire,
that my true heart you made so-much to me please
dont mau gré soi de ce que je l'en crui.
whereof ill will I-know of this that I it-thereof believed

Si sui pensis que ne sai que je qier
So I-am pensive that not I-know what I seek
fors que merci, dame, s'il vous agree;
except that mercy lady if-it you pleases
que bien savez ja n'iert en reprouvier
for well you-know ever not-will-be in proverb
d'orgueilleus cuer bone chançon chantee.
of-proud heart good song sung

Mès par pitié se doit on essaucier,
But by pity oneself ought one to-exalt
ne ja orguels ne s'i doit herbegier
nor ever pride not itself-there ought to-lodge
la ou il a d'amors tel renonmee,
there where there is of-love such renown
ainz doit le sien bien faire et avancier.
rather ought the his good to-do and to-advance

Chançon, di li que tot ce n'a mestier;
Song tell her that all this not-has use
que, s'ele avoit cent foiz ma mort juree,
for if-she had hundred times my death sworn
si m'estuet il remaindre en son dangier.
so me-behooves it to-remain in her power

Fueille ne flor ne vaut riens en chantant

IV · LOVE'S ARCHER

He sings to cheer his heart, as comfort cures the sick. A man flees an enemy's arrows, but the more Love shoots at him the less he flees. He knows his lady loves a hundred others, yet loves her above all things, and asks lovers whether to speak or keep silent. He begs her only to believe that he loves her.

Fueille ne flor ne vaut riens en chantant
Leaf nor flower not is-worth anything in singing
que por defaut, sanz plus, de rimoier
except for default without more of rhyming
et pour fere solaz vilaine gent
and for to-give solace churlish folk
qui mauvès moz font souvent aboier.
who bad words make often bark
Je ne chant pas por aus esbanoier,
I not sing at-all for them to-amuse
mès por mon cuer fere un pou plus joiant,
but for my heart to-make a little more joyful
q'uns malades en guerist bien souvent
for-a sick-man thereby is-cured well often
par un confort, quant il ne puet mengier.
by a comfort when he not can eat

Qui voit venir son anemi corant
Who sees come his enemy running
pour trere a lui granz saetes d'acier
for to-shoot at him great arrows of-steel
bien se devroit destorner en fuiant
well himself ought to-turn-aside in fleeing
et garantir, s'il pouoit, de l'archier;
and to-shield if-he could from the-archer
mais, quant Amors vient plus a moi lancier,
but when Love comes more at me to-hurl
et mains la fui, c'est merveille trop grant,
and less her I-flee this-is marvel exceedingly great
q'ausic reçoif son coup entre la gent
that-just-so I-receive her blow among the folk
com se g'iere touz seus en un vergier.
as if I-were all alone in an orchard

Je sai de voir que ma dame aime cent
I know of truth that my lady loves hundred
et plus assez: c'est pour moi corrocier.
and more plenty this-is for me to-anger
Mais je l'aim plus que nule riens vivant,
But I her-love more than any thing living
si me doint Deus son gent cors enbracier!
so me may-grant God her fair body to-embrace
Ce est la riens que plus avroie chier,
This is the thing that most I-would-have dear
et, se j'en sui parjurs a escïent,
and if I-thereof am perjured with knowledge

on me devroit traïner tout avant
one me ought to-drag all first
et puis pendre plus haut que un clochier.
and then to-hang more high than a bell-tower

Se je li di: «Dame, je vous aim tant»,
If I to-her say Lady I you love so-much
ele dira je la vueil engingnier,
she will-say I her wish to-deceive
ne je n'ai pas ne sens ne hardement
nor I not-have at-all neither sense nor boldness
qu'encontre li m'osasse desresnier.
that-against her myself-I-might-dare to-plead
Cuers me faudroit, qui me devroit aidier,
Heart me would-fail which me ought to-aid
ne parole d'autrui n'i vaut noient.
nor word of-another not-there is-worth anything
Que ferai je? Conseilliez moi, amant!
What shall-do I Counsel me lovers
Li quels vaut melz, ou parler ou lessier?
The which is-worth better either to-speak or to-leave

Je ne di pas que nus aint folement,
I not say at-all that anyone loves foolishly
que li plus fous en fet melz a prisier,
that the most fool thereby is better to prize

mès granz eürs i a mestier souvent
but great luck there has use often
plus que n'a sens ne reson de pledier.
more than has sense or reason of pleading
De bien amer ne puet nus enseignier
Of well to-love not can anyone teach
fors que li cuers, qui done le talent.
except that the heart which gives the desire
Qui plus aime de fin cuer loiaument,
Who more loves with true heart loyally
cil en set plus et mains s'en set aidier.
he thereof knows more and less himself-thereof knows to-help

Dame, merci! Vueilliez cuidier itant
Lady mercy Be-pleased to-believe so-much
que je vous aim; riens plus ne vous demant.
that I you love anything more not you I-ask
Vez le forfet dont je vous vueil proier!
See the misdeed whereof I you wish to-pray

Li rosignous chante tant

V · THE NIGHTINGALE

The nightingale sings until it falls dead; so he dies singing, unheard by his lady. Boasting lovers are liars, and she should know their false hearts. Caesar was never so fierce toward Pompey as she is toward him. Love stings worse than a serpent and shoots more often than a Turk. The envoy greets the folk of Champagne.

Li rosignous chante tant
The nightingale sings so-much
que morz chiet de l'arbre jus;
that dead falls from the-tree down
si bele mort ne vit nus,
so fair death not saw anyone
tant douce ne si plesant.
so sweet nor so pleasing
Autresi muir en chantant a hauz criz,
Likewise I-die in singing with loud cries
que je ne puis de ma dame estre oïz,
for I not can by my lady be heard
n'ele de moi pitié avoir ne daigne.
nor-she of me pity to-have not deigns

Chascuns dit q'il aime tant
Each says that-he loves so-much
c'onques si fort n'ama nus.
that-ever so strongly not-loved anyone

Ce fet les amanz confus
This makes the lovers confounded
que trop mentent li truant;
that too-much lie the knaves
mès dame doit conoistre a leur faus diz
but lady ought to-know by their false sayings
que de toz biens s'est leur faus cuers partiz,
that from all good itself-is their false heart parted
n'il n'est pas droiz que pitiez leur en praingne.
nor-it not-is at-all right that pity to-them thereof may-take

Onques fierté n'ot si grant
Ever fierceness not-had so great
vers Pompee Julius
toward Pompey Julius
que ma dame n'en ait plus
that my lady not-thereof may-have more
vers moi, qui muir desirrant.
toward me who die desiring
Devant li est touz jorz mes esperiz
Before her is all days my spirit
et nuit et jor li crie mil merciz,
and night and day to-her cries thousand mercies
besant ses piez, que de moi li souviengne.
kissing her feet that of me to-her it-may-remember

J'en trerai Dieu a garant
I-thereof shall-take God as warrant
et touz les sainz de lasus
and all the saints from up-there
que, se nus puet amer plus,
that if anyone can love more
que je n'aie amendement
that I not-may-have amends
ne ja de vous ne soie mès oïz,
nor ever by you not may-I-be more heard
ainz me tolez voz debonaires diz
rather from-me take-away your gracious words
et me chaciez com beste de montaingne.
and me chase as beast of mountain

Je ne cuit pas que serpent
I not think at-all that serpent
n'autre beste poigne plus
nor-other beast stings more
que fet Amors au desus;
than does Love at-the top
trop par sont si coup pesant.
too much are her blows heavy
Plus tret souvent que Turs ne Arrabiz,
More she-shoots often than Turk or Arab
n'onques oncor Salemons ne Daviz
nor-ever yet Solomon nor David
ne s'i tindrent ne q'uns fous d'Alemaigne.
not themselves-there held no-more than-a fool of-Germany

N'est merveille se je sui esbahiz,
Not-is marvel if I am dismayed
que li conforz me vient si a enviz
for the comfort to-me comes so with reluctance
que je dout mout que touz biens ne sousfraigne.
that I fear much that all good — may-fail

Dame, de vous ne puis estre partiz,
Lady from you not I-can be parted
si vous en jur les grez et les merciz
so to-you thereof I-swear the favors and the mercies
que je atent c'oncor de vous me viengne.
that I await that-yet from you to-me may-come

Mainz durs assauz m'avra Amors bastiz.
Many hard assaults me-will-have Love built
Chançon, va tost et non pas a enviz
Song go quickly and not at-all with reluctance
et salue nostre gent de Champaigne!
and greet our folk of Champagne

De bone amor vient seance et bonté

VI · LOVE'S RUNNERS

Good love, seemliness, and goodness are three in one. Her glances, runners that have worn a road through his heart, shine by night and hide by day. Her eyes struck him with a dart whose wound only she can heal: her hand could draw the shaft, but not the iron point broken inside. This song is his messenger.

De bone amor vient seance et bonté,
From good love comes seemliness and goodness
et amors vient de ces deus autresi.
and love comes from these two likewise
Tuit troi sunt un, qui bien i a pensé;
All three are one who well thereon has thought
ja a nul jor ne seront departi.
ever on any day not will-be parted
Par un conseil ont ensenble establi
By one counsel have together established
li coreor, qui sont avant alé:
the runners who are before gone
de mon cuer ont fet leur chemin ferré;
of my heart have made their road paved
tant l'ont usé, ja n'en seront parti.
so-much it-have worn ever not-thence will-be parted

Li coreor sunt la nuit en clarté
The runners are the night in brightness
et le jor sont por la gent oscurci:
and the day are for the folk darkened

li douz regart plesant et savoré,
the sweet glances pleasing and savory
la granz biautez et li bien que g'i vi;
the great beauty and the goods that I-there saw
n'est merveille se je m'en esbahi.
not-is marvel if I myself-thereat was-amazed
De li a Deus le siecle enluminé,
With her has God the world illumined
car qui avroit le plus biau jor d'esté,
for who would-have the most fair day of-summer
lez li seroit oscurs a plain midi.
beside her would-be dark at full noon

En amor a paor et hardement:
In love there-is fear and boldness
li dui sont troi et du tierz sont li dui,
the two are three and of-the third are the two
et grant valeur est a eus apendant,
and great worth is to them belonging
ou tout li bien ont retret et refui.
where all the goods have retreat and refuge
Por c'est Amors li hospitaus d'autrui
For this-is Love the host of-others
que nus n'i faut selonc son avenant.
that anyone not-there fails according-to his deserving
G'i ai failli, dame, qui valez tant,
I-there have failed lady who are-worth so-much
a vostre ostel, si ne sai ou je sui.
at your lodging so not I-know where I am

Or n'i a plus fors qu'a li me conmant,
Now not-there is more except that-to her myself I-commend
car touz biens fez ai lessié pour cestui:
for all good deeds I-have left for this-one
ma bele joie ou ma mort i atent,
my fair joy or my death there I-await
ne sai le quel, dès que devant li fui.
not I-know the which since that before her I-was
Ne me firent lors si oeil point d'ennui,
Not me did then her eyes a-whit of-trouble
ainz me vindrent ferir si doucement
rather me came to-strike so sweetly
par mi le cuer d'un amoreus talent;
through mid the heart with-a loving desire
oncore i est li cous que j'en reçui.
still there is the blow that I-thereof received

Li cous fu granz, il ne fet qu'enpoirier,
The blow was great it not does but-worsen
ne nus mires ne m'en porroit saner,
nor any physician not me-thereof could heal
se cele non qui le dart fist lancier.
except she not who the dart had hurled
Se de sa main i daignoit adeser,
If with her hand there she-deigned to-touch
bien en porroit le coup mortel oster
well thereof she-could the blow mortal remove
a tout le fust, dont j'ai grant desirrier;
with all the shaft whereof I-have great longing

mès la pointe du fer n'en puet sachier,
but the point of-the iron not-thence she-can pull
qu'ele bruisa dedenz au cop doner.
which-she broke within at-the blow to-give

Dame, vers vous n'ai autre messagier
Lady toward you not-I-have other messenger
par cui vous os mon corage envoier
by whom to-you I-dare my heart to-send
fors ma chançon, se la volez chanter.
except my song if it you-wish to-sing

Une dolor enossee

VII · A GRIEF TO THE BONE

A grief of love has lodged in his heart; he thinks the one he loves hates him, yet shuts out despair, since longing outweighs suffering. Her beauty so silences him that he never dared complain. He will wait for pity to soften her hard will, worshiping her dwelling like a shrine. The envoy is to Bernart.

Une dolor enossee
A grief bone-deep
s'est dedenz mon cuer
itself-is within my heart
que je ne puis oster fuer
that I not can remove out
por nule riens qui soit nee;
for any thing that may-be born
c'est dolor d'amors,
this-is grief of-love
dont n'ai confort ne secors,
whereof not-I-have comfort nor succor
ainz cuit ce que j'aim me hee.
rather I-think that which I-love me hates

Dolenté desesperee
Grief despairing
doit on geter puer,
ought one to-throw away

ne je ne vueil a nul fuer
nor I not wish at any price
qu'ele soit en moi entree.
that-she be in me entered
Melz aim mes dolors
Rather I-love my griefs
sousfrir et les granz poors,
to-suffer and the great fears
que sousfrir vaint consieurree.
than to-suffer overcomes deprivation

Dame, ainz ne m'osai conplaindre
Lady ever not myself-I-dared complain
a vous tant ne quant,
to you much nor little
que vostre biauté tres grant
for your beauty very great
fet mon sens el cuer estaindre,
makes my sense in-the heart die-out
si que n'ai pouoir
so that not-I-have power
de vous dire mon voloir;
of to-you to-tell my will
por tant puet touz jorz remaindre.
for so-much it-can all days remain

Bien voi que n'i puis ataindre
Well I-see that not-there I-can attain
par nul mandement,
by any message
n'en qier, voir, parler avant
not-thereof I-seek truly to-speak further
ne aillors ne m'en vueil plaindre;
nor elsewhere not myself-thereof I-wish to-complain
ainz atendrai, voir,
rather I-shall-await truly
sa merci de dur voloir,
her mercy of hard will
se pitiez ne la fet fraindre.
if pity not her makes break

N'os entrer en son repaire,
Not-I-dare to-enter into her dwelling
tant dout son corroz.
so-much I-fear her wrath
As sospirs et as sangloz
To-the sighs and to-the sobs
m'en tieng, que n'en puis plus faire;
myself-thereto I-hold for not-thereof I-can more do
ainz vois aorant
rather I-go worshiping
le leu et merci criant
the place and mercy crying
conme a un haut saintuaire.
as at a high sanctuary

Dame, cui j'aim tant,
Lady whom I-love so-much
quelque bien en delaiant
some good in delaying
me donnez por plus atraire.
me give for more to-attract

Bernart, cil qui sent
Bernart he who feels
mes maus et merci n'atent
my ills and mercy not-awaits
trop a ennui et contraire.
too-much has trouble and adversity

Por mau tens ne por gelee

VIII · VALARA

No bad weather or cold morning will part his thought from love of her, and each stanza ends on the refrain Valara. He begs the fair, blond lady for her love, puts his body and life in her keeping, and asks her not to kill him. He loves no other, stays in her mercy, and cannot stop singing of her.

Por mau tens ne por gelee
For bad weather nor for frost
ne por froide matinee
nor for cold morning
ne por nule autre riens nee
nor for any other thing born
ne partirai ma pensee
not I-shall-part my thought
d'amors que j'ai,
from-love that I-have
que trop l'ai amee
for too-much it-I-have loved
de cuer verai.
with heart true
Valara!
Valara

Bele et blonde et coloree,
Fair and blond and colored
moi plest quanq'il vous agree.
me pleases whatever-it you pleases

He, Deus! car me fust donee
Ah God would-that to-me were given
l'amor que vous ai rouvee!
the-love that of-you I-have asked
Quant prierai,
When I-shall-pray
s'ele m'est veee,
if-she to-me-is refused
je me morrai.
I myself shall-die
Valara!
Valara

Dame, en la vostre baillie
Lady in the your keeping
ai mis mon cors et ma vie.
I-have put my body and my life
Por Deu, ne m'ocïez mie!
For God not me-kill at-all
La ou fins cuers s'umilie
There where true heart itself-humbles
doit on trouver
ought one to-find
merci et aïe
mercy and help
pour conforter.
for to-comfort
Valara!
Valara

Dame, faites cortoisie!
Lady do courtesy
Plaise vos que en ma vie
May-it-please you that in my life
iceste parole die:
this word I-may-say
ma bele, tres douce amie
my fair very sweet friend
vos os nonmer,
you I-dare to-name
c'onques n'oi envie
for-ever not-I-had desire
d'autrui amer.
of-another to-love
Valara!
Valara

Onques jor ne me soi plaindre,
Ever day not myself I-knew-how to-complain
tant seroit ma dolor graindre;
so-much would-be my grief greater

ne d'amer ne me sai faindre,
nor of-loving not myself I-know-how to-shirk
ne mes maus ne puis estaindre,
nor my ills not I-can extinguish
se je ne di
if I not say
que touz vueil remaindre
that wholly I-wish to-remain
en sa merci.
in her mercy
Valara!
Valara

Trop seroit fort a estaindre
Too-much would-be hard to extinguish
chançons de li;
song of her
l'amors est a fraindre,
the-love is to break
dont pens a li.
whereof I-think on her
Valara!
Valara

Tant ai amors servies longuement

IX · LEAVING LOVE

He has served love so long that no one can blame him for leaving. He will not slander Love, as bitter lovers do, and wishes all lovers well. Love made him love the fairest of women, and the lady bids him go, so God has freed him from Love's lordship. He prays to love only Her whom one should adore.

Tant ai amors servies longuement
So-much I-have love served long
que dès or mès ne m'en doit nus reprendre
that from now on not me-thereof ought anyone to-reprove
se je m'en part. Ore a Dieu les conmant,
if I myself-thence part Now to God them I-commend
qu'en ne doit pas touz jorz folie enprendre;
for-one not ought at-all all days folly to-undertake
et cil est fous qui ne s'en set desfendre
and he is foolish who not himself-thereof knows-how to-defend
ne n'i conoist son mal ne son torment.
nor not-there knows his ill nor his torment
On me tendroit dès or mès por enfant,
One me would-hold from now on for child
car chascuns tens doit sa seson atendre.
for each time ought its season to-await

Je ne sui pas si com cele autre gent
I not am at-all so as that other folk
qui ont amé, puis i vuelent contendre
who have loved then there wish to-contend
et dïent mal par vilain mautalent.
and speak ill by churlish ill-will
On ne doit pas seigneur servise vendre
One not ought at-all a-lord service to-sell
ne vers Amors mesdire ne mesprendre;
nor toward Love to-slander nor to-transgress
mès qui s'en part parte s'en bonement.
but who himself-thence parts may-part himself-thence graciously
Endroit de moi vueil je que tuit amant
As-for of me wish I that all lovers
aient grant bien, quant je plus n'i puis prendre.
may-have great good since I more not-there can take

Amors m'a fet grant bien enjusqu'ici,
Love me-has done great good up-to-here
qu'ele m'a fet amer sanz vilanie
for-she me-has made love without baseness
la plus tres bele et la meilleur ausi,
the most very fair and the best also
au mien cuidier, qui onques fust choisie.
to-the my thinking who ever was chosen
Amors le veut et ma dame m'en prie
Love it wishes and my lady me-thereof begs
que je m'en parte, et je mult l'en merci.
that I myself-thence may-part and I much her-thereof thank

Quant par le gré ma dame m'en chasti,
Since by the will (of-)my lady myself-thereof I-check
meilleur reson n'ai je a ma partie.
better reason not-have I for my departure

Autre chose ne m'a Amors meri
Other thing not me-has Love rewarded
de tant com j'ai esté en sa baillie,
for so-much as I-have been in her keeping
mès bien m'a Deus par sa pitié gueri,
but well me-has God by his pity cured
quant delivré m'a de sa seignorie.
when delivered me-he-has from her lordship
Quant eschapez li sui sanz perdre vie,
Since escaped from-her I-am without to-lose life
ainz de mes euz si bone heure ne vi,
ever with my eyes so good hour not I-saw
si cuit je fere oncor maint jeu parti
so think I to-make yet many-a game divided
et maint sonet et mainte raverdie.
and many-a little-song and many-a spring-song

Au conmencier se doit on bien garder
At-the beginning oneself ought one well to-guard
d'entreprendre chose desmesuree,
from-undertaking thing immoderate

mès bone amor ne let honme apenser
but good love not lets man take-thought
ne bien choisir ou mete sa pensee.
nor well to-choose where he-may-put his thought
Plus tost aime on en estrange contree,
More soon loves one in foreign country
ou on ne puet ne venir ne aler,
where one not can neither come nor go
qu'on ne fet ce qu'on puet toz jorz trouver;
than-one — does that which-one can all days find
issi est bien la folie esprouvee.
thus is well the folly proved

Or me gart Deus et d'amor et d'amer
Now me may-keep God both from-love and from-loving
fors de Celi, cui on doit aourer,
except from Her whom one ought to-adore
ou on ne puet faillir a grant soudee.
where one not can fail of great wage

Douce dame, tout autre pensement

X · THE EYES OF THE HEART

Since he first saw his lady, Love has tormented him more, and only gazing on her in thought soothes him. He fears slanderers, so any love he feigns elsewhere is heartless. Her laughing eyes changed a heart that despised love. Each of her features wounds him, yet he loves these enemies. The envoy says he sang in fear.

Douce dame, tout autre pensement,
Sweet lady all other thought
quant pens a vous, oubli en mon corage.
when I-think on you I-forget in my heart
Dès que vous vi des euz premierement,
Since that you I-saw with-the eyes first
ainz puis Amors ne fu de moi sauvage;
ever since Love not was toward me wild
ançois m'a plus traveillié que devant.
rather me-has more tormented than before
Pour ce voi bien que garison n'atent,
For this I-see well that cure not-I-await
qui m'assoage,
which me-soothes
fors seul de vos remirer
except only of you to-gaze-on
des euz du cuer en penser.
with-the eyes of-the heart in thought

Se je ne puis vers vos aler souvent,
If I not can toward you go often
ne vos poist pas, bele, cortoise et sage,
not you may-it-grieve at-all fair courteous and wise
que je me dot forment de male gent
for I myself fear greatly of evil folk
qui devinant avront fait maint damage;
who guessing will-have done many-a harm
et se je faz d'aillors amer senblant,
and if I make from-elsewhere to-love semblance
sachiez que c'est sanz cuer et sanz talent,
know that this-is without heart and without desire
s'en soiez sage;
so-thereof be wise
et s'il vous devoit peser,
and if-it you should grieve
gel leroie ançois ester.
I-it would-leave rather be

Sanz vos ne puis, dame, ne je ne qier,
Without you not I-can lady nor I not seek
ne ja d'autrui Deus ne me doint mès joie!
nor ever from-another God not me may-grant more joy
Car j'aim mult melz estre en vostre dangier
For I-love much better to-be in your power
et sousfrir mal qu'autre bien, se l'avoie.
and to-suffer ill than-other good if it-I-had

Ha! si bel oeil riant a l'acointier
Ah her fair eyes laughing at the-meeting
m'i firent si mon corage changier;
me-there made so my heart change
que je soloie
that I was-wont
blasmer et despire amors;
to-blame and to-despise love
ore en sent mortieus dolors.
now thereof I-feel mortal griefs

Si grant biauté com s'i pot acointier
So great beauty as itself-there could join
en cortois sens, qui son gent cors mestroie,
in courteous sense which her fair body masters
ja li fist Deus por fere merveillier
already to-her gave God for to-make marvel
touz ceus a qui ele veut fere joie.
all those to whom she wishes to-make joy
Nul outrage, dame, je ne vous qier
Any outrage lady I not of-you seek
fors seul itant que daignissiez cuidier
except only so-much that you-might-deign to-believe
que vostres soie;
that yours I-may-be
mult me seroit granz secors
much to-me would-be great succor
et esperance d'amors.
and hope of-love

Ainz riens ne vi en li ne m'ait navré
Ever anything not I-saw in her not me-has wounded
d'un coup parfont a si tres douce lance:
with-a blow deep with so very sweet lance
front, bouche et nés, euz, vis frès coloré,
brow mouth and nose eyes face fresh colored
mains, chief et cors et bele contenance.
hands head and body and fair bearing
Ma douce dame, et quant les reverré,
My sweet lady and when them I-shall-see-again
mes anemis, qui si fort m'ont grevé
my enemies which so strongly me-have grieved
par leur puissance
by their power
c'ainz mès nus hons ne fu vis
for-ever before any man not was alive
tant amast ses anemis?
so-much might-love his enemies

Chançon, va t'en a celi que bien sé
Song go thyself-thence to her whom well I-know
et si li di por poor ai chanté
and so to-her say for fear I-have sung
et en doutance;
and in doubt
mes droiz est que fins amis
my right is that true friend
soit a sa dame ententis.
be to his lady attentive

Tuit mi desir et tuit mi grief torment

XI · FOOLISH HOPE

All his desires come from his lady, and he fears that all who see her wish her well; even God loves her and lit the world with her beauty. Foolish hope keeps lovers alive where despair would kill, so folly is good. He laments that he dared neither look at her nor speak. The envoy bids Raoul serve Love.

Tuit mi desir et tuit mi grief torment
All my desires and all my grievous torments
viennent de la ou sont tuit mi pensé.
come from there where are all my thoughts
Grant poor ai, pour ce que toute gent
Great fear I-have for this that all folk
qui ont veü son gent cors acesmé
who have seen her fair body adorned
sont si vers li de bone volenté.
are so toward her of good will
Nès Deus l'aime, gel sai a escïent;
Even God her-loves I-it know with knowledge
grant merveille est, quant il s'en suesfre tant.
great marvel is when he himself-thereof holds-back so-much

Touz esbahiz m'obli en merveillant
All amazed myself-I-forget in marveling
ou Deus trouva si estrange biauté;
where God found so strange beauty
quant il la mist ça jus entre la gent,
when he it put here down among the folk

mult nous en fist grant debounereté.
much to-us thereby he-did great kindness
Trestout le mont en a enluminé,
All the world thereby he-has illumined
qu'en sa valor sont tuit li bien si grant;
for-in her worth are all the goods so great
nus ne la voit ne vous en die autant.
anyone not her sees not to-you thereof may-say as-much

Bone aventure aviengne fol espoir,
Good fortune may-befall foolish hope
qui mainz amanz fet vivre et resjoïr!
which many lovers makes live and rejoice
Desperance fet languir et doloir,
Despair makes languish and grieve
et mes fous cuers me fet cuidier guerir;
and my foolish heart me makes think to-recover
s'il fust sages, il me feïst morir.
if-it were wise it me would-make die
Pour ce fet bon de la folie avoir,
For this it-makes good of the folly to-have
qu'en trop grant sens puet il bien mescheoir.
for-in too great sense can it well mischance

Qui la voldroit souvent ramentevoir,
Who her would-wish often to-recall
ja n'avroit mal ne l'esteüst guerir,
ever not-would-have ill not him-behooved to-cure

car ele fet trestoz ceus melz valoir
for she makes all those better avail
cui ele veut belement acoillir.
whom she wishes fairly to-welcome
Deus! tant me fu grief de li departir!
God so-much to-me was grievous from her to-part
Amors, merci! Fetes li a savoir:
Love mercy Make her to know
cuers qui n'ainme ne puet grant joie avoir.
heart which not-loves not can great joy have

Souviengne vous, dame, du douz acueil
May-it-remember to-you lady of-the sweet welcome
qui ja fu fez par si grant desirrier,
which once was made by so great longing
que n'orent pas tant de pouoir mi oeil
that not-had at-all so-much of power my eyes
que je vers vous les osasse lancier;
that I toward you them might-dare to-cast
de ma bouche ne vos osai prïer,
with my mouth not you I-dared to-pray
ne poi dire, dame, ce que je vueil;
nor I-could say lady that which I wish
tant fui coarz, las, chetis! q'or m'en dueil.
so-much I-was coward alas wretch that-now myself-thereof I-grieve

Dame, se je vos puis mès aresnier,
Lady if I you can more address
je parlerai mult melz que je ne sueil,
I shall-speak much better than I — am-wont
s'Amors me let, qui trop me maine orgueil.
if-Love me lets who too-much to-me shows pride

Chançon, va t'en droit a Raoul noncier
Song go thyself-thence straight to Raoul to-announce
qu'il serve Amors et face bel acueil
that-he may-serve Love and may-make fair welcome
et chant souvent com oiselez en brueil.
and may-sing often as little-bird in thicket

De nouviau m'estuet chanter

XII · SINGING IN GRIEF

He must sing when most grieved and, not daring to speak to her, makes his song his message. Forgetting her beauty would cure him, but he cannot. Others say they die of love; he would rather live, wait, and languish for her reward, since Love rewards those who wait. He yields to her wholly.

De nouviau m'estuet chanter
Of new me-behooves to-sing
el tens que plus sui marriz.
in-the time that most I-am grieved
Quant ne puis merci trouver,
Since not I-can mercy find
bien doi chanter a enviz;
well I-ought to-sing with reluctance
ne je n'os a li parler;
nor I not-dare to her to-speak
de ma chançon faz mesage,
of my song I-make message
que tant est cortoise et sage
for so-much she-is courteous and wise
que ne puis aillors penser.
that not I-can elsewhere think

Se je peüsse oublïer
If I could forget
sa biauté et ses bons diz
her beauty and her good sayings
et son tres douz esgarder,
and her very sweet looking
bien peüsse estre gueriz;
well I-could be cured
mès n'en puis mon cuer oster,
but not-thence I-can my heart to-remove
tant i pens de fin corage.
so-much there I-think with true heart
Espoir s'ai fet grant folage,
Perhaps so-I-have done great folly
mès moi l'estuet endurer.
but me it-behooves to-endure

Chascuns dit q'il muert d'amor,
Each says that-he dies of-love
mès je n'en qier ja morir.
but I not-thereof seek ever to-die
Melz aim sousfrir ma dolor,
Rather I-love to-suffer my grief
vivre et atendre et languir,
to-live and to-wait and to-languish
qu'ele me puet bien merir
for-she me can well reward
mes maus et ma consieurree.
my ills and my deprivation

N'aime pas a droit qui bee
Not-loves at-all at right who aims
q'il l'en porroit avenir.
that-it to-him-thereof could befall

Dame, qui a grant poor
Lady who has great fear
souvent l'estuet esbahir
often him-behooves to-be-dismayed
et penser a tel folor
and to-think on such folly
dont je ne me puis tenir.
whence I not myself can hold
S'il est a vostre plesir,
If-it is at your pleasure
s'iert bien ma paine sauvee,
so-will-be well my pain saved
que sol de la desirree
for only from the desiring
me fet mon cuer resbaudir.
me makes my heart rejoice

Nus ne puet grant joie avoir,
Anyone not can great joy have
s'il ne ra des maus apris.
if-be not has-in-turn of-the ills learned

Qui touz jorz fet son voloir
Who all days does his will
a poine ert ja fins amis.
with pain will-be ever true friend
Pour ce fet Amors doloir
For this makes Love (one)-grieve
qu'ele veut guerredon rendre
for-she wishes guerdon to-render
ceus qui bien sevent atendre
those who well know-how to-wait
et servir a son voloir.
and to-serve at her will

Dame, de tout mon pouoir
Lady with all my power
m'otroi a vous sanz contendre,
myself-I-yield to you without contending
que sanz vous ne me puet rendre
for without you not to-me can render
nus biens ne ne puet valoir.
any good nor not can avail

Nus hons ne puet ami reconforter

XIII · GIVE ME HOPE

Only his lady can comfort him, and none comes from her; every stanza begs her for hope of joy. So many feign love that true lovers are hardly known. Some blame him for not naming his lady, but he tells no one but her. Love has stolen his heart and sets no term for returning it. The envoy goes to Philip at Nanteuil.

Nus hons ne puet ami reconforter
Any man not can friend comfort
se cele non ou il a son cuer mis.
except she not where he has his heart put
Por ce m'estuet souvent plaindre et plorer,
For this me-behooves often to-lament and to-weep
que nus conforz ne me vient, ce m'est vis,
for any comfort not to-me comes this to-me-is seeming
de la ou j'ai toute ma remenbrance.
from there where I-have all my remembrance
Por bien amer ai sovent esmaiance
For well to-love I-have often dismay
a dire voir.
to tell truth
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Je ne puis pas souvent a li parler
I not can at-all often to her speak
ne remirer les biaus euz de son vis.
nor gaze-on the fair eyes of her face
Ce poise moi que je n'i puis aler,
This grieves me that I not-there can go
car adès est mes cuers la ententis.
for ever is my heart there intent
Hé, bele riens, douce sanz conoissance!
Ah fair thing sweet without understanding
Car me metez en meilleur atendance
Now me put in better expectation
de bon espoir!
of good hope
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Je ne sai tant vers li merci crïer
I not know-how so-much toward her mercy to-cry
qu'ele ne cuit que je soie faintis,
that-she not may-think that I be false
que tante gent se sont pris au guiler
for so-many folk themselves are taken to-the cheating
qu'a paine ert mès coneüz fins amis.
that-with pain will-be more known true friend

Ice m'ocit, ice me desavance,
This me-kills this me sets-back
ice me tout ma joie et ma fiance
this from-me takes my joy and my trust
et fet doloir.
and makes grieve
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Aucuns i a qui me seulent blasmer,
Some there are who me are-wont to-blame
quant je ne di a qui je sui amis,
when I not say to whom I am friend
mès ja, dame, ne savra mon penser
but ever lady not will-know my thought
nus qui soit nez, fors vous, cui je le dis
anyone who may-be born except you to-whom I it tell
coardement, pooros, en dotance.
cowardly fearful in doubt
Vos poïstes lors bien a ma senblance
You could then well by my semblance
mon cuer savoir.
my heart know
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Amors, de vos me vueil du tout clamer,
Love of you myself I-wish of-the all to-complain
car en vous est trestouz li larrecins.
for in you is all the theft
Trop savez bien le cuer d'un honme enbler,
Too-much you-know well the heart of-a man to-steal
mès du rendre n'est il termes ne fins,
but of-the giving-back not-is there term nor end
ainz le tenez esmaiant en balance.
rather it you-hold dismayed in balance
Amors, en vous ai fet ma remenbrance
Love in you I-have made my remembrance
de mon voloir.
of my will
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Chançon, va t'en a Nantueil sanz faillance!
Song go thyself-thence to Nanteuil without failing
Phelipe di que, s'il ne fust de France,
Philip tell that if-he not were of France
trop puet valoir.
exceedingly he-can avail
Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance
Lady mercy Give me hope
de joie avoir!
of joy to-have

Tout autresi con fraint nois et yvers

XIV · THE SWAN

As winter breaks in summer, the false suitor should fail and the true lover prosper; he stays a magnet though she is not iron to him. He asks Love not to be like the swan that beats its cygnets. Pain that awaits reward is ease. He yields, since killing him gains her nothing, and Love maims lovers as a snare does birds.

Tout autresi con fraint nois et yvers,
All likewise as breaks snow and winter
que vient estez, que li douz tens repaire,
when comes summer when the sweet weather returns
deüst fraindre li faus prïerres sers
ought to-break the false suitor serf
et fins amis amender son afaire;
and true friend to-amend his affair
et je dot mult q'il ne me soit divers,
and I fear much that-it — to-me may-be hostile
se il touz est aus autres debonaire;
if it wholly is to-the others gracious
mès tant me fi la ou biautez repaire,
but so-much myself I-trust there where beauty dwells
q'aÿmanz sui, se tout n'est vers moi fers.
that-magnet I-am if all not-is toward me iron

Par Dieu, Amors, ainz serai vains et pers
By God Love rather I-shall-be faint and livid
et plus destroiz que cil qui porte haire
and more distressed than he who wears hair-shirt
que ne sache de vos un autre vers
than — I-may-know of you an other turn
que n'est icil qui tant me fet mal traire.
than is that-one who so-much me makes ill bear
Ne soiez pas con li cines c'adès
Not be at-all like the swan which-always
bat ses cisniaus, quant il lor doit melz faire,
beats its cygnets when it to-them ought better to-do
quant il sont grant et il vient a son aire,
when they are grown and it comes to its nest
et a premiers les a norriz et ters.
and at first them has nourished and cleaned

Nule paine, qui guerredon atent;
No pain which guerdon awaits
c'est aese, qui bien le set entendre.
this-is ease who well it knows-how to-understand
Car qui adès veut fere son talent,
For who ever wishes to-do his desire
on i puet bien mainte chose reprendre.
one there can well many-a thing reprove
Tel chevauchent mult acemeement
Such ride very elegantly
qui ne sevent leur grant honor atendre.
who not know-how their great honor to-await

En Amors a maint guerredon a prendre
In Love there-is many-a guerdon to take
dont el puet bien son dru faire joiant.
whereby she can well her beloved make joyful

Certes, dame, bien cuit a escïent
Certainly lady well I-think with knowledge
n'i doi perdre, se ne m'i puis desfendre.
not-there I-ought to-lose if not myself-there I-can defend
De vos amer me va Amors hastant,
Of you to-love me goes Love hastening
que je me claim vaincu sanz plus coup rendre;
that I myself declare vanquished without more blow to-render
et vos tenez le baston en estant,
and you hold the staff in standing
si fetes tant c'on ne vos puist reprendre;
so do so-much that-one not you could reprove
et je vos vueil avuec itant aprendre:
and I you wish besides so-much to-teach
se m'ocïez, n'i gaaigniez noient.
if me-you-kill not-there you-gain anything

Enviz prent nus nul oiselet au broi
Hardly takes anyone any little-bird at-the snare
q'il nel mehaint ou ocie ou afole,
that-he not-it maims or kills or cripples

et Amors prent tout autretel conroi
and Love takes wholly such-like course
de mult de ceus qu'ele tient a s'escole;
of many of those that-she holds at her-school
gent les atret, si leur moustre pour quoi;
nobly them she-draws so to-them she-shows for what
a premiers est chascuns si liez q'il vole.
at first is each so glad that-he flies
Mult m'atrest bel, mès ci me faut parole,
Much me-she-drew fairly but here me fails word
car vos dirai de qui ce poise moi.
for to-you I-shall-tell of whom this grieves me

Chançon, va t'en cele part ou je voi
Song go thyself-thence that way where I see
douz cuer au mains, que que die en parole;
sweet heart at-the least what ever she-may-say in word
et se mi oeil sont loing, ice m'afole,
and if my eyes are far this me-maddens
mès je me fi tout adès en ma foi.
but I myself trust all ever in my faith

Amors me fet conmencier

XV · A NEW SONG

Love makes him begin a new song, teaching him to love the fairest lady alive, for whom his heart leaps. True love summons him to serve and obey her above all things; if she makes him languish to death, his soul will be saved. If he wins her, lovers will say he has achieved his quest. She herself can confess that Love hastened for her.

Amors me fet conmencier
Love me makes begin
une chançon nouvele,
a song new
qu'ele me veut enseignier
for-she me wishes to-teach
a amer la plus bele
to love the most fair
qui soit el mont vivant:
who is in-the world living
c'est la bele au cors gent,
this-is the fair-one with-the body noble
c'est cele dont je chant.
this-is she of-whom I sing
Deus m'en doint tel nouvele
God me-thereof may-grant such news
qui soit a mon talent!
which may-be to my desire
Que menu et souvent
For quick and often
mes cuers por li sautele.
my heart for her leaps

Bien me porroit avancier
Well me could advance
ma douce dame bele,
my sweet lady fair
s'ele me voloit aidier
if-she me would aid
a ceste chançonele.
with this little-song
Je n'aim nule riens tant
I not-love any thing so-much
conme li seulement
as her only
et son afetement,
and her bearing
qui mon cuer renouvele.
which my heart renews
Amors me lace et prent
Love me snares and takes
et fet lié et joiant,
and makes glad and joyful
por ce qu'a soi m'apele.
for this that-to herself me-she-calls

Qant fine amor me semont,
When true love me summons
mult me plest et agree,
much me pleases and suits

que c'est la riens en cest mont
for this-is the thing in this world
que j'ai plus desirree.
that I-have most desired
Or la m'estuet servir
Now her me-behooves to-serve
— ne m'en puis plus tenir —
not myself-thence I-can more hold
et du tout obeïr
and of-the all to-obey
plus qu'a riens qui soit nee.
more than-to thing which may-be born
S'ele me fet languir
If-she me makes languish
et vois jusqu'au morir,
and I-go up-to-the dying
m'ame en sera sauvee.
my-soul thereby will-be saved

Se la mieudre de cest mont
If the best of this world
ne m'a s'amor donee,
not me-has her-love given
tuit li amoreus diront
all the lovers will-say
ci a fort destinee.
here there-is hard destiny

S'a ce puis ja venir
If-to that I-can ever come
qu'aie, sanz repentir,
that-I-may-have without repenting
ma joie et mon plesir
my joy and my pleasure
de li, qu'ai tant amee,
from her whom-I-have so-much loved
lors diront, sanz mentir,
then they-will-say without lying
qu'avrai tout mon desir
that-I-shall-have all my desire
et ma queste achevee.
and my quest achieved

Cele pour qui souspir,
She for whom I-sigh
la blonde coloree,
the blond colored
puet bien dire et gehir
can well say and confess
que por li, sanz mentir,
that for her without lying
s'est Amors mult hastee.
herself-is Love much hastened

En chantant vueil ma dolor descouvrir

XVI · WHETHER HE SINGS OR WEEPS

He sings his grief at losing what he most desired, yet knows he will have joy, if loyal service brings anyone to good love. His songs are so full of grief that he cannot tell if he sings or weeps, but hopes Love will turn her mind toward him. He trusts her worth and sends the song for her to sing.

En chantant vueil ma dolor descouvrir,
In singing I-wish my grief to-uncover
quant perdu ai ce que plus desirroie.
since lost I-have that which most I-desired
Las! si ne sai que puisse devenir,
Alas so not I-know what I-may become
que m'amors est ce dont g'espoire joie;
for my-love is that whence I-hope joy
si m'estouvra a tel dolor languir,
so me-will-behoove in such grief to-languish
quant je ne puis ne veoir ne oïr
since I not can neither see nor hear
la bele riens a qui je m'atendoie.
the fair thing on whom I myself-relied

Quant m'en souvient, grief en sont li souspir,
When to-me-thereof it-remembers grievous thereof are the sighs
et c'est toz jorz, ne ja n'en recrerroie.
and this-is all days nor ever not-thereof I-would-desist
Por li m'estuet mainte gent obeïr,
For her me-behooves many folk to-obey

que je ne sai se nus va cele voie;
for I not know if anyone goes that way
mès, se nus puet a bone amor venir
but if anyone can to good love come
par bien amer et loiaument servir,
by well to-love and loyally to-serve
ge sai de voir qu'encore en avrai joie.
I know of truth that-yet thereof I-shall-have joy

Mi chant sont tuit plain d'ire et de dolor
My songs are all full of-anger and of grief
por vos, dame, que je ai tant amee,
for you lady whom I have so-much loved
que je ne sai se je chant ou je plor;
for I not know if I sing or I weep
ensi m'estuet sousfrir ma destinee.
thus me-behooves to-suffer my destiny
Mès, se Deu plest, oncor verrai le jor
But if (to-)God it-pleases yet I-shall-see the day
qu'Amors sera changiee en autre tor,
that-Love will-be changed in other turn
si vos donra vers moi meillor pensee.
so to-you will-give toward me better thought

Souviengne vos, dame, de fine amor,
May-it-remember to-you lady of true love
que loiautez ne vos ait oublïee,
that loyalty not you may forget

que je me fi tant en vostre valor
for I myself trust so-much in your worth
qu'adès m'est vis que merci ai trouvee,
that-ever to-me-is seeming that mercy I-have found
et ne por quant je muir et nuit et jor!
and not for all-that I die both night and day
Or vous doint Deus, pour oster ma dolor,
Now to-you may-grant God for to-remove my grief
que par vos soit m'ire reconfortee!
that by you be my-anger comforted

Dame, bien vueil que vous sachiez de voir
Lady well I-wish that you may-know of truth
c'onques par moi ne fu mès dame amee,
that-ever by me not was before lady loved
ne ja de vous ne me qier mès mouvoir;
nor ever from you not myself I-seek more to-move
mon cuer i ai et m'entente atornee.
my heart there I-have and my-intent turned
Je n'ai mestier, dame, de decevoir,
I not-have need lady of deceiving
que de tel mal ne me sueil pas doloir.
for of such ill not myself I-am-wont at-all to-grieve
Ne m'esfreez, s'il vous plest, a l'entree!
Not me-frighten if-it you pleases at the-entry

Chançon, va t'en, garde ne remanoir!
Song go thyself-thence take-care not to-remain
Prie celi qui plus i a pooir
Pray her who most there has power
que tu soies souvent par li chantee.
that thou be often by her sung

Je me cuidoie partir

XVII · THE WHITE STAG

He thought he could leave Love, but memory keeps him sleepless. Could he catch the white stag with golden tresses, guarded by envious wolves, none would be as joyful as Thibaut. No knight or starving wolf grieves like him. He asks if killing a true lover is a sin and bids his lady kill him if she will.

Je me cuidoie partir
I myself thought to-part
d'Amors, mès riens ne me vaut.
from-Love but anything not me is-worth
Li douz maus du souvenir,
The sweet ill of-the remembering
qui nuit et jor ne m'i faut,
which night and day not me-there fails
le jor m'i fet maint assaut,
the day me-there makes many-an assault
et la nuit ne puis dormir,
and the night not I-can sleep
ainz plain et pleur et souspir.
rather I-lament and weep and sigh
Deus! tant art quant la remir,
God so-much I-burn when her I-gaze-on
mès bien sai q'il ne l'en chaut.
but well I-know that-it not to-her-thereof matters

Nus ne doit Amors traïr
Anyone not ought Love to-betray
fors que garçon et ribaut;
except that knave and ribald
et, se n'est par son plesir,
and if not-it-is by her pleasure
je n'i voi ne bas ne haut;
I not-there see neither low nor high
ainz vueil qu'ele me truist baut
rather I-wish that-she me may-find blithe
sanz guiler et sanz mentir;
without cheating and without lying
mès se je puis consivir
but if I can overtake
le cerf, qui tant puet fouir,
the stag which so-much can flee
nus n'est joianz a Thiebaut.
anyone not-is joyful beside Thibaut

Li cers est aventureus
The stag is adventurous
et si est blans conme nois
and so is white as snow
et si a les crins andeus
and so has the tresses both
plus sors que or espanois.
more tawny than gold Spanish

Li cers est en un defois
The stag is in a preserve
a l'entrer mult perilleus
at the-entering very perilous
et si est gardez de leus:
and so is guarded by wolves
ce sont felon envïeus
these are felons envious
qui trop grievent aus cortois.
who too-much grieve to-the courteous

Ainz chevaliers angoisseus
Ever knight anguished
qui a perdu son hernois,
who has lost his harness
ne vielle qui art li feus
nor old-woman for-whom burns the fire
mesons, vignes, blez et pois,
houses vines wheat and peas
ne chacierres qui prent sois,
nor hunter whom takes thirst
ne leus qui est fameilleus
nor wolf which is famished
n'est avers moi dolereus,
not-is beside me sorrowful
que je ne soie de ceus
lest I — may-be of those
qui aiment deseur leur pois.
who love against their will

Dame, une riens vous demant:
Lady a thing of-you I-ask
cuidiez vous que soit pechiez
think you that it-be sin
d'ocirre son vrai amant?
of-killing one's true lover
Oïl, voir! bien le sachiez!
Yes truly well it know
S'il vos plest, si m'ocïez,
If-it you pleases so me-kill
que je le vueil et creant,
for I it wish and grant
et se melz m'amez vivant,
and if better me-you-love living
je le vos di en oiant,
I it to-you say in hearing
mult en seroie plus liez.
much thereof I-would-be more glad

Dame, ou nule ne se prent,
Lady to-whom anyone not herself compares
mès que vos vueilliez itant
provided that you may-wish so-much
c'un pou i vaille pitiez!
that-a little there may-avail pity

Renaut, Phelippe, Lorent,

Renaut Philip Lorent

mult sont or li mot sanglent

very are now the words bloody

dont couvient que vos rïez.

whereof it-behooves that you laugh

De ma dame souvenir

XVIII · THE GOODS OF LOVE

Remembering his lady gladdens his heart, and he is hers without falsehood; each stanza ends that no one can pay too much for the goods Love gives. Love's custom makes a lover's griefs please him, and her fresh color is a mirror in his heart. He expects no mercy, yet waits in trust. The envoy goes to his friend Blazon.

De ma dame souvenir
Of my lady remembering
fet Amors lié mon corage,
makes Love glad my heart
qui me fet joiant morir,
who me makes joyful die
si la truis vers moi sauvage.
so her I-find toward me wild
La bele que tant desir
The fair-one whom so-much I-desire
fera de moi son plesir,
will-do of me her pleasure
que touz sui siens sanz fausser.
for wholly I-am hers without falsehood
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Bele et bone, a vos servir
Fair and good to you serve
vueil estre tout mon aage,
I-wish to-be all my age
si sui vostres sanz faillir
so I-am yours without failing
et de cuer et de corage.
both with heart and with spirit
Car me daigniez retenir,
Now me deign to-retain
Amors, par vostre plesir!
Love by your pleasure
Fetes li de moi menbrer!
Make her of me remember
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Une costume a Amors,
A custom has Love
qui ami forment guerroie:
which friend strongly wars
plere li fet ses dolors.
please him makes his griefs
Ce me senble, por la moie,
This to-me seems for the mine

que nus biens ne puet d'aillors
that any good not can from-elsewhere
venir fors du haut secors
come except from-the high succor
qu'en li me doint Deus trouver.
that-in her me may-grant God to-find
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Et qui ses tres granz valors
And who her very great worth
recorderoit, toute voie
would-recount all the-same
est ele sor les meillors;
is she above the best
qu'adès m'estuet que la voie
for-ever me-behooves that her I-may-see
et que sa fresche colors
and that her fresh color
soit en mon cuer mireors.
be in my heart mirror
Deus! con s'i fet biau mirer!
God how oneself-there it-makes fair to-gaze
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Atendre m'estuet ensi,
To-wait me-behooves thus
si m'est vis que je foloie.
so to-me-is seeming that I act-foolishly
Ja n'i cuit trouver merci,
Ever not-there I-think to-find mercy
si feré, voir, toute voie;
so I-shall-do truly all the-same
qu'en ma dame trop me fi,
for-in my lady too-much myself I-trust
ne je n'ai pas deservi
nor I not-have at-all deserved
que si me doie grever.
that so me she-should grieve
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Chançon, va t'en tost et di
Song go thyself-thence quickly and say
a Blazon, a mon ami,
to Blazon to my friend
que il te face chanter!
that he thee may-make be-sung
Nus ne puet trop acheter
Anyone not can too-much purchase
les biens qu'Amors set doner.
the goods that-Love knows-how to-give

Li douz penser et li douz souvenir

XIX · FROM BEYOND THE SEA

Sweet thoughts make him sing, since Love can make men rejoice in dismay, and no one keeps sense and honor who has not felt love's ills. He dares not address his lady, and her beauty wounds him. Far from her he is the saddest man alive, and all his good and ill come from her. He sends her greetings from beyond the sea.

Li douz penser et li douz souvenir
The sweet thoughts and the sweet memories
m'i font mon cuer esprendre de chanter,
me-there make my heart kindle with singing
et fine Amor, qui ne m'i let durer,
and true Love who not me-there lets endure
qui fet les siens en joie maintenir
who makes the hers in joy be-maintained
et met es cuers la douce remenbrance.
and puts in-the hearts the sweet remembrance
Pour c'est Amors de trop haute poissance,
For this-is Love of exceedingly high power
qui en esmai fet honme resjoïr
who in dismay makes man rejoice
ne pour doloir nel let de li partir.
nor for grieving not-him lets from her to-part

Sens et honor ne puet nus maintenir,
Sense and honor not can anyone maintain
s'il n'a en soi senti les maus d'amer,
if-he not-has in himself felt the ills of-loving

n'a grant valor ne puet pour riens monter,
nor-to great worth not can for anything climb
n'onques oncor nel vit nus avenir;
nor-ever yet not-it saw anyone happen
pour ce vous pri, d'Amors droite senblance,
for this you I-pray of-Love right semblance
c'on ne s'en doit partir pour esmaiance,
that-one not oneself-thence ought to-part for dismay
ne ja de moi nou verroiz avenir,
nor ever of me not-it you-will-see happen
que touz parfez vueil en amors morir.
for wholly perfect I-wish in love to-die

Dame, se je vos osasse prïer,
Lady if I you might-dare to-pray
mult me seroit, ce cuit, bien avenu,
much to-me would-be this I-think well befallen
mès il n'a pas en moi tant de vertu
but there not-is at-all in me so-much of virtue
que devant vous vous os bien aresnier;
that before you you I-dare well to-address
ice me font et m'ocit et m'esmaie.
this me melts and me-kills and me-dismays
Vostre biauté fet a mon cuer tel plaie
Your beauty makes to my heart such wound
que de mes euz seul ne me puis aidier
that of my eyes alone not myself I-can aid
dou regarder dont je ai desirrier.
of-the looking whereof I have longing

Quant me couvient, dame, de vous loignier,
When me it-behooves lady from you to-go-far
onques, certes, plus dolenz hons ne fu;
ever certainly more sorrowful man not was
et Deus feroit, ce croi, pour moi vertu,
and God would-do this I-believe for me miracle
se je jamès vous pouoie aprochier;
if I ever you could approach
que touz les biens et touz les maus que j'aie
for all the goods and all the ills that I-may-have
ai je de vous, douce dame veraie,
have I from you sweet lady true
ne ja sanz vous nus ne me puist aidier!
nor ever without you anyone not me may aid
Non fera il, q'il n'i avroit mestier.
Not will-do he for-he not-there would-have use

Ses granz biautez, dont nus hons n'a pouoir
Her great beauty whereof any man not-has power
q'il en deïst la cinqantisme part,
that-he thereof might-say the fiftieth part
li dit plesant, li amoreus regart
the words pleasing the loving glances
m'i font souvent resjoïr et doloir.
me-there make often rejoice and grieve
Joie en atent, que mes cuers a ce bee,
Joy thereof I-await for my heart to that aims
et la poors rest dedenz moi entree.
and the fear is-in-turn within me entered

Ensi m'estuet morir par estouvoir
Thus me-behooves to-die by necessity
en grant esmai, en joie et en voloir.
in great dismay in joy and in will

Dame, de qui est ma granz desirree,
Lady of whom is my great desire
saluz vos mant d'outre la mer salee,
greetings to-you I-send from-beyond the sea salt
conme a celi ou je pens main et soir;
as to her on-whom I think morning and evening
n'autres pensers ne me fet joie avoir.
nor-other thought not me makes joy have

Chanter m'estuet, que ne m'en puis tenir

XX · THE PHOENIX

He sings in despair, not as one loved, and would rather die recalling her than be lord of the world. Love hates him and his lady forgets him. Like the phoenix seeking its pyre, he sought his death in seeing her. Reason bids him leave; his heart says only love. The envoy warns Philip, gone to court, that ladies will hardly love him.

Chanter m'estuet, que ne m'en puis tenir,
To-sing me-behooves for not myself-thence I-can hold
et si n'ai je fors qu'ennui et pesance;
and so not-have I except that-trouble and heaviness
mès tout adès se fet bon resjoïr,
but all ever oneself it-makes good to-rejoice
qu'en fere duel nus del mont ne s'avance.
for-in making grief anyone of-the world not himself-advances
Je ne chant pas com hons qui soit amez,
I not sing at-all as man who may-be loved
mès com destroiz, pensis et esgarez;
but as distressed pensive and bewildered
que je n'ai mès de bien nule esperance,
for I not-have more of good any hope
ainz sui toz jorz a parole menez.
rather I-am all days to speech led

Je vous di bien une riens sanz mentir:
I to-you say well a thing without lying
qu'en Amors a eür et grant cheance.
that-in Love there-is fortune and great chance

Se je de li me poïsse partir,
If I from her myself could part
melz me venist qu'estre sires de France.
better to-me it-would-come than-to-be lord of France
Ore ai je dit com fous desesperez:
Now have I spoken as fool despairing
melz aim morir recordant ses biautez
rather I-love to-die recalling her beauty
et son grant sens et sa douce acointance
and her great sense and her sweet acquaintance
qu'estre sires de tout le mont clamez.
than-to-be lord of all the world proclaimed

Ja n'avrai bien, gel sai a escïent,
Ever not-I-shall-have good I-it know with knowledge
qu'Amors me het et ma dame m'oublie,
for-Love me hates and my lady me-forgets
s'est il resons, qui a amer entent,
so-is it reason who to love intends
q'il ne dout mort ne paine ne folie.
that-he not fear death nor pain nor folly
Puis que me sui a ma dame donez,
Since that myself I-am to my lady given
Amors le veut, et quant il est ses grez,
Love it wishes and since it is her will
ou je morrai ou je ravrai m'amie,
either I shall-die or I shall-have-in-turn my-friend
ou ma vie n'iert mie ma santez.
or my life not-will-be at-all my health

Li Fenix qiert la busche et le sarment
The Phoenix seeks the log and the vine-twig
en quoi il s'art et gete fors de vie.
in which it itself-burns and casts out of life
Ausi quis je ma mort et mon torment,
Likewise sought I my death and my torment
qant je la vi, se pitiez ne m'aïe.
when I her saw if pity not me-aids
Deus! tant me fu li veoirs savorez
God so-much to-me was the seeing savory
dont j'avrai puis tant de maus endurez!
whereof I-shall-have since so-many of ills endured
Li souvenirs me fet morir d'envie
The remembering me makes die of-longing
et li desirs et la granz volentez.
and the desire and the great will

Mult est Amors de merveilleus pouoir,
Much is Love of marvelous power
qui bien et mal fet tant com li agree.
who good and ill does so-much as to-her it-pleases
Moi fet ele trop longuement doloir;
Me makes she too long grieve
resons me dit que g'en ost ma pensee.
reason to-me says that I-thence may-remove my thought
Mès j'ai un cuer, ains teus ne fu trouvez;
But I-have a heart ever such not was found
touz jorz me dit: «Amez! amez! amez!»,
all days to-me says Love love love

n'autre reson n'iert ja par lui moustree,
nor-other reason not-will-be ever by it shown
et j'amerai, n'en puis estre tornez.
and I-shall-love not-thence I-can be turned

Dame, merci! qui touz les biens savez.
Lady mercy who all the good-things know
Toutes valors et toutes granz bontez
All worths and all great goodnesses
sont plus en vous qu'en dame qui soit nee.
are more in you than-in lady who may-be born
Secourez moi, que fere le poëz!
Succor me for to-do it you-can

Chançon, Phelipe, a mon ami, courez!
Song Philip to my friend run
Puis que il s'est dedenz la cort boutez,
Since that he himself-is within the court thrust
bien est s'amors en haïne tornee;
well is his-love into hatred turned
a paine ert ja de bele dame amez.
with pain he-will-be ever by fair lady loved

Tout autresi con l'ente fet venir

XXI · PYRAMUS

As water makes a graft grow, remembering makes love flower. Would that she were Thisbe, since he is Pyramus. Had he served God as he serves her, no reward in Paradise would match his, but cruelty vanquishes mercy and pride has more power than sweet will. He calls her Eagle: a smile from her is worth more than paradise.

Tout autresi con l'ente fet venir
All likewise as the-graft makes come
li arrousers de l'eve qui chiet jus,
the watering of the-water which falls down
fet bone amor nestre et croistre et florir
makes good love be-born and grow and flower
li ramenbrers par coustume et par us.
the remembering by custom and by use
D'amors loial n'iert ja nus au desus,
Of-love loyal not-will-be ever anyone at-the top
ainz li couvient au desouz maintenir.
rather him it-behooves at-the bottom to-keep
Por c'est ma douce dolor
For this-is my sweet grief
plaine de si grant poor,
full of so great fear
dame, si faz grant vigor
lady so I-do great effort
de chanter, quant de cuer plor.
of singing when from heart I-weep

Pleüst a Dieu, pour ma dolor garir,
Might-it-please to God for my grief to-cure
qu'el fust Tisbé, car je sui Piramus;
that-she were Thisbe for I am Pyramus
mès je voi bien ce ne puet avenir:
but I see well this not can happen
ensi morrai que ja n'en avrai plus.
thus I-shall-die that ever not-thereof I-shall-have more
Ahi, bele! con sui pour vous confus!
Ah fair-one how I-am for you confounded
Que d'un qarrel me venistes ferir,
For with-a bolt me you-came to-strike
espris d'ardant feu d'amor,
kindled with-burning fire of-love
quant vos vi le premier jor.
when you I-saw the first day
Li ars ne fu pas d'aubor,
The bow not was at-all of-laburnum
qui si trest par grant douçor.
which so shot with great sweetness

Dame, se je servisse Dieu autant
Lady if I served God as-much
et priasse de verai cuer entier
and prayed with true heart entire
con je faz vous, je sai certainement
as I do you I know certainly
qu'en Paradis n'eüst autel loier;
that-in Paradise not-would-be such reward

mès je ne puis ne servir ne prïer
but I not can neither serve nor pray
nului fors vous, a qui mes cuers s'atent,
anyone except you on whom my heart itself-waits
si ne puis apercevoir
so not I-can perceive
que ja joie en doie avoir,
that ever joy thereof I-ought to-have
et si ne vos puis vooir
and so not you I-can see
fors d'euz clos et de cuer noir.
except with-eyes closed and with heart black

La prophete dit voir, qui pas ne ment,
The prophet says truth who at-all not lies
que en la fin faudront li droiturier,
that in the end will-fail the righteous
et la fins est venue voirement,
and the end is come truly
que cruautez vaint merci et prïer,
that cruelty vanquishes mercy and praying
ne servises n'i puet avoir mestier,
nor service not-there can have use
ne bone amor n'atendre longuement,
nor good love nor-to-wait long
ainz a plus orgueus pouoir
rather has more pride power
et beubanz que douz vouloir,
and arrogance than sweet will

n'encontre Amor n'a savoir
nor-against Love not-is wisdom
q'atendue sanz espoir.
than-waiting without hope

Aygles, sanz vos ne puis merci trouver.
Eagle without you not I-can mercy find
Bien sai et voi qu'a touz biens ai failli,
Well I-know and see that-of all good-things I-have failed
se vous ensi me volez eschiver,
if you thus me wish to-shun
que vous de moi n'aiez quelque merci.
that you of me not-may-have any mercy
Ja n'avrez mès nul si loial ami
Ever not-you-will-have more any so loyal friend
ne ne porroiz a nul jor recovrer.
nor not you-will-be-able on any day to-recover
Et je me morrai chetis,
And I myself shall-die wretched
ma vie sera mès pis
my life will-be henceforth worse
loing de vostre biau cler vis,
far from your fair bright face
ou nest la rose et li lis.
where is-born the rose and the lily

Aygle, j'ai touz jorz apris
Eagle I-have all days learned
a estre loiaus amis,
to be loyal friend
si me vaudroit melz un ris
so to-me would-avail better a laugh
de vous qu'autre paradis.
from you than-other paradise

A enviz sent mal qui ne l'a apris

XXII · NARCISSUS

His ill passes all others, yet hope of joy comforts him, and he wonders that Love holds back from one wholly his lady's. He dares not pray to her, dreading refusal, and fears that if Pity falls at her feet for him, she will overcome Pity. If she scorns him, he is Narcissus, drowned by himself and far from his cure.

A enviz sent mal qui ne l'a apris:
With reluctance feels ill who not it-has learned
guerir l'estuet ou morir ou remaindre,
to-recover him-behooves or to-die or to-remain
et li miens maus, las! dont je ne m'os plaindre,
and the my ill alas whereof I not myself-dare complain
icil par est seur touz poosteïs.
that-one much is above all powerful
Morir en vueil, mès quant me vient devant
To-die thereof I-wish but when to-me comes before
l'esperance de la grant joie ataindre,
the-hope of the great joy to-attain
lors me confort. Voire, qui poïst tant
then myself I-comfort Truly who could so-much
sousfrir en pais, mès ne puis, ce m'est vis!
suffer in peace but not I-can this to-me-is seeming

Et cil qui est d'Amors si entrepris
And he who is by-Love so overtaken
qu'il li estuet a sa volenté maindre,
that-it him behooves at her will to-remain

mult me merveil s'Amors se puet tant faindre
much myself I-marvel if-Love herself can so-much hold-back
vers moi, qui sui a ma dame ententis;
toward me who am to my lady attentive
despuis que vi son biau cors droit et gent
since that I-saw her fair body straight and noble
et son cler vis, qui trop m'i set destraindre,
and her bright face which too-much me-there knows-how to-constrain
nel cuidai pas trouver si decevant
not-it I-thought at-all to-find so deceiving
conme il estoit; oncor m'en va il pis.
as it was still to-me-thereof goes it worse

Mès cil qui sert et merci i atent,
But he who serves and mercy there awaits
cil doit avoir joie fine et entiere;
he ought to-have joy fine and entire
et je, qui n'os vers li fere proiere
and I who not-dare toward her to-make prayer
— tant par redout son escondisement —,
so much I-dread her refusal
g'en deüsse partir, voire par foi,
I-thence ought to-part truly by faith
mès je ne puis veoir en quel maniere.
but I not can see in what manner
Estre ne puet ensi, a li m'otroi,
Be not it-can thus to her myself-I-grant
qu'en mon dangier n'est ele de noient.
for-in my power not-is she of anything

Dès ore mès vueil prïer en chantant,
From now on I-wish to-pray in singing
et, se li plest, ne me sera tant fiere,
and if to-her it-pleases not to-me she-will-be so fierce
car je ne cuit que nus hons qui reqiere
for I not think that any man who may-ask
merci d'amors, qu'il n'ait le cuer plorant,
mercy of-love that-he not-has the heart weeping
que, se Pitiez li chiet aus piez por moi,
that if Pity to-her falls at-the feet for me
si dout je mult qu'ele ne la conqiere.
so fear I much that-she — her may-conquer
Ensi ne sai se faz sens ou foloi,
Thus not I-know if I-do sense or act-foolishly
car cist esgarz va par son jugement.
for this judgment goes by her judging

Se ma dame ne prent oncor conroi
If my lady not takes yet care
de moi, qui l'aim par si grant couvoitise,
of me who her-love with so great covetousness
mult la desir et, s'ele me desprise,
much her I-desire and if-she me despises
Narcisus sui, qui noia tout par soi.
Narcissus I-am who drowned all by himself
Noiez sui près, loing est ma garison,
Drowned I-am near far is my cure
s'entendré je touz jorz a son servise.
so-shall-attend I all days to her service

Servir doi bien pour si grant guerredon;
To-serve I-ought well for so great guerdon
mult voudroie qu'ele en seüst ma foi.
much I-would-wish that-she thereof might-know my faith

Dame, merci! qu'aie de vos pardon!
Lady mercy that-I-may-have from you pardon
Se je vous aim, ci a bele entreprise.
If I you love here there-is fair enterprise
Je ne puis pas bien couvrir ma reson,
I not can at-all well cover my speech
si le savrez encor, si con je croi.
so it you-will-know yet so as I believe

Chançon ferai, que talenz m'en est pris

XXIII · BETTER THAN TRISTAN

He sings of the best lady in the world, then doubts it, since she has no pity. He was without love until he saw her. Love chooses without reason, yet his heart thanks his eyes for so fair a face. One evening with her would give him more joy than Tristan ever had. He thinks only of her: why does she not think of him?

Chançon ferai, que talenz m'en est pris,
Song I-shall-make for desire to-me-thereof is taken
de la meilleur qui soit en tout le mont.
of the best who may-be in all the world
De la meilleur? Je cuit que j'ai mespris.
Of the best I think that I-have erred
S'ele fust teus, se Deus joie me dont,
If-she were such so God joy me may-grant
de moi li fust aucune pitié prise,
of me to-her were some pity taken
qui sui touz siens et sui a sa devise.
who am wholly hers and am at her disposal
Pitiez de cuer, Deus! que ne s'est assise
Pity of heart God why not itself-is seated
en sa biauté? Dame, qui merci proi,
in her beauty Lady whom mercy I-pray
je sent les maus d'amer por vos.
I feel the ills of-loving for you
Sentez les vos por moi?
Feel them you for me

Douce dame, sanz amor fui jadis,
Sweet lady without love I-was formerly
quant je choisi vostre gente façon;
when I chose your noble fashion
et quant je vi vostre tres biau cler vis,
and when I saw your very fair bright face
si me raprist mes cuers autre reson:
so me taught-in-turn my heart other reason
de vos amer me semont et justise,
of you to-love me summons and constrains
a vos en est a vostre conmandise.
to you thence it-is at your command
Li cors remaint, qui sent felon juïse,
The body remains which feels cruel judgment
se n'en avez merci de vostre gré.
if not-thereof you-have mercy of your will
Li douz mal dont j'atent joie
The sweet ills whence I-await joy
m'ont si grevé
me-have so grieved
morz sui, s'ele m'i delaie.
dead I-am if-she me-there delays

Mult a Amors grant force et grant pouoir,
Much has Love great force and great power
qui sanz reson fet choisir a son gré.
who without reason makes choose at her will
Sanz reson? Deus! je ne di pas savoir,
Without reason God I not say at-all wisdom

car a mes euz en set mes cuers bon gré,
for to my eyes thereof knows my heart good thanks
qui choisirent si tres bele senblance,
which chose so very fair semblance
dont jamès jor ne ferai desevrance,
whence ever day not I-shall-make separation
ainz sousfrirai por li grief penitance,
rather I-shall-suffer for her grievous penance
tant que pitiez et merciz l'en prendra.
until that pity and mercy her-thereof will-take
Diré vos qui mon cuer enblé m'a?
I-shall-tell you who my heart stolen me-has
Li douz ris et li bel oeil qu'ele a.
The sweet laugh and the fair eyes that-she has

Douce dame, s'il vos plesoit un soir,
Sweet lady if-it you pleased one evening
m'avrïez vos plus de joie doné
me-would-have you more of joy given
c'onques Tristans, qui en fist son pouoir,
than-ever Tristan who thereof did his power
n'en pout avoir nul jor de son aé;
thereof could have any day of his age
la moie joie est tornee a pesance.
the my joy is turned to heaviness
Hé, cors sanz cuer! de vos fet grant venjance
Ah body without heart of you makes great vengeance
cele qui m'a navré sanz defiance,
she who me-has wounded without defiance

et ne por quant je ne la lerai ja.
and not for all-that I not her shall-leave ever
L'en doit bien bele dame amer
One ought well fair lady to-love
et s'amor garder, qui l'a.
and her-love to-keep who it-has

Dame, por vos vueil aler foloiant,
Lady for you I-wish to-go acting-foolishly
que je en aim mes maus et ma dolor,
for I thereof love my ills and my grief
qu'après les maus la grant joie en atent
for-after the ills the great joy thereof I-await
que je avrai, se Deu plest, a brief jor.
which I shall-have if (to-)God it-pleases at short day
Amors, merci! ne soiez oublïee!
Love mercy not be forgetful
S'or me failliez, c'iert traïson doublee,
If-now me you-fail it-will-be treason doubled
que mes granz maus por vos si fort m'agree.
for my great ill for you so strongly me-pleases
Ne me metez longuement en oubli!
Not me put long in oblivion
Se la bele n'a de moi merci,
If the fair-one not-has of me mercy
je ne vivrai mie longuement ensi.
I not shall-live at-all long thus

La grant biautez qui m'esprent et agree,
The great beauty which me-kindles and pleases
qui seur toutes est la plus desirree,
which above all is the most desired
m'a si lacié mon cuer en sa prison.
me-has so snared my heart in her prison
Deus! je ne pens s'a li non.
God I not think except-on her not
A moi que ne pense ele donc?
On me why not thinks she then

Contre le tens qui devise

XXIV · THE LIGHT OF THE EYES

At the turn of the season he makes a song, and Love has struck him with her dart. He finds no mercy in his lady, only a fierceness born of her beauty. He thinks only of her and fears a childishness keeps her from showing him a kind thought. Love passed the light of her eyes through his heart, and he begs her mercy.

Contre le tens qui devise
Against the season which divides
yver et pluie d'esté,
winter and rain from-summer
et la mauvis se debrise,
and the thrush herself breaks
qui de lonc tens n'a chanté,
which for long time not-has sung
ferai chançon, car a gré
I-shall-make song for to liking
me vient que j'ai enpensé.
to-me comes that-which I-have conceived
Amors, qui en moi s'est mise,
Love who in me herself-is put
bien m'a droit son dart geté.
well me-has straight her dart cast

Douce dame, de franchise
Sweet lady of nobleness
n'ai je point en vous trouvé,
not-have I a-whit in you found

s'ele ne s'i est puis mise
if-she not herself-there is since put
que je ne vous esgardé.
that I — you looked-at
Trop avez vers moi fierté,
Too-much you-have toward me fierceness
mès ce fet vostre biauté,
but this does your beauty
ou il n'a point de devise;
where there not-is a-whit of limit
tant en i a grant plenté.
so-much thereof there is great plenty

En moi n'a pas abstinence
In me not-is at-all abstinence
que je puisse ailleurs penser
that I may elsewhere think
fors qu'a li, ou conoissance
except that-to her where understanding
ne merci ne puis trouver.
nor mercy not I-can find
Bien fui fez pour li amer,
Well I-was made for her to-love
car ne m'en puis saouler,
for not myself-thereof I-can sate
et qant plus avrai cheance,
and when more I-shall-have chance
plus la me couvient douter.
more her me it-behooves to-fear

D'une riens sui en dotance
Of-a thing I-am in doubt
que je ne puis plus celer:
which I not can more conceal
qu'en li n'ait un pou d'enfance.
that-in her there-be a little of-childishness
Ce me fet desconforter
This me makes be-disheartened
que, s'a moi a bon penser,
that if-toward me she-has good thought
ne l'ose ele demoustrer.
not it-dares she to-show
Si feïst qu'a sa senblance
So she-might-do that-by her semblance
le peüsse deviner!
it I-might guess

Dès que je li fis prïere
Since that I to-her made prayer
et la pris a esgarder,
and her I-took to look
me fist Amors la lumiere
me made Love the light
des euz par le cuer passer.
of-the eyes through the heart pass

Cist conduiz me fet grever,
This conduct me makes grieve
dont je ne me sai garder,
whence I not myself know-how to-guard
n'il ne puet torner arriere;
nor-it not can turn back
li cuers melz voudroit crever.
the heart rather would-wish to-burst

Dame, a vos m'estuet clamer
Lady to you me-behooves to-cry
et que merci vos reqiere.
and that mercy of-you I-may-ask
Deus m'i dont merci trouver!
God me-there may-grant mercy to-find

Dame, l'en dit que l'en muert bien de joie

XXV · DYING OF JOY

They say one can die of joy, and he thought to die in her arms, but love's grief is worse. Only fear of grieving her keeps him alive, and he would not want Paradise without her. Flatterers part loyal lovers from their joy. She calls his words invention; a lady who takes a prisoner owes him the grain after the straw.

Dame, l'en dit que l'en muert bien de joie.
Lady one says that one dies well of joy
Je l'ai douté, mès ce fu pour noient
I it-have feared but this was for nothing
que je cuidai, s'entre voz braz estoie,
for I thought if-between your arms I-were
que je fenisse enqui joieusement.
that I would-end there joyfully
Si douce morz fust bien a mon talent,
So sweet death would-be well to my desire
que la dolor d'amors qui me guerroie
for the grief of-love which me wars
par est si grant que du morir m'esfroie.
much is so great that of-the dying me-frightens

Se Deus me doint ce que je li querroie,
So God me may-grant that which I of-him would-ask
ce me retient a morir seulement,
this me holds-back from dying only
que resons est, se je por li moroie,
for reason is if I for her died

qu'ele en eüst por moi son cuer dolent;
that-she thereof might-have for me her heart sorrowful
et je me doi garder a escïent
and I myself ought to-guard with knowledge
de corocier li, qu'estre ne voudroie
from angering her for-to-be not I-would-wish
en Paradis, s'ele n'i estoit moie.
in Paradise if-she not-there were mine

Deus nous pramet que, qui porra ataindre
God to-us promises that who can attain
a Paradis, q'il porra souhedier
to Paradise that-he can wish
quanq'il voudra; ja puis ne l'estuet plaindre,
whatever-he will-wish ever then not him-behooves to-lament
que il l'avra tantost sanz delaier;
for he it-will-have at-once without delaying
et, se je puis Paradis gaaignier,
and if I can Paradise gain
la avrai je ma dame sanz contraindre,
there shall-have I my lady without constraining
ou Deus fera sa parole remaindre.
or God will-make his word cease

Tres granz amors ne puet partir ne fraindre,
Very great love not can part nor break
s'el n'est en cuer desloial, losengier,
if-it not-is in heart disloyal flatterers

faus, guileor, qu'a mentir et a faindre
false deceivers who-by lying and by feigning
font les loiaus de leur joie esloignier.
make the loyal from their joy go-far
Mès ma dame set bien, au mien cuidier,
But my lady knows well to-the my thinking
a ses doz moz cointes si bel ataindre
with her sweet words elegant so fairly to-reach
qu'ele i conoist ce qui la fet destraindre.
that-she there knows that which her makes be-constrained

Se je puis tant vivre que il li chaille
If I can so-long live that it to-her may-matter
de mes dolors, bien porroie guerir;
of my griefs well I-could recover
mès ele tient mes diz a controuvaille
but she holds my sayings for invention
et dit toz jorz que je la vueil traïr;
and says all days that I her wish to-betray
et je l'aim tant et la vueil et desir
and I her-love so-much and her wish and desire
q'el mont n'a bien qui sanz li riens me vaille.
that-in-the world not-is good which without her anything to-me may-avail
Melz vaut la morz que trop vilaine faille.
Better is-worth the death than too base failing

Dame, qui veut son prison bien tenir
Lady who wishes her prisoner well to-keep
et si l'a pris a si dure bataille,
and so him-has taken in so hard battle
doner li doit le grain après la paille.
to-give to-him she-ought the grain after the straw

Je ne puis pas bien metre en nonchaloir

XXVI · CONCEALING

He cannot keep from singing when Love summons him, though he dares not reveal his thought. After great ills joy returns, and he awaits it from her alone. He will conceal his heart and learn whether Love can reward, though concealing harms him while chatterers win mercy. He gives himself to her, humble and silent.

Je ne puis pas bien metre en nonchaloir
I not can at-all well put in neglect
que je ne chant, quant Amors m'en semont,
that I — sing when Love me-thereto summons
que de ç'ai je le greigneur duel du mont
for of this-have I the greatest grief of-the world
que je n'os pas descouvrir ma pensee,
that I not-dare at-all to-uncover my thought
ce dont je voi les autres decevoir.
that whereby I see the others deceive
Tels fet senblant d'amor qui point n'i bee;
Such makes semblance of-love who at-all not-there aims
por ce chant je que g'en refraig mon plor,
for this sing I that I-thereby check my weeping
et s'en atent joie après ma dolor.
and so-thereof I-await joy after my grief

Ceste dolor me devroit mult seoir
This grief me ought much to-suit
qui est sanz rive et n'i a point de font;
which is without bank and not-there is a-whit of bottom

et s'il est nus qu'autrement m'en respont,
and if-there is anyone who-otherwise to-me-thereof answers
je l'en avrai mult tost reson moustree;
I to-him-thereof shall-have very soon reason shown
qu'après granz maus, ce dit on tot por voir,
that-after great ills this says one all for truth
est mainte foiz grant joie recouvree.
is many-a time great joy recovered
S'il ensi est, dont n'ai je pas poor
If-it thus is then not-have I at-all fear
que de mes maus n'aie bien le retor.
that of my ills not-I-may-have well the return

Ice retor, Deus! et quant l'avrai gié?
This return God and when it-I-shall-have I
Certes, dame, de vos sole l'atent.
Certainly lady from you alone it-I-await
Les voz biautez et vostre fin senblant
The your beauties and your true semblance
me font avoir une bone esperance;
me make have a good hope
et si ne sai se je ai foloié,
and so not I-know if I have acted-foolishly
que mult redout de vous fausse senblance.
for much I-dread from you false semblance
Ensi le di, que ne m'en puis celer,
Thus it I-say for not myself-thereof I-can conceal
ne ne m'en puis partir ne remuër.
nor not myself-thence I-can part nor move

Dou remuër ja ne prendrai congié,
Of-the moving ever not I-shall-take leave
nel feroie por riens qui soit vivant;
not-it I-would-do for anything that may-be living
si i parra, quant mis m'en sui en tant
so there it-will-appear when put myself-thereto I-am in so-much
que j'atendrai queus sera ma cheance,
that I-shall-await what will-be my chance
et couverrai ensi mon cuer irié
and I-shall-cover thus my heart angered
et si savrai s'Amors a conoissance,
and so I-shall-know if-Love has understanding
ne s'ele set ami guerredoner.
or if-she knows-how friend to-reward
Ja n'i perdrai pour belement celer.
Ever not-there I-shall-lose for fairly concealing

Celer dit on que mult vaut a ami,
Concealing says one that much is-worth to friend
mès ne m'en puis apercevoir de rien.
but not myself-thereof I-can perceive of anything
Li miens celers me fet plus mal que bien,
The my concealing me does more ill than good
que jangleor, qui poignent et atisent,
for chatterers who sting and stir-up
vont tant parlant que tantost ont merci,
go so-much speaking that at-once they-have mercy
ne le mentir une feve ne prisent.
nor the lying a bean not they-prize

Et je, dame, me rent a vos pensis,
And I lady myself render to you pensive
hunbles, celanz et fins, loiaus amis.
humble concealing and true loyal friend

Nus hons n'ert ja de bien amer espris,
Any man not-will-be ever with well to-love kindled
s'il est de cuer decevanz et faintis.
if-be is of heart deceiving and false

Empereor ne roi n'ont nul pouoir

XXVII · STRONGER THAN KINGS

Emperors and kings can give land and pardon, but Love can guard a man from death and give lasting joy, and should be loved above all. She will not reward as she could, yet he stays her servant whatever the end, and his life and death are in his lady. The envoy tells Raoul that he who serves and pleads needs help.

Empereor ne roi n'ont nul pouoir
Emperors nor kings not-have any power
envers Amors, ice vous vueil prouver:
toward Love this to-you I-wish to-prove
il puënt bien doner de leur avoir,
they can well give of their wealth
terres et fiez, et mesfez pardoner,
lands and fiefs and misdeeds pardon
mès Amors puet honme de mort garder
but Love can man from death guard
et doner joie qui dure,
and give joy which lasts
plaine de bone aventure.
full of good fortune

Amors fet bien un honme melz valoir,
Love makes well a man better avail
que nus fors li ne porroit amender;
than anyone except her — could amend

le grant desir done du douz voloir,
the great desire she-gives of-the sweet will
tel que nus hons ne puet autre penser.
such that any man not can other think
Seur toute riens doit on Amors amer;
Above all things ought one Love to-love
en li ne faut fors mesure
in her not fails except measure
et ce qu'ele m'est trop dure.
and this that-she to-me-is too hard

S'Amors vosist guerredoner autant
If-Love would-wish to-reward as-much
conme ele puet, mult fust ses nons a droit,
as she can much were her name by right
mès el ne veut, dont j'ai le cuer dolent,
but she not wishes whence I-have the heart sorrowful
qu'ensi me tient sanz guerredon destroit;
for-thus me she-holds without guerdon distressed
et je sui cil, quels que la fins en soit,
and I am he what ever the end thereof may-be
qui a li servir s'otroie.
who to her serve himself-grants
Empris l'ai, n'en recrerroie.
Undertaken it-I-have not-thence I-would-desist

Dame, avra ja bien qui merci atent?
Lady will-have ever good who mercy awaits
Vous savez bien de moi au parestroit
You know well of me at-the last
que vostres sui, ne puet estre autrement;
that yours I-am not can be otherwise
je ne sai pas se ce mal me feroit.
I not know at-all if this ill me would-do
De tant d'essais fetes petit d'esploit,
Of so-many of-trials you-make little of-profit
que, se je dire l'osoie,
for if I say it-I-dared
trop me demeure la joie.
too-much to-me delays the joy

Je ne cuit pas q'il onques fust nus hon
I not think at-all that-there ever were any man
qu'Amors tenist en point si perilleus.
whom-Love held in point so perilous
Tant m'i destraint que g'en pert ma reson;
So-much me-there she-constrains that I-thereof lose my reason
bien sent et voi que ce n'est mie a gieus.
well I-feel and see that this not-is at-all in game
Quant me moustroit ses senblanz amoreus,
When to-me she-showed her semblance loving
bien cuidai avoir amie,
well I-thought to-have friend
mès oncor ne l'ai je mie.
but yet not her-have I at-all

Dame, ma mort et ma vie
Lady my death and my life
est en vous, que que je die.
is in you what ever I may-say

Raoul, cil qui sert et prie
Raoul he who serves and prays
avroit bien mestier d'aïe.
would-have well need of-help

Por froidure ne por yver felon

XXVIII · THE COLD SEASON

Cold will not stop his song. Everyone says a lover should repent if he can, but whoever loves well cannot leave until death, and the more he reasons with himself the more dismayed he grows. He cannot fail his lady; the sea will dry for want of rain first. He sends his song weeping to her and will wait in long hope.

Por froidure ne por yver felon
For cold nor for winter cruel
ne lesserai
not I-shall-leave
que ne face d'amors une chançon,
that — I-may-make of-love a song
et si dirai
and so I-shall-say
que qui aime repente s'en, s'il puet.
that who loves may-repent himself-thereof if-he can
Chascuns le dit, mès mentir l'en estuet.
Each it says but to-lie him-thereof behooves
Qui bien aime, il ne s'en puet partir,
Who well loves he not himself-thence can part
tant que l'ame li soit du cors partie.
until that the-soul to-him be from-the body parted

Por moi le di, que j'ai mis a reson:
For me it I-say for I-have put to reason
a moi tençai.
with me I-quarreled

Plus pren conseil de si fete acheson,
More I-take counsel of so made occasion
plus m'en esmai,
more myself-thereat I-am-dismayed
que li esmais de mon fin penser muet.
for the dismay from my true thought moves
Plus pens a li, et plus en i apluet.
More I-think on her and more thereof there rains-in
Dame, merci! je ne vos puis faillir;
Lady mercy I not you can fail
ançois sera mers por pluie faillie.
sooner will-be sea for rain failed

Dame, se j'ai de mes granz maus poor,
Lady if I-have of my great ills fear
ne vous poist pas,
not you may-grieve at-all
que bien poëz alegier ma dolor.
for well you-can lighten my grief
Et tu, t'en vas,
And thou thyself-thence goest
chançon, a li, si li di en plorant
song to her so to-her say in weeping
qu'une merciz d'amors en souspirant
that-a mercy of-love in sighing
vaut bien cent tanz a fin, loial ami
is-worth well hundred times to true loyal friend
que ne porroit pour riens cuidier s'amie.
than — could for anything think his-friend

Fort sont li laz et grant li couvertor
Strong are the snares and great the coverts
— ce n'est pas gas —
this not-is at-all jest
en que cil est qui aime par amor.
in which he is who loves by love
Et qu'en diras,
And what-thereof thou-wilt-say
puis que je sai et conois son senblant
since that I know and recognize her semblance
et je me tieng ensi devers sa gent?
and I myself hold thus toward her folk
M'a ele donc pris, lïé ne saisi?
Me-has she then taken bound or seized
Oïl, certes, ja n'en ert dessaisie.
Yes certainly ever not-thereof she-will-be dispossessed

Puis qu'ensi est, j'atendrai bonement
Since that-thus it-is I-shall-await patiently
en lonc espoir,
in long hope
car il n'est riens que je vousisse tant
for there not-is anything that I would-wish so-much
con son vouloir
as her will
faire par tout sanz acheson trouver,
to-do in all without pretext to-find
et el seüst mon cuer et mon penser;
and she might-know my heart and my thought

que par ce cuit que j'avroie merci.
for by this I-think that I-would-have mercy
Deus, quant verrai pour quoi je la mercie!
God when I-shall-see for which I her thank

Nus ne porroit de cestui mal esmer
Anyone not could of this ill reckon
fors vos, dame, conbien il puet durer;
except you lady how-long it can last
et, s'il vous plest, nel metez en oubli,
and if-it you pleases not-it put in oblivion
que nule foiz mes cuers ne vous oublie.
for any time my heart not you forgets

Coustume est bien, quant on tient un prison

XXIX · THE PRISONER

A jailer will not hear his prisoner, and he dares not speak of ransom. He fears the many who surround her and tell her that no rich man loves; they lie. Loving so loyally, he never saw his folly. In thought she holds him in her arms, and when his sense returns he curses himself; if she does not reward him, he will live ill.

Coustume est bien, quant on tient un prison,
Custom is well when one holds a prisoner
qu'on ne le veut oïr ne escouter,
that-one not him wishes to-hear nor to-listen
car nule riens ne fet tant cuer felon
for any thing not makes so-much heart cruel
con grant pouoir, qui mal en veut user.
as great power who ill thereof wishes to-use
Pour ce, dame, de moi m'estuet douter,
For this lady for me me-behooves to-fear
car je n'i os parler de raençon
for I not-there dare speak of ransom
n'estre ostagiez s'en bele guise non.
nor-to-be hostaged except-in fair guise not
Après tout ce ne puis je eschaper.
After all this not can I escape

D'une chose ai au cuer grant soupeçon,
Of-a thing I-have at-the heart great suspicion
et c'est la riens qui plus me fet douter:
and this-is the thing which most me makes fear

que tant de genz li vont tout environ.
that so-many of folk to-her go all around
Je sai de voir que c'est por moi grever;
I know of truth that this-is for me to-grieve
adès dïent: «Dame, on vos veut guiler;
ever they-say Lady one you wishes to-deceive
ja par amors n'amera riches hom».
ever by love not-will-love rich man
Mès il mentent, li losengier felon,
But they lie the flatterers cruel
car qui plus a, melz doit amors garder.
for who more has better ought love to-keep

Se ma dame ne veut amer nului,
If my lady not wishes to-love anyone
moi ne autrui, cinq cenz merciz l'en rent,
me nor another five hundred thanks to-her-thereof I-render
qu'assez i a d'autres que je ne sui
for-plenty there are of-others than I — am
qui la prïent de faus cuer baudement.
who her pray with false heart boldly
Esbaudise fet gaaingnier souvent,
Boldness makes win often
mès ne sé riens, quant je devant li sui;
but not I-know anything when I before her am
tant ai de mal et de paine et d'ennui,
so-much I-have of ill and of pain and of-trouble
quant me couvient dire: «A Dieu vous conmant!»
when me it-behooves to-say To God you I-commend

Vous savez bien qu'en ne conoist en lui
You know well that-one not knows in himself
ce qu'en conoist en autrui plainement.
that which-one knows in another plainly
Ma grant folie onques jor ne conui,
My great folly ever day not I-knew
tant ai amé de fin cuer loiaument;
so-much I-have loved with true heart loyally
mès une riens m'i fet alegement:
but a thing me-there makes relief
qu'en esperance ai un pou de refui.
for-in hope I-have a little of refuge
Li oiselez se va ferir el glui,
The little-bird itself goes to-strike in-the birdlime
quant il ne puet trouver autre garant.
when it not can find other protection

Souvent m'avient, quant je pens bien a li,
Often to-me-it-happens when I think well on her
qu'a mes dolors une douçors me vient
that-to my griefs a sweetness to-me comes
si granz au cuer que trestouz m'entroubli,
so great at-the heart that wholly myself-I-forget
et m'est a vis qu'entre ses braz me tient;
and to-me-is to seeming that-between her arms me she-holds

et après ce, quant li sens me revient
and after this when the sense to-me returns
et je voi bien qu'a tout ce ai failli,
and I see well that-of all this I-have failed
lors me courrouz et ledange et maudi,
then myself I-anger and insult and curse
car je sai bien que il ne l'en souvient.
for I know well that it not to-her-thereof remembers

Bele du tout et dure de merci,
Fair of-the all and hard of mercy
se mi travail ne sont par vous meri,
if my labors not are by you rewarded
mult vivrai mal, s'a vivre me couvient.
much I-shall-live ill if-to live me it-behooves

Savez por quoi Amors a non amors

XXX · THE HAND HE KISSES

Why is Love called love, who grieves only her own? She is like a devil to those who trust her, yet he is hers and grieves for her faults as a good servant chastens his lord. Once, when Love led him to see his lady, she touched him with her white hand in greeting, and kissing that hand makes him think he has found mercy.

Savez por quoi Amors a non amors,
Know-you for what Love has name love
qui ne grieve fors les siens soulement?
who not grieves except the hers only
Qui le savra s'en die son talant,
Who it will-know so-thereof may-be-say his desire
car je nel sai, se Deus me doint secors!
for I not-it know so God me may-grant succor
Amors semble deable qui maistrie:
Love seems devil who masters
plus engigne celui qu'en li se fie;
more she-deceives him who-in her himself trusts
et poise m'en, se j'aie ja merci,
and it-grieves me-thereof so I-may-have ever mercy
plus que por moi cent mile tanz por li,
more than for me hundred thousand times for her
quant on la puet rester de felonnie.
when one her can charge with felony

Je sui touz siens et s'en sent les dolors,
I am wholly hers and so-thereof feel the griefs
et me poise de son mal durement,
and me it-grieves of her ill greatly
et en son bien cuit mon avancement,
and in her good I-think my advancement
car de seignors vient granz biens a plusors;
for from lords comes great good to many
et cil sert bien son seignor qui chastie,
and he serves well his lord who chastens
a cui poise, quant il fait vilenie.
to whom it-grieves when he does baseness
Mais Amors n'a cure de nul chasti,
But Love not-has care of any chastening
car ele a tant et veü et oï
for she has so-much both seen and heard
que ne li chaut de rien que on li die.
that not to-her matters of anything that one to-her may-say

Amors m'a fait tantes foiz corrocier
Love me-has made so-many times be-angry
qu'en mon corrouz n'a mès point de pooir,
that-in my anger not-is more a-whit of power
ainz sui plus siens, quant plus me desespoir.
rather I-am more hers when more myself I-despair

Ausi con cil qui delez le foier
Just as he who beside the hearth
gist malades et ne se puet desfendre
lies sick and not himself can defend
et menace la gent par mi a fendre,
and threatens the folk through mid to cleave
ausi di je ce por moi desenfler.
just-so say I this for me to-deflate
Il fait grant bien, quant on en ot parler;
It does great good when one thereof hears speak
mieuz en puet on l'assaut d'Amors atendre.
better thereby can one the-assault of-Love await

Se je m'en duil, ne fait a merveillier,
If I myself-thereof grieve not it-is to marvel
que Deus la fist pour gent faire doloir.
for God her made for folk to-make grieve
La ou Amors la m'amena veoir
There where Love her me-led to-see
oi je adès un tres douz atochier
had I at-once a very sweet touching
qu'ele me fist de sa blanche main tendre,
that-she me made with her white hand tender
quant par la main me prist au salu rendre.
when by the hand me she-took at-the greeting to-render

Mieuz aim la main dont me volt adeser
Better I-love the hand wherewith me she-wished to-touch
que l'autre cors ou ce me fait penser,
than the-other body where this me makes think
car dou confort set Amors as siens rendre.
for of-the comfort knows-how Love to-the hers to-render

Qui set amer, il savroit bien haïr,
Who knows-how to-love he would-know well to-hate
se il voloit, plus que nus autres hom,
if he wished more than any other man
mais n'est pour ce loiautez ne raison,
but not-is for this loyalty nor reason
qui bien aime, qu'il en doie partir;
who well loves that-he thence ought to-part
ainz doit chascuns amer sa renonmee.
rather ought each to-love his renown
Et se Amors estoit bien apensee,
And if Love were well advised
ele donroit a fin ami loial
she would-give to true friend loyal
joie et secors pour sosfrir trop grant mal;
joy and succor for to-suffer too great ill
ensi seroit servie et honoree.
thus she-would-be served and honored

Dame, merci! La mains enbausemee
Lady mercy The hand embalmed
que nuit et jor bais cent foiz d'un estal
which night and day I-kiss hundred times at-one stretch
me fait parler de vos si a cheval
me makes speak of you so on horseback
qu'il m'est a vis que merci ai trouvee.
that-it to-me-is to seeming that mercy I-have found

Les douces dolors

XXXI · SWEET GRIEFS

Love's sweet griefs burn, and foolish boldness finds little help; he was bold once and still fears. Loving loyally is folly, yet a tower would be carried down by flowers before he recanted. Long delay kills him. He sings to console himself and has set all his heart in her, and cannot endure until she calls him Friend.

Les douces dolors
The sweet griefs
et li mal plesant
and the ills pleasing
qui viennent d'amors
which come from-love
sont douz et cuisant,
are sweet and burning
et qui fet fol hardement
and who does foolish boldness
a paines avra secors.
with pains will-have succor
G'en fis un dont la poors
I-thereof did one whereof the fear
me tient el cors que g'en sent.
me holds in-the body that I-thereof feel

Bien est grant folors
Well it-is great folly
d'amer loiaument.
of-loving loyally

Qui porroit aillors
Who could elsewhere
changier son talent!
change his desire
Hé, Deus! g'en ai apris tant
Ah God I-thereof have learned so-much
q'ançois seroit une tors
that-sooner would-be a tower
portee a terre de flors
carried to ground by flowers
qu'on m'en veïst recreant.
than-one me-thereof would-see recreant

Lonc respit m'ont mort
Long delay me-have killed
et grant desirrier
and great longing
et ce qu'a son tort
and this that-at her wrong
me veut corrocier.
me she-wishes to-anger
Mains en fera a prisier,
Less thereof she-will-be to prize
se je n'ai de li confort,
if I not-have from her comfort
qu'el mont n'a chose si fort
for-in-the world not-is thing so hard
por li ne me fust legier.
for her not to-me would-be light

Je chant et deport
I sing and disport
pour moi solacier
for myself to-solace
et voi en ma sort
and I-see in my lot
ennui et dangier,
trouble and resistance
si porrai bien perillier
so I-shall-be-able well to-founder
quant ne puis venir a port,
since not I-can come to port
ne je n'ai aillors resort
nor I not-have elsewhere recourse
sanz ma lejance brisier.
without my allegiance to-break

Dame, j'ai tout mis
Lady I-have all put
— et cuer et penser —
both heart and thought
en vous et assis
in you and set
sanz ja remuër.
without ever moving

Se je voloie aconter
If I wished to-recount
vostre biauté, vostre pris,
your beauty your worth
j'avroie trop anemis;
I-would-have too-many enemies
por ce ne m'en os parler.
for this not myself-thereof I-dare speak

Dame, je n'i puis durer,
Lady I not-there can endure
car tout adès m'ira pis,
for all ever to-me-will-go worse
tant que vous dïez: «Amis,
until that you say Friend
je vous vueil m'amor donner».
I to-you wish my-love to-give

Por ce se d'amer me dueil

XXXII · THE HEART IN PRISON

Loving grieves him, yet recalling her beauty comforts him. His heart, body, and eyes fight against him, and she holds the heart, the strongest of them. Love strikes without respite. He has lost his heart into her keeping and asks some sweetness of her; a summer would be too short to praise her beauty.

Por ce se d'amer me dueil,
For this if of-loving myself I-grieve
si i ai je grant confort,
so there have I great comfort
car adès en li recort,
for ever on her I-recall
Deus! ce que virent mi oeil:
God that which saw my eyes
c'est sa grant biauté veraie
this-is her great beauty true
qui en pluseurs sens m'essaie,
which in several senses me-tries
que ce que j'ai, ce se combat a moi:
for that which I-have this itself fights with me
c'est cuers et cors et li oeil dont la voi;
this-is heart and body and the eyes whereby her I-see
mès le cuer a, qu'est de greigneur pouoir.
but the heart she-has which-is of greater power
Or me dont Deus les autres vueille avoir!
Now me may-grant God the others she-may-wish to-have

Maintes genz ont un escueil,
Many folk have one onset
ou soit a droit ou a tort,
either be-it by right or by wrong
et Amors fiert sanz deport;
and Love strikes without respite
ja n'i doutera orgueil.
ever not-there she-will-fear pride
Li sages plus s'en esmaie,
The wise-man more himself-thereat dismays
que trop set fere grant plaie.
for too-well she-knows-how to-make great wound
Grant la me fist, quant le cuer a de moi.
Great it me she-made when the heart she-has of me
En sa prison biau m'est quant je l'i voi;
In her prison fair to-me-is when I it-there see
melz l'aim en li qu'en nul autre pouoir.
better it-I-love in her than-in any other power
Or li dont Deus garder a mon vouloir!
Now to-her may-grant God to-keep at my will

Dame, qui pert au besoing
Lady who loses at-the need
por son ami ce qu'il a,
for his friend that which-he has
se cil le guerredon n'a,
if he the guerdon not-has
honiz en est par tesmoing;
shamed thereby he-is by witness

et je pert, sanz reconquerre,
and I lose without recovering
mon cuer, que tenez en serre.
my heart which you-hold in lock
Perdu non ai, nel perdrai pas ensi,
Lost not I-have not-it I-shall-lose at-all thus
que pour le cuer prïera tant merci
for for the heart will-pray so-much mercy
li cors vers vos que merveilles ert grant,
the body toward you that marvel will-be great
se ne fraigniez vers lui vostre talent.
if not you-break toward it your will

Se je a un honme doing
If I to a man give
— aucuns de tels genz i a, —
some of such folk there are
demain autant me harra,
tomorrow as-much me he-will-hate
se ne li remet el poing.
if not to-him I-put-back in-the hand
Mult grant sens a a biau querre
Very great sense there-is in fair asking
et a doner sanz requerre;
and in giving without asking
et je, dame, mil foiz vos cri merci:
and I lady thousand times to-you cry mercy
de ce qui miens deüst estre vos pri;
for that which mine ought to-be you I-pray

que n'espoir pas, a vostre douz senblant,
for not-I-hope at-all at your sweet semblance
que la merciz me viengne au cuer devant.
that the mercy to-me may-come at-the heart before

Dame, ore ai dit ma poor.
Lady now I-have said my fear
Mult voudroie ore escouter
Much I-would-wish now to-hear
se ja daigneroiz penser
if ever you-will-deign to-think
vers moi aucune douçor
toward me some sweetness
ne riens nule qui me vaille,
nor thing any which me may-avail
si que li cuers en tressaille
so that the heart thereof leaps
en la prison, la ou vos le tenez.
in the prison there where you it hold
Deus! fu ainz mès cuers si bien enchantez?
God was ever before heart so well enchanted
Nenil, certes! Mès se li cors pris fust
No certainly But if the body taken were
avec le cuer, ja ne li despleüst.
with the heart ever not to-it would-displease

Dame, ne puis loër voz granz biautez,
Lady not I-can praise your great beauties
que trop petiz me seroit uns estez;
for too little to-me would-be a summer
mès, se riens puis fere qui vos pleüst,
but if anything I-can do which you might-please
n'iert ja si grief que mie me neüst.
not-will-be ever so grievous that at-all me it-might-harm

Une chançon oncor vueil

XXXIII · A LOOK AT PARTING

He renews his song for the lady he grieves over. He thought her simple and without pride, but her welcome was only to grieve him. Waking and sleeping his heart begs her mercy, and he trusts her pity so much that he forgets himself for joy. Love seizes quickly and rewards slowly; one look she gave at parting holds his heart.

Une chançon oncor vueil
A song yet I-wish
fere por moi conforter.
to-make for me to-comfort
Pour celi dont je me dueil
For her whereof I myself grieve
vueil mon chant renouveler;
I-wish my song to-renew
pour ce ai talent de chanter
for this I-have desire of singing
que, quant je ne chant, mi oeil
for when I not sing my eyes
tornent souvent a plorer.
turn often to weeping

Simple et franche, sanz orgueil
Simple and noble without pride
cuidai ma dame trouver.
I-thought my lady to-find
Mult me fu de bel acueil,
Much to-me she-was of fair welcome

si le fist por moi grever.
so it she-did for me to-grieve
Si sont a li mi penser
So are on her my thoughts
que la nuit, quant je sonmeil,
that the night when I sleep
vet mes cuers merci crïer.
goes my heart mercy to-cry

En dormant et en veillant
In sleeping and in waking
est mes cuers du tout a li
is my heart of-the all to her
et li prie doucement,
and to-her prays sweetly
conme a sa dame, merci.
as to his lady mercy
En sa pitié tant me fi
In her pity so-much myself I-trust
que, quant g'i pens durement,
that when I-there think hard
de joie toz m'entroubli.
for joy wholly myself-I-forget

Joie et duel a cil souvent
Joy and grief has he often
qui le mien mal a senti.
who the my ill has felt

Mes cuers plore, et ge en chant;
My heart weeps and I thereof sing
ensi m'ont mi oeil traï.
thus me-have my eyes betrayed
Amors, tost avez saisi,
Love soon you-have seized
mès vous guerredonez lent;
but you reward slow
ne pour qant de moi vous pri.
not for all-that for me you I-pray

Hé, las! s'il ne li souvient
Ah alas if-it not to-her remembers
de moi, morz sui sanz faillir.
of me dead I-am without failing
S'el savoit dont mes maus vient,
If-she knew whence my ill comes
bien l'en devroit souvenir.
well to-her-thereof ought to-remember
Cist maus me fera morir,
This ill me will-make die
se ma dame n'en soustient
if my lady not-thereof bears
une part par son plesir.
a part by her pleasure

Chançon, di li sanz mentir
Song tell her without lying
c'uns resgarz le cuer me tient
that-a look the heart me holds
que li vi fere au partir.
which her I-saw make at-the parting

Ausi conme unicorne sui

XXXIV · THE UNICORN

Like the unicorn that swoons in the maiden's lap and is killed, he has been killed by Love and his lady. His heart lies in a sweet prison with pillars of desire, doors of fair seeing, and rings of good hope, kept by Fair Semblance, Beauty, and the churl Danger. Here one wins by humility, and only mercy helps.

Ausi conme unicorne sui
Just as unicorn I-am
qui s'esbahist en regardant,
which itself-amazes in looking
quant la pucele va mirant.
when the maiden it-goes gazing-at
Tant est liee de son ennui,
So it-is glad of its trouble
pasmee chiet en son giron;
swooned it-falls in her lap
lors l'ocit on en traïson.
then it-kills one in treason
Et moi ont mort d'autel senblant
And me have killed with-such semblance
Amors et ma dame, por voir:
Love and my lady for truth
mon cuer ont, n'en puis point ravoir.
my heart they-have not-thence I-can a-whit have-back

Dame, quant je devant vous fui
Lady when I before you was
et je vous vi premierement,
and I you saw first
mes cuers aloit si tressaillant
my heart went so leaping
qu'il vous remest, quant je m'en mui.
that-it with-you remained when I myself-thence moved
Lors fu menez sanz raençon
Then it-was led without ransom
en la douce chartre en prison
into the sweet jail in prison
dont li piler sont de talent
whereof the pillars are of desire
et li huis sont de biau veoir
and the doors are of fair seeing
et li anel de bon espoir.
and the rings of good hope

De la chartre a la clef Amors
Of the jail has the key Love
et si i a mis trois portiers:
and so there she-has put three porters
Biau Senblant a non li premiers,
Fair Semblance has name the first
et Biautez cele en fet seignors;
and Beauty that-one thereof makes lord

Dangier a mis a l'uis devant,
Danger she-has put at the-door front
un ort, felon, vilain, puant,
a filthy felon churl stinking
qui mult est maus et pautoniers.
who very is evil and rascally
Cil troi sont et viste et hardi:
Those three are both quick and bold
mult ont tost un honme saisi.
very they-have soon a man seized

Qui porroit sousfrir les tristors
Who could suffer the sorrows
et les assauz de ces huissiers?
and the assaults of these ushers
Onques Rollanz ne Oliviers
Ever Roland nor Oliver
ne vainquirent si granz estors;
not vanquished so great battles
il vainquirent en conbatant,
they vanquished in fighting
mès ceus vaint on humiliant.
but those vanquishes one humbling
Sousfrirs en est gonfanoniers;
Suffering thereof is standard-bearer
en cest estor dont je vous di
in this battle whereof I to-you tell
n'a nul secors fors de merci.
not-is any succor except of mercy

Dame, je ne dout mès riens plus
Lady I not fear more anything more
que tant que faille a vous amer.
than so-much that I-may-fail to you love
Tant ai apris a endurer
So-much I-have learned to endure
que je sui vostres tout par us;
that I am yours all by use
et se il vous en pesoit bien,
and if it you thereof grieved well
ne m'en puis je partir pour rien
not myself-thence can I part for anything
que je n'aie le remenbrer
that I not-may-have the remembering
et que mes cuers ne soit adès
and that my heart not be ever
en la prison et de moi près.
in the prison and from me near

Dame, quant je ne sai guiler,
Lady since I not know-how to-deceive
merciz seroit de seson mès
mercy would-be in season henceforth
de soustenir si greveus fès.
of sustaining so grievous burden

Qui plus aime plus endure

XXXV · THE DREAM

Whoever loves most endures most, since Love leads her friend to death before giving him joy. His lady laughs at his grief; reason bids him leave, but his heart refuses. He asks whether one who surrenders deserves death. In sleep he held her, and woke to weep. The envoy bids Raoul return soon: no Turk or Arab has taken what is his.

Qui plus aime plus endure,
Who more loves more endures
plus a mestier de confort,
more has need of comfort
qu'Amors est de tel nature
for-Love is of such nature
que son ami maine a mort;
that her friend she-leads to death
puis en a joie et deport,
then thereof he-has joy and pleasure
s'il est de bone aventure;
if-he is of good fortune
mès je n'en puis point avoir,
but I not-thereof can a-whit have
ainz m'a mis en nonchaloir
rather me-has put in neglect
cele qui n'a de moi cure.
she who not-has of me care

Onques riens ne fu si dure
Ever anything not was so hard
d'aÿmant en mon recort.
of-diamond in my recollection
Des souspirs et de l'ardure
Of-the sighs and of the-burning
et des lermes que je port
and of-the tears that I bear
sui perciez par la plus fort
I-am pierced through the most strongly
et mis a desconfiture,
and put to discomfiture
et je n'ai vers li pouoir,
and I not-have toward her power
ainz rit, quant me voit doloir:
rather she-laughs when me she-sees grieve
ci faut pitiez et mesure.
here fails pity and measure

Puis que pitiez est faillie,
Since that pity is failed
bien m'en devroie partir;
well myself-thence I-ought to-part
mes sens m'en semont et prie,
my sense me-thereto summons and prays
mès mes cuers nel veut sousfrir,
but my heart not-it wishes to-allow
ainz me het por li servir;
rather me hates for her to-serve

tant aime sa seignorie.
so-much it-loves her lordship
Dame, une riens vos demant:
Lady a thing of-you I-ask
que vous jugiez qui se rent,
that you judge who himself surrenders
se il a mort deservie.
if he has death deserved

Par maintes foiz l'ai sentie
By many times her-I-have felt
en dormant tout a loisir,
in sleeping all at leisure
mès quant pechiez et envie
but when sin and envy
m'esveilloit et que tenir
me-woke and that to-hold
la cuidoie a mon plesir,
her I-thought at my pleasure
et ele n'i estoit mie,
and she not-there was at-all
lors ploroie durement
then I-wept grievously
et melz vousisse en dormant
and rather I-would-wish in sleeping
li tenir toute ma vie.
her to-hold all my life

Ma grant joie en dormant iere
My great joy in sleeping was
si granz que nel puis conter.
so great that not-it I-can recount
En veillant ne truis maniere
In waking not I-find manner
de ma dolor conforter.
of my grief to-comfort
Bien me deüst trestorner
Well for-me ought to-turn-around
Amors ce devant deriere
Love this front behind
li dormirs fust en oubli
the sleeping would-be in oblivion
et g'eüsse en veillant li;
and I-might-have in waking her
lors seroit ma joie entiere.
then would-be my joy entire

Quant li vueil crïer merci,
When to-her I-wish to-cry mercy
lors ai tel poor de li
then I-have such fear of her
que n'os dire ma proiere.
that not-I-dare say my prayer

Raoul, Turc ne Arrabi
Raoul Turk nor Arab
n'ont riens dou vostre sesi;
not-have anything of-the yours seized
revenez par tens arriere!
come-back in time back

De grant joie me sui toz esmeüz

XXXVI · THE LADY'S GREETING

His lady has sent him greetings, and he cannot keep from singing. He has never dared send her word, fearing a bad answer would kill him. No lover should despair, since so precious a reward is worth awaiting. Far away, he sees her with the heart's eyes, sends her his heart in this song, and prays his longing not cost him dear.

De grant joie me sui toz esmeüz
With great joy myself I-am all moved
en mon voloir, qui mon fin cuer esclaire:
in my will which my true heart brightens
quant ma dame m'a envoié saluz,
since my lady me-has sent greetings
je ne me puis ne doi de chanter taire.
I not myself can nor ought from singing to-be-silent
De ce present doi je estre si liez
Of this present ought I to-be so glad
com de celui qui a, bien le sachiez,
as of her who has well it know
fine biauté, cortoisie et vaillance;
fine beauty courtesy and valor
pour ce i ai mis trestoute m'esperance.
for this there I-have put all my-hope

Dame, pour Dieu ne soie deceüz
Lady for God not may-I-be deceived
de vos amer, que ne m'en puis retraire!
of you to-love for not myself-thence I-can withdraw

De touz amis sui li plus elleüz,
Of all friends I-am the most choice
mès ne vos os descouvrir mon afaire.
but not to-you I-dare to-uncover my affair
Tant vous redout forment a corrocier
So-much you I-dread greatly to anger
c'onques vers vous n'osai puis envoier,
that-ever toward you not-I-dared since to-send
que, se de vous eüsse en atendance
for if from you I-had in expectation
mauvès respons, morz fusse sanz doutance.
bad answer dead I-would-be without doubt

Onques ne soi decevoir ne trichier
Ever not I-knew-how to-deceive nor to-cheat
— ne je pour rien aprendre nel voudroie —
nor I for anything to-learn not-it would-wish
envers celi qui me puet avancier.
toward her who me can advance
Faire et desfaire et donner bien et joie,
To-do and to-undo and to-give good and joy
tout c'est en li et en sa volenté.
all this-is in her and in her will
Deus! s'el savoit mon cuer et mon pensé,
God if-she knew my heart and my thought
je sai de voir que j'avroie conquise
I know of truth that I-would-have conquered
douce dame, ce que mes cuers plus prise.
sweet lady that which my heart most prizes

Nus qui aime ne se doit esmoier,
Anyone who loves not himself ought to-dismay
se fine amor le destraint et mestroie,
if true love him constrains and masters
car qui atent si precïeus loier,
for who awaits so precious reward
il n'est pas droiz que d'amer se recroie,
it not-is at-all right that from-loving himself he-desist
car qui plus sert, plus en doit avoir gré;
for who more serves more thereof ought to-have thanks
et je me fi tant en sa grant biauté,
and I myself trust so-much in her great beauty
qui des autres se desoivre et devise,
which from-the others itself separates and distinguishes
que il me plest a estre en son servise.
that it me pleases to be in her service

Des euz du cuer, dame, vous puis veoir,
With-the eyes of-the heart lady you I-can see
car trop sont loing li mien oil de ma chiere,
for too are far the my eyes from my dear-one
qui tant m'ont fet pour vous pensee avoir.
which so-much me-have made for you thought have
Dès celui jor que je vous vi premiere,
From that day that I you saw first
de vous veoir ai volenté trop grant.
of you to-see I-have will too great

Par ma chançon vous envoi en present
By my song to-you I-send in present
mon cuer et moi et toute ma pensee.
my heart and me and all my thought
Recevez le, dame, s'il vous agree!
Receive it lady if-it you pleases

Dame, de vous sont tuit mi pensement,
Lady of you are all my thoughts
et a vous sui remés a mon vivant.
and with you I-am remained at my lifetime
Pour Dieu vous pri, se mes fins cuers i bee,
For God you I-pray if my true heart there aims
ma volenté ne soit trop comparee.
my will not be too-much paid-for

Baudoÿn, il sunt dui amant

XXXVII · WORTH OR BEAUTY

Thibaut asks Baldwin which of two lovers deserves a maiden more, one who loves her worth and courtesy or one who loves her beauty. Baldwin speaks for worth, Thibaut for beauty, without which no heart is given. Ugly old women may be courteous but are worthless to touch, says Thibaut; worth holds Baldwin's heart.

Baudoÿn, il sunt dui amant
Baldwin there are two lovers
qui ainment de cuer sanz trichier
who love with heart without cheating
une pucele de jovent.
a maiden of youth
Li quelx la doit mieuz desraignier?
The which her ought better to-claim
Li uns l'ainme por ses valors
The one her-loves for her worth
et por sa cortoisie ausi;
and for her courtesy also
li autres l'ainme par amours
the other her-loves by love
por la grant beauté qu'est en li.
for the great beauty which-is in her

— Sire, saichiez certeinnement
Lord know certainly
que celui doit tenir plus chier
that him she-ought to-hold more dear
qui por son bon ensoignement
who for her good breeding
l'ainme de leal cuer entier;
her-loves with loyal heart entire
car cortoisie et granz honors
for courtesy and great honors
plaisent plus a leal ami
please more to loyal friend
que beautez ne fresche colors
than beauty or fresh color
ou il n'a pitié ne merci.
where there not-is pity nor mercy

— Baudoïn, la tres grant beauté
Baldwin the very great beauty
a valor et mainte vertu.
has worth and many-a virtue
S'ele disoit grant niceté,
If-she said great silliness
onques si cortois moz ne fu.
ever so courteous word not was
Granz beautez fait cuer forsenner
Great beauty makes heart go-mad
plus que nule autre rien vivant,
more than any other thing living

ne nuns ne puet son cuer doner,
nor anyone not can his heart give
se la beautez n'i est avant.
if the beauty not-there is before

— Sire, saichiez de verité:
Lord know of truth
beautez a tout son non perdu,
beauty has all its name lost
puis que valors a alevé
since that worth has raised
a dame son non et creü;
to lady her name and increased
car cortoisie fait loër
for courtesy makes be-praised
dames et bel acointement
ladies and fair acquaintance
et toz jors en bon pris monter,
and all days in good worth climb
ce dont beautez ne fait noiant.
this whereof beauty not does anything

— Baudoÿn, assez trueve l'en
Baldwin plenty finds one
vielles plus laides que nuns chiens
old-women more ugly than any dog
qui ont cortoisie et grant sen,
who have courtesy and great sense

mais au touchier ne valent riens.
but at-the touching not they-are-worth anything
Si la fait or si bon amer
So her it-makes now so good to-love
por ce que bel vos parlera?
for this that fair to-you she-will-speak
La bele ne puet mesparler,
The fair-one not can misspeak
ainz est bon quanque me dira.
rather is good whatever to-me she-will-say

— Sire, je ne dirai oian
Lord I not shall-say henceforth
qu'a vielle soie, ne ja siens
that-to old-woman I-may-be nor ever hers
ne serai mais, si con j'entent.
nor I-shall-be more so as I-intend
Blamer me volez les granz biens
To-blame me you-wish the great goods
que bele dame set mostrer
which fair lady knows-how to-show
qui cortoisie et bon pris a.
who courtesy and good worth has
Mieuz devrïez celui blamer
Better you-ought him to-blame
qui por beauté valour laira.
who for beauty worth will-leave

— Baudoÿn, soul d'un resgarder
Baldwin only of-a looking
ou d'un ris, quant le me fera,
or of-a laugh when it to-me she-will-make
la bele que je n'os nonmer
the fair-one whom I not-dare to-name
vaut quanque la laide donra.
is-worth whatever the ugly-one will-give

— Sire, li miens cuers remuër
Lord the my heart to-move
ne se veut de cele qui l'a.
not itself wishes from her who it-has
Valors l'a fait emprisoner,
Worth it-has had imprisoned
qui cortoisie li dona.
which courtesy to-her gave

Une chose, Baudoÿn, vos demant

XXXVIII · MOUTH OR FEET

When a lady grants her lover a meeting, should he first kiss her mouth or her feet? Baldwin says the mouth, since that kiss descends to the heart; Thibaut says the feet, since humility wins more love, and one kisses a shepherd's daughter on the mouth. Baldwin answers that a man snared by Love soon forgets the feet.

Une chose, Baudoÿn, vos demant:
A thing Baldwin of-you I-ask
s'il avenoit a fin, leal ami,
if-it happened to true loyal friend
qui sa dame a amee longuement
who his lady has loved long
et proiee tant qu'ele en a merci
and prayed so-much that-she thereof has mercy
et li mande que parler veingne a li
and to-him sends-word that to-speak he-may-come to her
tout por sa volenté faire,
all for his will to-do
que fera il tot avant por li plaire,
what will-do he all first for her to-please
quant li dira: «Beaus amis, bien veingniez»?
when to-him she-will-say Fair friend well come
Baisera il ou sa bouche ou ses piez?
Will-kiss he either her mouth or her feet

— Sire, je lo que il premierement
Lord I advise that he first
en la bouche la baist, car je vos di
on the mouth her may-kiss for I to-you say
que de baisier la boche au cuer descent
that from kissing the mouth to-the heart descends
une douçours dont sunt tuit acompli
a sweetness whereby are all fulfilled
li grant desir par qu'il s'entrainment si;
the great desires by which-they each-other-love so
et joie qui cuer esclaire
and joy which heart brightens
ne puet celer lëaus amis ne taire,
not can conceal loyal friend nor keep-silent
ainz li semble qu'il soit toz alegiez,
rather to-him seems that-he be all relieved
quant de la boche a sa dame est baisiez.
when by the mouth of his lady he-is kissed

— Baudoÿn, voir! je n'en mentirai ja:
Baldwin truly I not-thereof shall-lie ever
qui sa dame vuet tout avant baisier
who his lady wishes all first to-kiss
en la bouche, de cuer onques n'ama;
on the mouth with heart ever not-loved
qu'ainsi baise on la fille a un bergier.
for-thus kisses one the daughter of a shepherd

J'aing mieuz baisier ses piez et mercïer
I-love better to-kiss her feet and to-thank
que faire si grant outrage.
than to-do so great outrage
L'en doit cuidier que sa dame soit sage,
One ought to-think that his lady be wise
et sens done que granz humilitez
and sense gives that great humility
doit bien valoir a estre mieuz amez.
ought well to-avail to be better loved

— Sire, j'ai bien oï dire pieç'a
Lord I-have well heard say long-since
qu'umilitez fait l'amant avancier,
that-humility makes the-lover advance
et puis qu'Amors par humilité l'a
and since that-Love by humility him-has
tant avancié que rende le loier,
so-much advanced that she-renders the reward
qu'il ait cele que tant ainme et tient chier,
that-he may-have her whom so-much he-loves and holds dear
je di qu'il feroit folage
I say that-he would-do folly
s'en la bouche ne li feïst honmage,
if-on the mouth not to-her he-did homage
car j'oï dire, et vos bien le savez:
for I-heard say and you well it know
qui bouche lait por piez, c'est nicetez.
who mouth leaves for feet this-is silliness

— Baudoÿn, voir! ice ne di je pas
Baldwin truly this not say I at-all
qu'en sa bouche laist por ses piez avoir,
that-one her mouth may-leave for her feet to-have
mais baisier vuil ses piez eneslepas
but to-kiss I-wish her feet straightway
et puis après sa bouche a mon voloir
and then after her mouth at my will
et son beau cors, c'on ne tient mie a noir,
and her fair body which-one not holds at-all for black
et ses beaus eulz et sa face
and her fair eyes and her face
et son chief blont, qui le fin or efface.
and her head blond which the fine gold outshines
Mais vos estes bauz et desmesurez,
But you are bold and immoderate
si semble bien que pou d'amour savez.
so it-seems well that little of-love you-know

— Sire, bien est et recreanz et las
Lord well he-is both recreant and weary
qui congié a de baisier et d'avoir
who leave has of kissing and of-having
le douz solaz dou cors lonc, graille et gras
the sweet solace of-the body long slender and plump
et met douçour de bouche en nonchaloir
and puts sweetness of mouth in neglect
por piez baisier; ne fait mie savoir.
for feet to-kiss not does at-all wisdom

Ja Deus ne doint que il face
Ever God not may-grant that he may-do
jamès chose par quoi il ait sa grace,
ever thing by which he may-have her grace
que mil tanz est li baisiers savorez
for thousand times is the kiss savory
de la bouche que cil des piez assez!
of the mouth than that of-the feet much

— Baudoÿn, cil qui tant chace
Baldwin he who so-much hunts
que il ataint, bien se tient a eschace,
that he overtakes well himself holds on stilts
quant a ses piez ne chiet toz enclinez;
when at her feet not falls all bowed
je di qu'il est deables forsennez.
I say that-he is devil mad

— Sire, cil cui Amors lace
Lord he whom Love snares
ne puet muër, quant il a leu n'espace
not can refrain when he has place nor-space
qu'asevir puist toutes ses volentez,
that-to-fulfill he-may all his wills
tost n'ait les piez por la boche oblïez.
soon may-have the feet for the mouth forgotten

Phelipe, je vous demant

XXXIX · THE LOVED OR THE SUITOR

Thibaut asks Philip which of two young lovers should rise higher, the one who is loved or the one still suing. Philip says the loved one, free of dismay, does more good; Thibaut says the suitor, who strives for so high a gift. If joy lessened worth, Philip replies, all lovers would be shamed. Auberon and Rodrigue judge.

Phelipe, je vous demant:
Philip I of-you ask
dui ami de cuer verai
two friends of heart true
sont qui aiment loiaument,
there-are who love loyally
bacheler novel et gai.
young-men new and gay
Li uns a tout son talent,
The one has all his desire
li autres est a l'essai.
the other is at the-trial
Qui doit plus venir avant,
Who ought more to-come forward
li amez ou cil qui prie?
the loved-one or he who prays

— Cuens, sachiez certainement:
Count know certainly
li amez est fors d'esmai
the loved-one is out of-dismay
et pour c'est il plus en grant
and for this-is he more in great(-desire)
de melz valoir, bien le sai;
of better to-avail well it I-know
quant plus a, et plus enprent
when more he-has and more he-undertakes
et plus fet bien sanz delai;
and more does good without delay
ne cil ne puet valoir tant
nor he not can avail so-much
qui qiert merci et aïe.
who seeks mercy and help

— Phelipe, cil qui reqiert
Philip he who asks
doit melz valoir par raison,
ought better to-avail by reason
que toute bontez affiert
for all goodness befits
a atendre a si haut don.
to await to so high gift

Cil s'esforce qui conqiert,
He himself-strives who conquers
mès cil qui en est a son
but he who thereof is at top
jamès partir ne se qiert
ever to-part not himself seeks
por nul pris d'avec s'amie.
for any worth from-with his-friend

— Cuens, ja li prïerres n'iert
Count ever the suitor not-will-be
qui n'ait duel et soupeçon,
who not-may-have grief and suspicion
et pensee au cuer le fiert
and thought at-the heart him strikes
conment il avra pardon;
how he will-have pardon
mès cil qui a ce q'il qiert
but he who has that which-he seeks
ne pense s'a valoir non:
not thinks except-to avail not
joie son pris li porqiert
joy his worth for-him procures
et sa dame, qui l'en prie.
and his lady who him-thereof prays

— Phelipe, plus doit valoir
Philip more ought to-avail
cil qui veut entendre a li
he who wishes to-attend to her
et qui atent main et soir
and who waits morning and evening
de sa dame avoir merci.
from his lady to-have mercy
Cist pensers li fet avoir
This thought him makes have
le cuer vaillant et hardi.
the heart valiant and bold
Trop fet cil mains son pouoir
Much does he less his power
qui a sa joie aconplie.
who has his joy fulfilled

— Cuens, sachiez vos bien de voir
Count know you well of truth
que ci avez vos failli:
that here have you failed
s'on vaut mains por joie avoir,
if-one is-worth less for joy to-have
dont sunt tout amant honi.
then are all lovers shamed

Se cil qui se doit doloir
If he who himself ought to-grieve
vaut melz de joieus ami,
is-worth better than joyful friend
dont fesons dames savoir
then let-us-make ladies know
par tot c'on nes ainme mie.
through all that-one not-them loves at-all

— Phelipe, je faz savoir
Philip I make know
a Auberon, mon ami,
to Auberon my friend
q'il nos en die le voir,
that-he to-us thereof may-tell the truth
u sa langue soit honie!
or his tongue be shamed

— Cuens, a Rodrigue le Noir
Count to Rodrigue the Black
mant de par vos et li pri
I-send on behalf-of you and him I-pray
q'il nos en mant son voloir
that-he to-us thereof may-send his will
qui a droit de la partie.
who has right of the part

Cuens, je vous part un gieu par aatie

XL · THE LOYAL AND THE FALSE

Guy offers the count a choice: of two knights, one loyal and one false, which bears the worse? Thibaut defends the loyal one, never sad while he waits; the deceiver sleeps in his trickery. Guy says the loyal lover bears the worse, a grief Thibaut has not known; Thibaut, that a lady's smile is Paradise. They name Gilon and Sir Peter.

Cuens, je vous part un gieu par aatie
Count I to-you divide a game by challenge
et si m'en met seur vostre jugement:
and so myself-thereof I-put upon your judgment
dui chevalier aiment chascuns s'amie;
two knights love each his-friend
li uns des deus aime mult loiaument,
the one of-the two loves very loyally
et li autres guile mult durement.
and the other deceives very greatly
Li quels tret pis, se Deus vous beneïe,
The which bears worse so God you may-bless
ou li loiaus ou cil qui triche et ment
either the loyal or he who cheats and lies
et deçoit?
and deceives
Dites m'en droit,
Tell me-thereof right
sire, tout orendroit
lord all right-now
et si prenez l'un des deus maintenant,
and so take the-one of-the two at-once

et j'avrai l'autre partie
and I-shall-have the-other part
et respondrai avenant,
and I-shall-answer fittingly
selonc voz diz, en chantant.
according-to your sayings in singing

— Mesire Guis, mult me siet la partie,
My-lord Guy much me suits the part
mès du meilleur vous dirai mon senblant;
but of-the better to-you I-shall-tell my opinion
que loiautez n'iert ja par moi perie,
for loyalty not-will-be ever by me perished
oncor la bé a tenir mon vivant.
yet it I-aim to hold my lifetime
Li desloiaus ne bien ne mal ne sent,
The disloyal-one neither good nor ill not feels
qu'endormiz est en sa vil tricherie,
for-asleep he-is in his vile cheating
si ne li chaut li quels chiés voist avant,
so not to-him matters the which head may-go first
tort ou droit,
wrong or right
quant il deçoit
when he deceives
celi qui tout metroit,
her who all would-put
et cuer et cors, en son conmandement.
both heart and body in his command

Dehez ait qui plus s'i fie!
Curse may-have who more himself-there trusts
Qui bien a et bien atent
Who well has and well awaits
ja n'avra son cuer dolent.
ever not-will-have his heart sorrowful

— Cuens, je sai bien auques vostre pensee;
Count I know well somewhat your thought
ne savez pas d'amors jusq'au doloir:
not you-know at-all of-love up-to-the grieving
toutes dolors sont vers celi rousee
all griefs are toward that-one dew
d'ome qui aime et n'en puet joie avoir;
of-man who loves and not-thereof can joy have
et je pri Dieu q'il vous face savoir
and I pray God that-he you may-make know
quel mal cil sent qui bien aime a celee.
what ill he feels who well loves in secret
Adonc primes savroiz vos bien de voir,
Then first will-know you well of truth
ce m'est vis,
this to-me-is seeming

que mult est pris
that much is taken
cil qui aime et trait pis
he who loves and bears worse
que li autres, qui guile a son pooir
than the other who deceives at his power
et a toute honor quitee.
and has all honor quit
Endroit moi, pour nul avoir
As-for me for any wealth
ne vueil avoir tel voloir.
not I-wish to-have such will

— Messires Guis, touz jorz ert honoree
My-lord Guy all days will-be honored
la bone amor la ou ele est, por voir!
the good love there where it is for truth
Mains trait de mal qui toute a sa pensee
Less bears of ill who all has his thought
en la joie dont muevent tuit savoir.
in the joy whence move all wisdom
La fole gent n'i puënt remanoir,
The foolish folk not-there can remain
ainz dit chascuns que trop atent qui bee.
rather says each that too-much waits who aims

Fins amerres doit touz jorz mentevoir
True lover ought all days to-recall
son cler vis
her bright face
et son douz ris,
and her sweet laugh
qui li est Paradis,
which to-him is Paradise
si ne se doit pas puis de li doloir
so not himself ought at-all then of her to-grieve
dont atent joie honoree.
whence he-awaits joy honored
Qui s'i fet apercevoir,
Who himself-there makes be-perceived
tuit l'en doivent mal voloir.
all him-thereof ought ill to-wish

— A Gilon pri q'il en die le voir,
To Gilon I-pray that-he thereof may-tell the truth
qui a tort de la meslee
who has wrong of the quarrel
ne qui s'en doit plus doloir.
nor who himself-thereof ought more to-grieve
Die le por pès avoir!
May-he-tell it for peace to-have

— Sor dan Perron m'en met a son voloir,
Upon sir Peter myself-thereof I-put at his will
qui du vis resenble espee,
who of-the face resembles sword
qui nos face remanoir
who us may-make remain
et voir die a son pooir.
and truth may-say at his power

Sire, ne me celez mie

XLI · NIGHT OR DAY

William asks Thibaut whether he would rather lie naked beside his lady by night, unseen, or meet her by day in a meadow to kiss and embrace. Thibaut takes the night and leaves William the meadow. William says he knows nothing of love's pains; Thibaut says the meadow gives only a false smile. Gilon and John judge.

Sire, ne me celez mie
Lord not from-me conceal at-all
li queus vous ert melz a gré:
the which to-you will-be better to liking
s'il avient que vostre amie
if-it happens that your friend
vous ait parlement mandé
to-you may-have meeting sent
nu a nu lez son costé
naked to naked beside her side
par nuit que n'en verroiz mie,
by night that not-thereof you-will-see at-all
ou de jorz vous best et rie
or by days you she-may-kiss and may-laugh
en un biau pré
in a fair meadow
et enbrast, mès ne di mie
and may-embrace but not I-say at-all
q'il i ait de plus parlé.
that-it there may-have of more spoken

— Guilleaume, c'est grant folie,
William this-is great folly
quant ensi avez chanté;
when thus you-have sung
li bergiers d'une abeïe
the shepherd of-an abbey
eüst assez melz parlé.
would-have much better spoken
Quant j'avrai lez mon costé
When I-shall-have beside my side
mon cuer, ma dame, m'amie,
my heart my lady my-friend
que j'avrai toute ma vie
whom I-shall-have all my life
desirré,
desired
lors vous quit la druërie
then to-you I-quit the love-dealing
et le parlement dou pré.
and the meeting of-the meadow

— Sire, je di qu'en s'enfance
Lord I say that-in one's-childhood
doit on aprendre d'amors;
ought one to-learn of-love
mès mult faites mal senblance
but much you-make ill semblance
que n'en sentez les dolors.
that not-thereof you-feel the griefs

Pou prisiez esté ne flors,
Little you-prize summer nor flowers
gent cors ne douce acointance,
noble body nor sweet acquaintance
biaus regarz ne contenance
fair looks nor bearing
ne colors.
nor color
En vous n'a point d'abstinence;
In you not-is a-whit of-abstinence
ce deüst prendre uns priors.
this ought to-take a prior

— Guilleaume, qui ce conmence,
William who this begins
bien le demaine folors,
well him leads folly
et mult a pou conoissance
and very has little understanding
qui n'en va au lit le cors;
who not-thence goes to-the bed (at-)the run
que desouz biaus couvertors
for beneath fair covers
prent on tele seürtance
takes one such assurance
dont on s'oste de doutance
whereby one oneself-removes from doubt
et de freors.
and from fears

Tant com je soie en balance,
So-long as I be in balance
n'ert ja mes cuers sanz poors.
not-will-be ever my heart without fears

— Sire, pour riens ne voudroie
Lord for anything not I-would-wish
que nus m'eüst a ce mis.
that anyone me-had to that put
Quant celi qui j'ameroie
When her whom I-would-love
et qui tout m'avroit conquis
and who all me-would-have conquered
puis veoir en mi le vis
I-can see in mid the face
et besier a si grant joie
and kiss with so great joy
et enbracier toute voie
and embrace all the-same
a mon devis,
at my choice
sachiez, se l'autre prenoie,
know if the-other I-took
ne seroie pas amis.
not I-would-be at-all friend

— Guilleaume, se Deus me voie,
William so God me may-see
folie avez entrepris,
folly you-have undertaken
que, se nue la tenoie,
for if naked her I-held
n'en prendroie Paradis.
not-for-it I-would-take Paradise
Ja por resgarder son vis
Ever for looking-at her face
a paiez ne me tendroie,
for paid not myself I-would-hold
s'autre chose n'en avoie.
if-other thing not-thereof I-had
J'ai melz pris,
I-have better chosen
qu'au partir, s'el vos convoie,
for-at-the parting if-she you escorts
n'en porteroiz c'un faus ris.
not-thence you-will-carry but-a false laugh

— Sire, Amors m'a si sorpris
Lord Love me-has so seized
que siens sui, ou que je soie,
that hers I-am where ever I may-be
et sor Gilon m'en metroie
and upon Gilon myself-thereof I-would-put
a son devis,
at his choice

li quels va plus droite voie
the which goes more straight way
ne li quels maintient le pris.
nor the which maintains the prize

— Guilleaume, fous et pensis
William fool and pensive
i remaindroiz toute voie;
there you-will-remain all the-same
et cil qui ensi dosnoie
and he who thus courts
est bien chaitis.
is well wretched
Bien vueil que Gilon en croie,
Well I-wish that Gilon thereof one-may-believe
mès sor Jehan m'en sui mis.
but upon John myself-thereof I-am put

Rois Thiebaut, sire, en chantant responnez

XLII · CARRYING HER TO ANOTHER

Baldwin asks King Thibaut whether, to have his lady, he would carry her on his neck to the house of a man she loves or bring that man to lie with her in his own. Thibaut would carry her, since a true lover must attain or die, and never admit his enemy; Baldwin calls that sluggish and would bear her will in his own house.

Rois Thiebaut, sire, en chantant responnez:
King Thibaut lord in singing answer
joene dame tres bele et avenant
young lady very fair and comely
seur toute riens de fin cuer amerez,
above all things with true heart you-will-love
mès n'en porrez avoir vostre talent,
but not-thereof you-will-be-able to-have your desire
s'a vostre col gesir ne la portez
if-on your neck to-lie not her you-carry
chiés un autre qui de li est amez,
at-the-house-of an other who by her is loved
ou se celui ne li fetes venir
or if him not to-her you-make come
en vostre ostel pour avec li gesir.
into your lodging for with her to-lie

— Baudoïn, voir! mauvès gieu me partez!
Baldwin truly bad game to-me you-divide
Mès, por avoir ma dame, a son talent
But for to-have my lady at her desire
la porterai, puis que il est ses grez,
her I-shall-carry since that it is her will
entre mes braz, besant et acolant.
between my arms kissing and embracing
Ja ne crerrai tels soit sa volentez,
Ever not I-shall-believe such be her will
se me juroit cent foiz sainz Barnabez,
if to-me swore hundred times saint Barnabas
après tel bien que me vueille traïr.
after such good that me she-may-wish to-betray
Fins amis doit ou ataindre ou morir.
True friend ought either to-attain or to-die

— Par Dieu, sire, trop avez meschoisi,
By God lord too-much you-have ill-chosen
quant vous de li voulez saisir celui
when you of her wish to-invest him
qui ele tient pour son loial ami.
whom she holds for her loyal friend
Ne la verrez jamès jour sanz ennui,
Not her you-will-see ever day without trouble
puis que celui en avrïez saisi.
since that him thereof you-would-have invested

Trop a le cuer mauvès et endormi
Too-much has the heart evil and asleep
qui s'amie porte autrui a son col.
who his-friend carries (to-)another on his neck
J'aim melz sousfrir qu'en m'en tenist por fol.
I-love better to-suffer than-one me-thereof held for fool

— Baudoïn, cil a bien d'amors menti
Baldwin he has well of-love lied
qui sa dame veut lessier a nului.
who his lady wishes to-leave to anyone
S'en m'en devoit detrenchier tout par mi,
If-one me-thereof should cut-up all through mid
ne la puis je guerpir, dès que siens sui.
not her can I forsake since that hers I-am
Ainz me plest tant l'atente de merci
Rather me pleases so-much the-waiting of mercy
que le vilain enuieus en oubli,
that the churl envious thereby I-forget
que je mult haz, foi que je doi saint Pol;
whom I much hate faith that I owe saint Paul
mès tot le mont ne pris sanz li un chol.
but all the world not I-prize without her a cabbage

— Certes, sire, de cuer onques n'ama
Certainly lord with heart ever not-loved
qui s'amie veut chiés autrui lessier;
who his-friend wishes at-the-house-of another to-leave

et qui de ce a droit jugier voudra,
and who of this at right to-judge will-wish
je doi servir ce qu'ele aime et tient chier,
I ought to-serve that which-she loves and holds dear
tout m'ennuit il ce que ele en fera.
all me-may-vex it that which she thereof will-do
Melz vueil sousfrir de ce qu'ele amera
Rather I-wish to-suffer of this that-she will-love
qu'en mon ostel en face son voloir
that-in my lodging thereof she-may-do her will
qu'il fust saisiz et j'amasse en espoir.
than-he were invested and I-loved in hope

— Baudoïn, voir! ja chiés moi n'entrera
Baldwin truly ever at-the-house-of me not-will-enter
mes anemis por ma dame baillier,
my enemy for my lady to-hand-over
mès ma dame la ou il li plera
but my lady there where it to-her will-please
vueil je porter et servir sanz dangier;
wish I to-carry and to-serve without resistance
ne ja por riens mes cuers n'en retrera.
nor ever for anything my heart not-thence will-withdraw
S'ele me dit: «Biaus amis, je vois la»,
If-she to-me says Fair friend I go there
c'est faintise, je nel cuit pas de voir;
this-is pretense I not-it think at-all of truth
qu'ele le dit por moi fere doloir.
for-she it says for me to-make grieve

Sire, loëz moi a choisir

XLIII · SEEING OR TOUCHING

Raoul asks whether it is better to embrace one's lady in the dark without seeing or speaking, or to see and speak with her always without touching. Thibaut chooses sight and speech. Raoul mocks his stuffed belly, Thibaut Raoul's crutch. Thibaut ends courteously: seeing, hearing, and sweet words are better than groping in the dark.

Sire, loëz moi a choisir
Lord advise me to choose
d'un gieu! Li quels doit melz valoir:
of-a game The which ought better to-avail
ou souvent s'amie sentir,
either often his-friend to-feel
besier, acoler, sanz veoir,
to-kiss to-embrace without seeing
sanz parler et sanz plus avoir
without speaking and without more to-have
a touz jorz mès de ses amors,
for all days more of her love
ou parler et veoir touz jorz,
or to-speak and to-see all days
sanz sentir et sanz atouchier?
without feeling and without touching
Se l'un en couvient a lessier,
If the-one thereof it-behooves to leave
dites li quels est mains joianz
say the which is less joyful
et du quel la joie est plus granz.
and of-the which the joy is more great

— Raoul, je vous di sanz mentir
Raoul I to-you say without lying
que il ne puet nul bien avoir
that he not can any good have
en prendre ce dont a morir
in taking that whereof to die
couvient ami par estouvoir;
behooves friend by necessity
mès, quant il ne puet remanoir,
but since it not can remain
el veoir a plus de secors
in-the seeing there-is more of succor
et el parler qui est d'amors.
and in-the speaking which is of-love
Si bel ris et si solacier
Her fair laughs and her solacing
feront ma dolor alegier,
will-make my grief lighten
que je ne vueil estre senblanz
for I not wish to-be resembling
Meremellin ne ses paranz.
Meremellin nor his kin

— Sire, vous avez mult bien pris
Lord you have very well chosen
de vostre amie regarder,
of your friend to-look-at

que voz ventres gros et farsis
for your belly fat and stuffed
ne porroit sousfrir l'adeser,
not could suffer the-touching
et por ce amez vous le parler
and for this love you the speaking
que voz solaz n'est preus aillors.
for your solace not-is worth elsewhere
Ensi vait des faus pledeors,
Thus it-goes of-the false pleaders
dont li senblant sont mençongier.
whereof the semblances are lying
Mès d'acoler et de besier
But of-embracing and of kissing
fet bone dame a son ami
makes good lady to her friend
cuer large, loial et hardi.
heart generous loyal and bold

— Raoul, du regart m'est a vis
Raoul of-the looking to-me-is to seeming
q'il doit plus ami conforter
that-it ought more friend to-comfort
qu'estre de nuiz lez li pensis
than-to-be by nights beside her pensive
la ou l'en ne puet alumer,
there where one not can light
veoir, oïr, joie mener;
see hear joy lead

l'en n'i doit avoir fors que plors.
one not-there ought to-have except that tears
Et s'ele met sa main aillors,
And if-she puts her hand elsewhere
quant vous cuidera enbracier,
when you she-will-think to-embrace
se la potence puet baillier,
if the crutch she-can handle
plus avra duel, je vous afi,
more she-will-have grief I to-you affirm
que de mon gros ventre farsi.
than of my fat belly stuffed

— Rois, vous resenblez le gaignon
King you resemble the cur
qui se revenche en abaiant;
which itself avenges in barking
por ce avez mors en mon baston
for this you-have bitten on my staff
de quoi je m'aloie apuiant.
on which I myself-went leaning
Mès pris avez a loi d'enfant;
But chosen you-have in fashion of-child
car il n'est si granz tenebrors,
for there not-is so great darkness
se je pouoie les douçors
if I could the sweetnesses
de ma douce dame enbracier,
of my sweet lady embrace

qui ja me poïst ennuier;
which ever me could vex
et si me puis melz delivrer
and so myself I-can better deliver
de mon bordon que vous d'enfler.
of my staff than you of-swelling

— Raoul, j'aing melz nostre tençon
Raoul I-love better our dispute
a lessier tout cortoisement
to leave all courteously
que dire mal, dont li felon
than to-say ill whereof the felons
riroient et vilaine gent,
would-laugh and churlish folk
et nous en serions dolent;
and we thereof would-be sorrowful
mès mult vaudroit melz en amors
but much would-avail better in love
veoir et oïr qu'estre aillors,
to-see and to-hear than-to-be elsewhere
rire, parler et solacier
to-laugh to-speak and to-solace
douz moz, qui font cuer tatouillier,
sweet words which make heart flutter
et resjoïr et saouler
and rejoice and be-sated
que en tenebres tastoner.
than in darkness to-grope

Bons rois Thiebaut, sire, conseilliez moi

XLIV · THE CLERK'S QUESTION

A clerk asks King Thibaut whether true lovers suffer in silence or tell their pain. Thibaut advises service, covert words, and signs; the clerk answers that a true lover cannot hide his pain. Thibaut says a true lover dares not speak before her, and blames the clerk's loins. Scorned, he bids the clerk beg mercy at her feet.

Bons rois Thiebaut, sire, conseilliez moi!
Good king Thibaut lord counsel me
Une dame ai, mult a lonc tens, amee
A lady I-have very it-is long time loved
de cuer loial, sachiez, en bone foi,
with heart loyal know in good faith
mès ne li os descouvrir ma pensee,
but not to-her I-dare to-uncover my thought
tel poor ai que ne m'i soit veee
such fear I-have that — to-me-there be refused
de li l'amors qui me destraint souvent.
by her the-love which me constrains often
Dites, sire, qu'en font li fin amant?
Say lord what-thereof do the true lovers
Suesfrent il tuit ausi si grant dolor,
Suffer they all also so great grief
ou il dïent le mal q'il ont d'amor?
or they tell the ill that-they have of-love

— Clers, je vous lo et pri que teigniez quoi;
Clerk I you advise and pray that you-keep quiet
ne dites pas pour quoi ele vous hee,
not say at-all for which she you may-hate
mès servez tant et fetes le, pour quoi
but serve so-much and do it for which
qu'ele sache ce que vostre cuers bee;
that-she may-know that which your heart aims
que par servir est mainte amor donee.
for by serving is many-a love given
Par moz couverz et par cointe senblant
By words covert and by elegant semblance
et par signes doit on moustrer avant,
and by signs ought one to-show forward
qu'ele sache le mal et la dolor
that-she may-know the ill and the grief
que fins amanz tret pour li nuit et jor.
which true lover bears for her night and day

— Par Dieu, sire, tel conseil me donez
By God lord such counsel me you-give
ou ma mort gist et ma grant mesestance,
where my death lies and my great distress
que mot couvert et signe, ce savez,
for word covert and sign this you-know
et tel senblant viennent de decevance.
and such semblance come from deceit

Assez trueve on qui set fere senblance
Plenty finds one who knows-how to-make semblance
de bien amer sanz grant dolor sousfrir;
of well loving without great grief to-suffer
mès fins amis ne puet son mal couvrir
but true friend not can his ill cover
q'il ne die ce dont au cuer souvient
that-he not may-say that whereof at-the heart it-remembers
par l'angoisse du mal que il soustient.
by the-anguish of-the ill that he sustains

— Clers, je voi bien que haster vous voulez,
Clerk I see well that to-hasten yourself you-wish
et bien est droiz, qu'en clerc n'a abstinence;
and well is right that-in clerk not-is abstinence
mès s'amïez autant con dit avez,
but if-you-loved as-much as said you-have
nel dirïez pour quanq'il a en France;
not-it you-would-say for whatever-there is in France
car, quant on est devant li en presence,
for when one is before her in presence
adonc viennent trenbler et grief souspir,
then come trembling and grievous sighs
et li cuers faut, quant doit la bouche ouvrir;
and the heart fails when ought the mouth to-open
n'est pas amis qui sa dame ne crient,
not-is at-all friend who his lady not fears
car la crieme de la grant amor vient.
for the fear from the great love comes

— Par Dieu, sire, po sentez, ce m'est vis,
By God lord little you-feel this to-me-is seeming
la grant dolor, le mal et le juïse
the great grief the ill and the judgment
que nuit et jor tret fins, loiaus amis;
which night and day bears true loyal friend
ne savez pas conment Amors justise
not you-know at-all how Love rules
ce que sien est et en sa conmandise.
that which hers is and in her command
Je sai de voir que, se le seüssiez,
I know of truth that if it you-knew
ja du dire ne me repreïssiez;
ever of-the saying not me you-would-reprove
car pour ce fet Amors ami doloir
for for this makes Love friend grieve
que de son mal regehisse le voir.
that of his ill he-may-confess the truth

— Clers, je voi bien que tant estes espris
Clerk I see well that so-much you-are kindled
que la corone est bien en vous assise.
that the tonsure is well on you set
Quant du prïer par estes si hastis,
Since of-the praying much you-are so hasty
ce fait li maus des rains qui vous atise;
this does the ill of-the loins which you stirs
itels amors n'est pas el cuer assise.
such love not-is at-all in-the heart set

Dites li tost, quant si vous angoissiez;
Tell her soon since so you anguish
ou tost l'aiez, ou vous tost la lessiez,
either soon her-may-you-have or you soon her may-leave
car bien puet on a voz diz parcevoir
for well can one by your sayings perceive
qu'aillors voulez changier vostre voloir.
that-elsewhere you-wish to-change your will

— Par Dieu, sire, j'aing de cuer sanz faintise,
By God lord I-love with heart without pretense
mès vos guilez Amors. Pour ce cuidiez
but you deceive Love For this you-think
que je soie tout ausi tost changiez
that I may-be all as soon changed
con vous estes, qui mis en nonchaloir
as you are who put in neglect
avez Amors et ceus de son pooir.
have Love and those of her power

— Clers, puis qu'a moi avez tel guerre enprise
Clerk since that-with me you-have such war undertaken
et vous de riens mon conseil ne prisiez,
and you in anything my counsel not prize
crïez merci, mains jointes, a ses piez
cry mercy hands joined at her feet
et li dites tout le vostre voloir;
and to-her tell all the your will
el vous crerra, et ce sera bien voir.
she you will-believe and this will-be well true

Girart d'Amiens, Amours, qui a pouoir

XLV · GIRART OF AMIENS

Thibaut sets Girart of Amiens a choice: to have his lady at once and be hated, or be loved while another has her too. Girart takes the lady: no true friend lets another share her. Thibaut calls that disloyal; Girart answers that nothing is worse than a rival having his will of her, and curses any man who allows it.

Girart d'Amiens, Amours, qui a pouoir
Girart of-Amiens Love who has power
sor toutes gens, vous et un autre esprendre
above all folk you and an other kindle
fait de son feu — dont mieus devez valoir —
makes with her fire whereby better you-ought to-avail
d'une dame ou il n'a que reprendre.
for-a lady in-whom there not-is what to-reprove
Se vous voulez, tantost, sans plus atendre,
If you wish at-once without more waiting
ou vous plaira avecques vous l'avrez,
where you it-will-please with you her-you-will-have
mais bien sachiez: de li haïs serez;
but well know by her hated you-will-be
ou, en tel point que je vos di, l'avra
or in such point as I to-you tell her-will-have
autre avec lui, et el vous ainmera.
another with him and she you will-love

— Roy de Navarre, il doit bien mescheoir
King of Navarre it ought well to-befall-ill
a tout honme qui le bien n'osse prendre,
to every man who the good not-dares to-take
puis qu'il le puet, sans lui mesfaire, avoir;
since that-he it can without himself to-misdo have
car nus amis ne porroit tant mesprendre
for any friend not could so-much transgress
que de sousfrir, s'il le pouoit desfandre,
as of allowing if-he it could forbid
c'autres fust ja de sa dame privés;
that-another were ever with his lady intimate
par coi le bien qui m'iert abandonnez
by which the good which to-me-will-be abandoned
par tel eür ne refusserai ja,
by such fortune not I-shall-refuse ever
n'autres, mon gré, nul jour n'i partira.
nor-another my will any day not-there will-share

— Girart d'Amiens, huimais puis parcevoir
Girart of-Amiens now I-can perceive
que vous le cuer avez et fol et tendre
that you the heart have both foolish and tender
a un tel fait desloial conscevoir,
to a such deed disloyal to-conceive
si vueil que vous, pour la folie entendre,
so I-wish that you for the folly to-understand

sachiez qu'amis n'est pas chilz qui engendre
know that-friend not-is at-all he who engenders
riens dont il soit haïs ne disfamés
anything whereby he be hated nor defamed
de la dame dont il seroit amez,
by the lady by-whom he would-be loved
s'il li plessoit, et dont haïs sera,
if-it to-her pleased and by-whom hated he-will-be
quant tout premiers, son gré, la decevra.
when all first his will her he-will-deceive

— Pour pis que mort ne rage recevoir,
For worse than death or madness to-receive
sire, ne puis connoistre ne aprendre
lord not I-can know nor learn
qu'il m'en peüst nesun bien escheoir.
that-it to-me-thereof could any good befall
Conment pourroie a plus grant dolour tendre
How I-could to more great grief tend
que de lessier tant ma dame souprendre
than of letting so-much my lady be-seized
qu'autres eüst de li ses voulentez?
that-another had of her his wills
Plus ne pourroie estre desesperés,
More not I-could be despairing
s'elle me het. Amours pourchacera
if-she me hates Love will-procure
qu'amés en ier si tost que li plera.
that-loved thereof I-shall-be as soon as to-her it-will-please

— Girart d'Amiens, quant plus vous voy mouvoir
Girart of-Amiens when more you I-see move
d'ensi parler, plus m'est vostre sens mendre.
of-thus speaking more to-me-is your sense less
Nus hons n'entant sa dame a decevoir
Any man not-intends his lady to deceive
ne deserve que l'en le doie pendre.
not may-deserve that one him ought to-hang
Se mes eürs fait ma dame destendre
If my fortune makes my lady unbend
a un tel fait, n'en vueil estre encombrés;
to a such deed not-thereof I-wish to-be encumbered
j'ain mieus qu'autre que moy en soit blasmés.
I-love better that-another than me thereof be blamed
S'amer me vueut, plus me proufitera;
If-to-love me she-wishes more me it-will-profit
c'uns tieulz deduiz jamais ne vous vaudra.
than-a such delight ever — you will-avail

— Sire, ne puis en pensee mannoir
Lord not I-can in thought abide
c'uns teus profis se puist en bien estandre
that-a such profit itself can into good extend
dont li amis cherra en desespoir,
whereby the friend will-fall into despair
qu'il n'osse en riens qu'il parçoive contendre;
that-he not-dares in anything that-he may-perceive to-contend

par quoi ja jour ne me quier vaincu rendre,
by which ever day not myself I-seek vanquished to-render
que mieus ne vueille ensi joïr assez
that better not I-may-wish thus to-enjoy plenty
de celle a cui je sui touz que de lés
of her to whom I am wholly than from beside
reveingne autres qui en esploitera.
may-come-back another who thereof will-profit
Honnis soit cilz qui ce otrïera!
Shamed be he who this will-grant

Phelipe, je vous demant

XLVI · WHERE LOVE HAS GONE

Thibaut asks Philip where love has gone, since no one courts any more. Philip blames the lovers, the slanderers, the old women, and bad husbands, but not the ladies; Thibaut blames the ladies' disdain, which drives knights to despair. Philip answers that lovers want their joy too soon and that ladies make the world worth something.

Phelipe, je vous demant
Philip I of-you ask
que est devenue amors:
what is become love
en cest païs ne aillors
in this country or elsewhere
ne fet nus d'amer senblant.
not makes anyone of-loving semblance
Trop me merveil durement
Exceedingly myself I-marvel greatly
por qu'ele demore ensi,
for why-she delays thus
s'ai oï
so-I-have heard
des dames grant plaint,
about-the ladies great lament
et chevalier en font maint.
and knights thereof make many-a-one

— Sire, sachiez voirement
Lord know truly
qu'amors faut par ameors,
that-love fails through lovers
s'en remaint joie et valors
so-thereby ceases joy and worth
et faillent tornoiement,
and fail tournaments
si ont corpes mesdisant,
so have blame slanderers
vielles et mauvès mari;
old-women and bad husbands
n'est failli
not-is failed
par dames qu'en aint,
by ladies that-one may-love
mès es chevaliers remaint.
but in-the knights it-remains

— Phelipe, bien m'i acort
Philip well myself-there I-agree
q'il remaint es chevaliers,
that-it remains in-the knights
mès tout ce fet li dangiers
but all this does the resistance
que dames mainent tant fort.
which ladies lead so strongly

Quant il sont jusqu'a la mort,
When they are up-to the death
lors lor metent achesons.
then to-them they-put pretexts
Bon respons
Good answer
n'i puënt trouver,
not-there they-can find
s'en font maint desesperer.
so-thereby make many-a-one despair

— Sire, il s'en partent a tort
Lord they themselves-thence part at wrong
et s'en plaignent volentiers.
and themselves-thereof complain willingly
Plus lor plest li aaisiers
More them pleases the easing
qu'atendre d'Amors confort,
than-to-await from-Love comfort
n'aiment valor ne deport,
not-they-love worth nor pleasure
ainz tolent et font mesons;
rather they-take and make houses
n'est resons:
not-is reason
cil qui veut amer
he who wishes to-love
se doit du tout amender.
himself ought of-the all to-amend

— Phelipe, legierement
Philip lightly
s'en partent qui poor ont,
themselves-thence part who fear have
que les dames trop leur sont
that the ladies too-much to-them are
de sauvage acointement.
of wild acquaintance
Dame doit atrere lent
Lady ought to-attract slow
por melz fere a li baer,
for better to-make to her aspire
que d'amer
that of-loving
doit dame savoir
ought lady to-know
por plus faire ami valoir.
for more to-make friend avail

— Sire, trop hastivement
Lord too hastily
vuelent mès par tout le mont
wish now through all the world
cil qui amoureus se font
those who amorous themselves make
avoir joie entierement,
to-have joy entirely

mès dames a lor talent
but ladies at their desire
doivent lor amis mener.
ought their friends to-lead
Endurer
To-endure
doit on lor voloir
ought one their will
sanz plaindre et sanz decevoir.
without complaining and without deceiving

— Phelipe, ami voir
Philip friends true
n'en sevent pas le pooir.
not-thereof know at-all the power

— Sire, tout pour voir,
Lord all for truth
dames font le mont valoir.
ladies make the world avail

Dame, merci! Une riens vos demant

XLVII · WHEN WE DIE

Thibaut asks his lady what will become of Love when they die, since she has such worth and he loves so much. She answers that Love will not perish for any death, and teases that he is not yet thin. He says his joy restored his fat; she tells him to be silent. If she had to love, she has a heart that would not feign.

Dame, merci! Une riens vos demant,
Lady mercy A thing of-you I-ask
dites m'en voir, se Deus vous beneïe:
tell me-thereof truth so God you may-bless
quant vous morrez et je — mès c'iert avant,
when you will-die and I but it-will-be before
car après vous ne vivroie je mie —,
for after you not would-live I at-all
que devendra Amors, cele esbahie,
what will-become Love that bewildered-one
que tant avez sens, valor, et j'aim tant
for so-much you-have sense worth and I-love so-much
que je croi bien qu'après nous ert faillie?
that I believe well that-after us she-will-be failed

— Par Dieu, Thiebaut, selonc mon escïent
By God Thibaut according-to my knowledge
Amors n'iert ja pour nule mort perie,
Love not-will-be ever for any death perished
ne je ne sai se vous m'alez guilant,
nor I not know if you me-go deceiving

que trop megres n'estes oncore mie.
for too thin not-you-are yet at-all
Quant nos morrons (Deus nos dont bone vie!),
When we shall-die God to-us may-grant good life
bien croi qu'Amors damage i avra grant,
well I-believe that-Love harm there will-have great
mès toz jorz ert valors d'amors conplie.
but all days will-be worth of-love fulfilled

— Dame, certes ne devez pas cuidier,
Lady certainly not you-ought at-all to-think
mès bien savoir que trop vous ai amee.
but well to-know that too-much you I-have loved
De la joie m'en aim melz et tieng chier
From the joy myself-thereof I-love better and hold dear
et pour ce ai ma graisse recouvree
and for this I-have my fat recovered
qu'ainz Deus ne fist si tres bele riens nee
that-ever God not made so very fair thing born
com vos, mès ce me fet trop esmaier,
as you but this me makes too-much be-dismayed
quant nos morrons, qu'Amors sera finee.
when we shall-die that-Love will-be ended

— Thiebaut, tesiez! Nus ne doit conmencier
Thibaut be-silent Anyone not ought to-begin
reson qui soit de touz droiz desevree.
argument which may-be from all rights separated

Vous le dites por moi amoloier
You it say for me to-soften
encontre vous, que tant avez guilee.
toward you whom so-much you-have deceived
Je ne di pas, certes, que je vos hee,
I not say at-all certainly that I you may-hate
mès, se d'Amors me couvenoit jugier,
but if of-Love me it-behooved to-judge
ele seroit servie et honoree.
she would-be served and honored

— Dame, Deus doint que vos jugiez a droit
Lady God may-grant that you may-judge at right
et conoissiez les maus qui me font plaindre,
and may-know the ills which me make lament
que je sai bien, quels li jugemenz soit,
for I know well whatever the judgment be
se je i muir, Amors couvient a faindre,
if I there die Love it-behooves to falter
se vous, dame, ne la fetes remaindre
if you lady not her make remain
dedenz son lieu arriers ou ele estoit;
within her place back where she was
q'a vostre sens ne porroit nus ataindre.
for-to your sense not could anyone attain

— Thiebaut, s'Amors vous fet pour moi destraindre,
Thibaut if-Love you makes for me be-constrained
ne vous griet pas, que, s'amer m'estouvoit,
not you may-grieve at-all for if-to-love me-behooved
j'ai bien un cuer qui ne se savroit faindre.
I-have well a heart which not itself would-know-how to-feign

L'autre nuit en mon dormant

XLVIII · LOVE IN A DREAM

In a dream Love comes to him and reproaches his changing heart. He answers that her false semblance has killed him and that he means to leave her. Love replies that he who changes his thought for pain never has his will, and promises to reward him. Won over, he puts his body and life in her will and asks her mercy.

L'autre nuit en mon dormant
The-other night in my sleeping
fui en grant dotance
I-was in great doubt
d'un gieu parti en chantant
of-a game divided in singing
et en grant balance,
and in great balance
quant Amors me vint devant,
when Love to-me came before
qui me dist: «Que vas querant?
who to-me said What thou-goest seeking
Trop as corage mouvant;
Too-much thou-hast heart moving
ce te muet d'enfance.»
this to-thee moves from-childishness

Lors tressailli durement;
Then I-started hard
en grant esmaiance
in great dismay
dis li: «Dame, se g'entent
I-said to-her Lady if I-attend
a ma grant pesance,
to my great heaviness
c'est par vostre faus senblant,
this-is by your false semblance
qui m'a mort si cruëlment.
which me-has killed so cruelly
Partir vueil de vostre gent
To-part I-wish from your folk
par vostre esloignance.
by your estrangement

— Cil n'avra ja son voloir
He not-will-have ever his will
a longue duree
at long duration
qui por mal ne paine avoir
who for ill or pain having
change sa pensee;
changes his thought
oncor t'en puès pou doloir.
yet thyself-thereof thou-canst little grieve

Mult doit avoir le cuer noir
Much ought to-have the heart black
qui por fere son pouoir
who for doing his power
pert sa desirree.
loses his desired-one

— Trop savez bien decevoir,
Too-much you-know well to-deceive
nus n'i a duree.
anyone not-there has duration
Il n'est pas en son pooir,
He not-is at-all in his power
cil qui a vos bee.
he who to you aims
Por ce m'estuet remanoir,
For this me-behooves to-remain
ne truis en vos fors espoir;
not I-find in you except hope
ne bonté ne puis avoir,
nor goodness not I-can have
s'el n'est conparee.
if-it not-is paid-for

— N'aies si le cuer desvé,
Not-have so the heart crazed
mès en moi te fie!
but in me thyself trust

Qui est en ma poosté
Who is in my power
plus mauvès n'est mie,
more wretched not-is at-all
ainz a cent tanz plus bonté,
rather has hundred times more goodness
plus valor, plus largeté.
more worth more generosity
Tost t'avrai guerredoné;
Soon thee-I-shall-have rewarded
met t'en ma baillie!
put thyself-into my keeping

— Tant m'avez biau sarmoné
So-much me-you-have fairly preached
que ne lerai mie
that not I-shall-leave at-all
que ne face vostre gré.
that — I-may-do your will
Mon cors et ma vie
My body and my life
met en vostre volenté,
I-put in your will
mau gré ceus qui m'ont mellé
ill will (of-)those who me-have embroiled
a vous, qui j'ai creanté
with you to-whom I-have promised
a estre en aïe.
to be in help

Or vos pri merci, pour Dé;
Now you I-pray mercy for God
que cil qui tant a amé
that he who so-much has loved
a vous s'umelie.»
to you himself-humbles

Par Dieu, sire de Champaigne et de Brie

XLIX · A PARTING FROM LOVE

Philip asks the lord of Champagne why he no longer sings in summer. Thibaut has left Love, who never advanced him. To Philip all honor comes from Love, and one who served her ill does not shame her name. Thibaut calls her a proven cheat; Philip will serve her loyally, and Thibaut warns a later season will teach him.

Par Dieu, sire de Champaigne et de Brie,
By God lord of Champagne and of Brie
je me sui mult d'une riens merveilliez,
I myself am much at-a thing amazed
que je voi bien que vous ne chantez mie,
for I see well that you not sing at-all
ainz estes pou jolis et renvoisiez;
rather you-are little merry and gay
car me dites pour quoi vous le lessiez.
now to-me tell for what you it leave
Estez revient et la sesons florie,
Summer returns and the season flowered
que tous li monz doit estre bauz et liez;
when all the world ought to-be blithe and glad
et bien sachiez que mains en vaudrïez,
and well know that less thereby you-would-avail
s'Amors s'estoit si tost de vos partie.
if-Love herself-were so soon from you parted

— Phelipe, n'ai de chançon fere envie,
Philip not-I-have of song to-make desire
que d'Amors sui partiz et esloigniez.
for from-Love I-am parted and removed
Je l'ai lonc tens honoree et servie,
I her-have long time honored and served
n'onques par li ne fui jor avanciez,
nor-ever by her not I-was day advanced
si ne vueil plus de li estre chargiez.
so not I-wish more with her to-be burdened
Par tout la voi et remese et faillie,
Through all her I-see both ceased and failed
mult est ses nons et ses pris abessiez.
much is her name and her worth lowered
Du tout m'en part, et vous si feriez,
Of-the all myself-thence I-part and you so would-do
se ne volez demorer en folie.
if not you-wish to-remain in folly

— Sire, a grant tort m'avez Amors blasmee
Lord with great wrong to-me-you-have Love blamed
et du partir faus conseil me donez.
and of-the parting false counsel to-me you-give
S'Amors avez mal servie et guilee,
If-Love you-have ill served and deceived
pour ce n'est pas ses nons deshonorez,
for this not-is at-all her name dishonored
que d'Amors vient toute honor et bontez.
for from-Love comes all honor and goodness

Qui bien la sert en fez et en pensee
Who well her serves in deeds and in thought
ne puet faillir ne remaigne honorez,
not can fail — he-may-remain honored
que sanz Amors n'est nus a droit loëz,
for without Love not-is anyone at right praised
et cil puet bien po valoir qui n'i bee.
and he can well little avail who not-there aims

— Phelipe, Amors est chose forsenee,
Philip Love is thing mad
ne nus ne doit sieurre ses volentez.
nor anyone not ought to-follow her wills
Tant la conois tricheresse prouvee
So-much her I-know cheat proven
que je pris pou li et ses faussetez,
that I prize little her and her falsehoods
ainz me sui si de li servir lassez
rather myself I-am so of her serving wearied
que j'en hé ceus par qui ele est loëe.
that I-thereof hate those by whom she is praised
Pour ce vous pri que jamès n'en chantez,
For this you I-pray that ever not-thereof you-sing
que vous serez touz jorz par li guilez,
for you will-be all days by her deceived
si com je sui, qui ainz n'en oi soudee.
so as I am who ever not-thereof had wage

— Sire, trop est Amors et douce et chiere,
Lord exceedingly is Love both sweet and dear
et trop m'en plest li servirs et li nons.
and exceedingly me-thereof pleases the service and the name
Servirai la, sanz moi retrere arriere,
I-shall-serve her without myself drawing back
d'uevre et de cuer et de fere chançons.
with-work and with heart and with making songs
Quant li plera, s'en avrai guerredons,
When to-her it-will-please so-thereof I-shall-have guerdons
que je la sai loial et droituriere.
for I her know loyal and righteous
S'ele tant est blasmee des felons,
If-she so-much is blamed by-the felons
des desloiaus qui qierent achesons,
by-the disloyal who seek pretexts
et mult m'est bel, quant il la truevent fiere.
and much to-me-is fair when they her find fierce

— Phelipe, Amors est fausse et trop legiere;
Philip Love is false and too light
oncor diroiz que voire est ma resons.
yet you-will-say that true is my argument
Quant vos savroiz conoistre sa maniere,
When you will-know-how to-know her manner
ne tendroiz pas les partiz a bricons.
not you-will-hold at-all the parted-ones for fools
Trop conois bien Amors et ses façons:
Too-much I-know well Love and her fashions

a l'encontrer vos iert de bele chiere,
at the-meeting to-you she-will-be of fair cheer
puis troveroiz guiles et traïsons;
then you-will-find deceits and treasons
et en la fin ne vaut noient li dons:
and in the end not is-worth anything the gift
trop la covient conquerre a grant proiere.
too-much her it-behooves to-conquer with great prayer

— Sire, dehet qui crerra voz sermons!
Lord curse who will-believe your sermons
A fine Amor m'otroi, qui m'a semons,
To true Love myself-I-grant who me-has summoned
et maintendrai ma pensee pleniere.
and I-shall-maintain my thought full

— Phelipe, oncor vendra autre sesons.
Philip yet will-come other season
Ains qu'en aiez conquis nul bon respons,
Before that-thereof you-may-have won any good answer
me diroiz vous qu'Amors n'est pas entiere.
to-me will-say you that-Love not-is at-all whole

Robert, veez de Perron

L · THE DISTANT BARON

Thibaut tells Robert that Peter means to marry his bright-faced daughter to a distant baron; whoever lets her go is worth not a button. Robert agrees she should not go for land or wealth. Thibaut would rather die than lose her, and longs for one night beside her. Now it is done, and he fears he will die.

Robert, veez de Perron
Robert see of Peter
conme il a le cuer felon,
how he has the heart cruel
qu'a un si loigtaing baron
for-to a so distant baron
veut sa fille marïer,
wishes his daughter to-marry
qui a si clere façon
who has so bright fashion
que l'en s'i porroit mirer!
that one oneself-there could mirror

Hé, Deus! con ci faut reson!
Ah God how here fails reason
Veez du vis de fuiron!
See of-the face of ferret
Gente de toute façon,
Noble of all fashion
or vos en voi je mener.
now you thence see I led

Robert, ne vaut un bouton
Robert not is-worth a button
qui si l'en lera aler.
who so her-thence will-let go

— Sire, vos doit on blasmer,
Lord you ought one to-blame
s'ensi l'en lessiez mener.
if-thus her-thence you-let be-led
Ce que tant poëz amer
That which so-much you-can love
et ou avez tel pouoir
and where you-have such power
n'en devez lessier aler
not-thence you-ought to-let go
pour terre ne pour avoir.
for land nor for wealth

Mult par avroiz le cuer noir,
Very much you-will-have the heart black
quant vous en savroiz le voir.
when you thereof will-know the truth
N'avroiz force ne pouoir
Not-you-will-have force nor power
de li veoir ne sentir;
of her to-see nor to-feel

et sachiez: si bel avoir
and know so fair wealth
doit on près de lui tenir.
ought one near to oneself to-keep

— Robert, je vueil melz morir,
Robert I wish rather to-die
s'il li venoit a plesir,
if-it to-her came to pleasure
que l'en lessasse partir
than her-thence I-let part
pour trestoute ma conté.
for all my county
Hé, las! qui porroit gesir
Ah alas who could lie
une nuit lez son costé!
one night beside her side

— Sire, Deus vous dont joïr
Lord God to-you may-grant to-enjoy
de ce qu'avez desirré!
of that which-you-have desired

— Robert, je m'en crien morir,
Robert I myself-thereof fear to-die
quant il l'ont fet, mau gré Dé!
since they it-have done ill will (of-)God

J'aloie l'autrier errant

LI · ROBEÇON

Riding alone and composing, he hears a girl of fifteen by a bush. She seizes her staff and tells him to flee, since she has chosen Robeçon. He sits beside her and asks for a kind look; she weeps, then laughs. He sets her before him on his horse, but two shepherds come shouting through the wheat, and he leaves her and flees.

J'aloie l'autrier errant
I-went the-other-day wandering
sanz conpaignon
without companion
seur mon palefroi, pensant
upon my palfrey thinking
a fere une chançon,
to make a song
quant j'oï, ne sai conment,
when I-heard not I-know how
lez un buisson
beside a bush
la voiz du plus bel enfant
the voice of-the most fair child
c'onques veïst nus hon;
that-ever saw any man
et n'estoit pas enfes si
and not-she-was at-all child so
n'eüst quinze anz et demi,
not-she-had fifteen years and half

n'onques nule riens ne vi
nor-ever any thing not I-saw
de si gente façon.
of so noble fashion

Vers li m'en vois maintenant,
Toward her myself-thence I-go at-once
mis l'a reson:
put her-I-have speech
«Bele, dites moi conment,
Fair-one tell me how
pour Dieu, vous avez non!»
for God you have name
Et ele saut maintenant
And she leaps at-once
a son baston:
to her staff
«Se vous venez plus avant
If you come more forward
ja avroiz la tençon.
soon you-will-have the dispute
Sire, fuiez vous de ci!
Lord flee yourself from here
N'ai cure de tel ami,
Not-I-have care of such friend
que j'ai mult plus biau choisi,
for I-have much more fair chosen
qu'en claime Robeçon.»
whom-one calls Robeçon

Quant je la vi esfreer
When I her saw be-frightened
si durement
so hard
qu'el ne me daigne esgarder
that-she not me deigns to-look-at
ne fere autre senblant,
nor to-make other semblance
lors conmençai a penser
then I-began to think
confaitement
how
ele me porroit amer
she me could love
et changier son talent.
and change her desire
A terre lez li m'assis.
On ground beside her myself-I-sat
Quant plus regart son cler vis,
When more I-regard her bright face
tant est plus mes cuers espris,
so-much is more my heart kindled
qui double mon talent.
which doubles my desire

Lors li pris a demander
Then her I-began to ask
mult belement
very fairly
que me daignast esgarder
that me she-might-deign to-look-at
et fere autre senblant.
and to-make other semblance
Ele conmence a plorer
She begins to weep
et dist itant:
and said so-much
«Je ne vos puis escouter;
I not you can listen-to
ne sai qu'alez querant.»
not I-know what-you-go seeking
Vers li me trais, si li dis:
Toward her myself I-drew so to-her I-said
«Ma bele, pour Dieu merci!»
My fair-one for God mercy
Ele rist, si respondi:
She laughed so answered
«Ne faites pour la gent!»
Not do for the folk

Devant moi lors la montai
Before me then her I-mounted
de maintenant
from at-once
et trestout droit m'en alai
and all straight myself-thence I-went
vers un bois verdoiant.
toward a wood greening
Aval les prez regardai,
Down the meadows I-looked
s'oï criant
so-I-heard crying
deus pastors par mi un blé,
two shepherds through mid a wheat-field
qui venoient huiant,
who came hooting
et leverent un grant cri.
and raised a great cry
Assez fis plus que ne di:
Much I-did more than — I-say
je la les, si m'en foï,
I her leave so myself-thence I-fled
n'oi cure de tel gent.
not-I-had care of such folk

L'autrier par la matinee

LII · PERRIN

One morning he finds a shepherdess singing of love's ill and offers her rich gifts. She says knights are cheats and she prefers Perrin, her shepherd, to a rich liar. He praises knights; she calls them worse than Ganelon. When he embraces her she cries out to Perrin, shouts rise from the wood, and she mocks him as he rides off.

L'autrier par la matinee
The-other-day by the morning
entre un bois et un vergier
between a wood and an orchard
une pastore ai trouvee
a shepherdess I-have found
chantant por soi envoisier,
singing for herself to-amuse
et disoit un son premier:
and she-said a tune first
«Ci me tient li maus d'amor.»
Here me holds the ill of-love
Tantost cele part m'en tor
At-once that way myself-thence I-turn
que je l'oï desresnier,
that I her-heard declare
si li dis sanz delaier:
so to-her I-said without delaying
«Bele, Deus vos dont bon jor!»
Fair-one God to-you may-grant good day

Mon salu sanz demoree
My greeting without delay
me rendi et sanz targier.
to-me she-rendered and without tarrying
Mult ert fresche et coloree,
Very she-was fresh and colored
si m'i plot a acointier:
so me-there it-pleased to accost
«Bele, vostre amor vous qier,
Fair-one your love of-you I-seek
s'avroiz de moi riche ator.»
so-you-will-have from me rich attire
Ele respont: «Tricheor
She answers Cheats
sont mès trop li chevalier.
are now too-much the knights
Melz aim Perrin, mon bergier,
Better I-love Perrin my shepherd
que riche honme menteor.»
than rich man liar

«Bele, ce ne dites mie;
Fair-one this not say at-all
chevalier sont trop vaillant.
knights are exceedingly valiant

Qui set donc avoir amie
Who knows-how then to-have friend
ne servir a son talent
nor to-serve at her desire
fors chevalier et tel gent?
except knight and such folk
Mès l'amor d'un bergeron
But the-love of-a little-shepherd
certes ne vaut un bouton.
certainly not is-worth a button
Partez vos en a itant
Part yourself thence at so-much
et m'amez; je vous creant:
and me-love I to-you promise
de moi avrez riche don.»
from me you-will-have rich gift

«Sire, par sainte Marie,
Lord by holy Mary
vous en parlez por noient.
you thereof speak for nothing
Mainte dame avront trichie
Many-a lady will-have deceived
cil chevalier soudoiant.
those knights mercenary
Trop sont faus et mal pensant,
Too-much they-are false and ill thinking
pis valent de Guenelon.
worse they-are-worth than Ganelon

Je m'en revois en meson,
I myself-thence go-back into house
que Perrinez, qui m'atent,
for Perrinet who me-awaits
m'aime de cuer loiaument.
me-loves with heart loyally
Abessiez vostre reson!»
Lower your speech

G'entendi bien la bergiere,
I-understood well the shepherdess
qu'ele me veut eschaper.
that-she me wishes to-escape
Mult li fis longue proiere,
Very to-her I-made long prayer
mès n'i poi riens conquester.
but not-there I-could anything gain
Lors la pris a acoler,
Then her I-began to embrace
et ele gete un haut cri:
and she casts a loud cry
«Perrinet, traï, traï!»
Perrinet betrayed betrayed
Du bois prenent a huper;
From-the wood they-begin to shout
je la lais sanz demorer,
I her leave without delaying
seur mon cheval m'en parti.
upon my horse myself-thence I-parted

Quant ele m'en vit aler,
When she me-thence saw go
si me dist par ranposner:
so to-me said by mocking
«Chevalier sont trop hardi!»
Knights are too bold

Seigneurs, sachiez: qui or ne s'en ira

LIII · THE CALL TO THE CROSS

Whoever will not take the cross and go where God died will hardly reach Paradise. The wicked stay behind fretting over wives and friends; the valiant go to God. At the Judgment, Christ will send those who helped carry his cross to his angels and the rest to Hell. He prays God to rid laggards of the thought and bring all to heaven.

Seigneurs, sachiez: qui or ne s'en ira
Lords know who now not himself-thence will-go
en cele terre ou Deus fu morz et vis
into that land where God was dead and alive
et qui la croiz d'Outremer ne prendra,
and who the cross of-Outremer not will-take
a paines mès ira en Paradis.
with pains more will-go into Paradise
Qui a en soi pitié ne remenbrance,
Who has in himself pity or remembrance
au haut Seigneur doit querre sa venjance
for-the high Lord ought to-seek his vengeance
et delivrer sa terre et son païs.
and to-deliver his land and his country

Tuit li mauvès demorront par deça,
All the wicked will-remain on this-side
qui n'aiment Dieu, bien ne honor ne pris;
who not-love God good nor honor nor worth

et chascuns dit: «Ma fame, que fera?
and each says My wife what will-she-do
Je ne leroie a nul fuer mes amis.»
I not would-leave at any price my friends
Cil sont cheoit en trop fole atendance,
Those are fallen into too foolish expectation
q'il n'est amis fors que cil, sanz dotance,
for-there not-is friend except that he without doubt
qui pour nos fu en la vraie croiz mis.
who for us was on the true cross put

Or s'en iront cil vaillant bacheler
Now themselves-thence will-go those valiant young-men
qui aiment Dieu et l'eneur de cest mont,
who love God and the-honor of this world
qui sagement vuelent a Dieu aler,
who wisely wish to God to-go
et li morveus, li cendreus demorront;
and the snotty the ash-covered will-remain
avugle sont, de ce ne dout je mie.
blind they-are of this not doubt I at-all
Qui un secors ne fet Dieu en sa vie,
Who one succor not does (to-)God in his life
et por si pou pert la gloire du mont.
and for so little loses the glory of-the world

Deus se lessa por nos en croiz pener
God himself let for us on cross suffer
et nos dira au jor ou tuit vendront:
and to-us will-say at-the day when all will-come
«Vous qui ma croiz m'aidastes a porter,
You who my cross me-helped to carry
vos en iroiz la ou mi angre sont;
you thence will-go there where my angels are
la me verroiz et ma mere Marie.
there me you-will-see and my mother Mary
Et vos par qui je n'oi onques aïe
And you by whom I not-had ever help
descendroiz tuit en Enfer le parfont.»
will-descend all into Hell the deep

Chascuns cuide demorer touz hetiez
Each thinks to-remain all healthy
et que jamès ne doie mal avoir;
and that ever not he-ought ill to-have
ensi les tient Anemis et pechiez
thus them holds the-Enemy and sin
que il n'ont sens, hardement ne pouoir.
that they not-have sense boldness nor power
Biaus sire Deus, ostez leur tel pensee
Fair lord God remove from-them such thought
et nos metez en la vostre contree
and us put in the your country
si saintement que vos puissons veoir!
so holily that you we-may see

Douce dame, roïne coronee,
Sweet lady queen crowned
prïez pour nos, Virge bone eüree!
pray for us Virgin good fortunate
Et puis après ne nos puet mescheoir.
And then after not to-us can befall-ill

Dame, ensi est q'il m'en couvient aler

LIV · LEAVING FOR OUTREMER

He must leave his lady and the sweet country; the land overseas parts so many lovers. He cannot live without love, yet leaves her for God, who will reward the loss of heart and joy. He is sorrowful to leave his lady and glad to serve God, whose love is the gem that cures sin, and prays the Lady of heaven to aid him.

Dame, ensi est q'il m'en couvient aler
Lady thus it-is that-it me-thence behooves to-go
et departir de la douce contree
and to-depart from the sweet country
ou tant ai maus apris a endurer;
where so-many I-have ills learned to endure
quant je vous lais, droiz est que je m'en hee.
since I you leave right is that I myself-thereof hate
Deus! pour quoi fu la terre d'Outremer,
God for what was the land of-Outremer
qui tanz amanz avra fet desevrer
which so-many lovers will-have made part
dont puis ne fu l'amors reconfortee,
whereof since not was the-love comforted
ne ne porent leur joie remenbrer!
nor not they-could their joy remember

Ja sanz amor ne porroie durer,
Ever without love not I-could endure
tant par i truis fermement ma pensee,
so much there I-find firmly my thought

ne mes fins cuers ne m'en let retorner,
nor my true heart not me-thence lets return
ainz sui a li la ou il veut et bee.
rather I-am with her there where it wishes and aims
Trop ai apris durement a amer,
Too-much I-have learned hard to love
pour ce ne voi conment puisse durer
for this not I-see how I-may endure
sanz joie avoir de la plus desirree
without joy to-have from the most desired
c'onques nus hons osast merci crïer.
that-ever any man dared mercy to-cry

Je ne voi pas, quant de li sui partiz,
I not see at-all when from her I-am parted
que puisse avoir bien ne solaz ne joie,
that I-may have good nor solace nor joy
car onques riens ne fis si a enviz
for ever anything not I-did so with reluctance
con vous lessier, se je jamès vous voie;
as you to-leave so I ever you may-see
trop par en sui dolenz et esbahiz.
too much thereof I-am sorrowful and dismayed
Par maintes foiz m'en serai repentiz,
By many times myself-thereof I-shall-be repented
quant j'onques voil aler en ceste voie
since I-ever wished to-go on this way
et je recort voz debonaires diz.
and I recall your gracious words

Biaus sire Deus, vers vous me sui guenchiz;
Fair lord God toward you myself I-am turned
tout lais pour vous ce que je tant amoie.
all I-leave for you that which I so-much loved
Li guerredons en doit estre floriz,
The guerdon thereof ought to-be flowered
quant pour vous pert et mon cuer et ma joie.
since for you I-lose both my heart and my joy
De vous servir sui touz prez et garniz;
Of you to-serve I-am all ready and furnished
a vous me rent, biaus Peres Jhesu Criz!
to you myself I-render fair Father Jesus Christ
Si bon seigneur avoir je ne porroie:
So good lord to-have I not could
cil qui vous sert ne puet estre traïz.
he who you serves not can be betrayed

Bien doit mes cuers estre liez et dolanz:
Well ought my heart to-be glad and sorrowful
dolanz de ce que je part de ma dame,
sorrowful of this that I part from my lady
et liez de ce que je sui desirranz
and glad of this that I am desiring
de servir Dieu, qui est mes cors et m'ame.
of serving God who is my body and my-soul
Iceste amor est trop fine et puissanz,
This love is exceedingly true and powerful
par la couvient venir les plus sachanz;
by there it-behooves to-come the most knowing

c'est li rubiz, l'esmeraude et la jame
this-is the ruby the-emerald and the gem
qui touz guerist des vius pechiez puanz.
which all cures of-the vile sins stinking

Dame des cieus, granz roïne puissanz,
Lady of-the heavens great queen powerful
au grant besoing me soiez secorranz!
at-the great need to-me be succoring
De vous amer puisse avoir droite flame!
Of you to-love may-I have right flame
Quant dame pert, dame me soit aidanz!
Since lady I-lose lady to-me be aiding

Au tens plain de felonnie

LV · THE KINGDOM OF SYRIA

In a time of treachery, when we barons worsen the world and the just are put under the ban, Syria cries that unless we amend we should not go, since God aids righteous hearts. Paradise, Philip is told, is won by hardship. Love holds the poet captive, and he will die his lady's loyal lover. Lorent is warned against folly.

Au tens plain de felonnie,
At-the time full of felony
d'envie et de traïson,
of-envy and of treason
de tort et de mesprison,
of wrong and of misdeed
sanz bien et sanz cortoisie,
without good and without courtesy
et que entre nos baron
and when among us barons
fesons tout le siecle empirier,
we-make all the world worsen
que je voi esconmeïer
when I see excommunicated
ceus qui plus offrent reson,
those who most offer reason
lors vueil dire une chançon.
then I-wish to-say a song

Li roiaumes de Surie
The kingdom of Syria
nos dit et crie a haut ton,
to-us says and cries at high tone
se nos ne nos amendon,
if we not ourselves amend
pour Dieu! que n'i alons mie:
for God that not-there we-go at-all
n'i ferions se mal non.
not-there we-would-do except ill not
Deus aime fin cuer droiturier,
God loves true heart righteous
de teus genz se veut il aidier;
of such folk himself wishes he to-aid
cil essauceront son non
they will-exalt his name
et conquerront sa meson.
and will-conquer his house

Oncor aim melz toute voie
Yet I-love better all the-same
demorer el saint païs
to-remain in-the holy country
que aler povre, chetis
than to-go poor wretched
la ou ja solaz n'avroie.
there where ever solace not-I-would-have

Phelipe, on doit Paradis
Philip one ought Paradise
conquerre par mesaise avoir,
to-conquer by hardship to-have
que vous n'i trouverez ja, voir,
for you not-there will-find ever truly
bon estre ne geu ne ris,
good being nor game nor laughter
que vous avïez apris.
that you had learned

Amors a coru en proie
Love has run in plunder
et si m'en maine tout pris
and so me-thence leads all taken
en l'ostel, ce m'est a vis,
into the-lodging this to-me-is to seeming
dont ja issir ne querroie,
whence ever to-go-out not I-would-seek
s'il estoit a mon devis.
if-it were at my choice
Dame, de qui Biautez fet hoir,
Lady of whom Beauty makes heir
je vous faz or bien a savoir:
I to-you make now well to know
ja de prison n'istrai vis,
ever from prison not-I-shall-go-out alive
ainz morrai loiaus amis.
rather I-shall-die loyal friend

Dame, moi couvient remaindre,
Lady me it-behooves to-remain
de vous ne me qier partir.
from you not myself I-seek to-part
De vous amer et servir
Of you to-love and to-serve
ne me soi onques jor faindre,
not myself I-knew-how ever day to-shirk
si me vaut bien un morir
so to-me is-worth well a dying
l'amors qui tant m'asaut souvent.
the-love which so-much me-assails often
Adès vostre merci atent,
Ever your mercy I-await
que biens ne me puet venir,
for good not to-me can come
se n'est par vostre plesir.
if not-it-is by your pleasure

Chançon, va moi dire Lorent
Song go (for-)me to-tell Lorent
qu'il se gart bien outreement
that-he himself may-keep well utterly
de grant folie envaïr,
from great folly to-undertake
qu'en lui avroit faus mentir!
for-in him there-would-be false lying

Deus est ensi conme li pellicanz

LVI · THE PELICAN

God is like the pelican that kills itself to revive the fledglings a foul bird has killed, for Christ redeemed his children with his blood. Now pride and fraud rule, clerks leave sermons for war, and the barons share the blame. This world must fall unless God ends the battle. The hypocrites are the foul birds that kill God's children.

Deus est ensi conme li pellicanz
God is thus like the pelican
qui fet son nif el plus haut arbre sus,
which makes its nest in-the most high tree up
et li mauvès oisiaus, qui vient de jus,
and the evil bird which comes from below
ses oisellons ocit: tant est puanz;
its fledglings kills so-much it-is stinking
li peres vient destroiz et angoisseus,
the father comes distressed and anguished
du bec s'ocit, de son sanc dolereus
with-the beak itself-kills with its blood grievous
vivre refet tantost ses oisellons.
live makes-again at-once its fledglings
Deus fist autel, quant fu sa passions:
God did such when was his passion
de son douz sanc racheta ses enfanz
with his sweet blood he-redeemed his children
du Deable, qui trop estoit poissanz.
from-the Devil who too-much was powerful

Li guerredons en est mauvès et lenz,
The guerdon thereof is bad and slow
que bien ne droit ne pitié n'a mès nus,
for good nor right nor pity not-has more anyone
ainz est orguels et baraz au desus,
rather is pride and fraud at-the top
felonie, traïsons et bobanz.
felony treason and arrogance
Mult par est or nostre estaz perilleus;
Very much is now our state perilous
et se ne fust li essamples de ceus
and if not were the example of those
qui tant aiment et noises et tençons
who so-much love both quarrels and disputes
— ce est des clers qui ont lessié sarmons
this is of-the clerks who have left sermons
por guerroier et pour tuër les genz —,
for to-war and for to-kill the folk
jamès en Dieu ne fust nus hons creanz.
ever in God not would-be any man believing

Nostre chiés fet touz noz menbres doloir,
Our head makes all our members ache
por c'est bien droiz qu'a Dieu nos en plaingnons;
for this-is well right that-to God ourselves thereof we-complain
et granz corpes ra mult seur les barons,
and great blame is-in-turn much upon the barons
qui il poise quant aucuns veut valoir;
whom it grieves when someone wishes to-avail

et entre gent en font mult a blasmer
and among folk thereof are much to blame
qui tant sevent et mentir et guiler;
who so-much know-how both to-lie and to-deceive
le mal en font deseur aus revenir;
the ill thereof they-make upon them come-back
et qui mal qiert, maus ne li doit faillir.
and who ill seeks ill not to-him ought to-fail
Qui petit mal porchace a son pouoir,
Who little ill pursues at his power
li granz ne doit en son cuer remanoir.
the great not ought in his heart to-remain

Bien devrions en l'estoire vooir
Well we-ought in the-story to-see
la bataille qui fu des deus dragons,
the battle which was of-the two dragons
si com l'en trueve el livre des Bretons,
so as one finds in-the book of-the Bretons
dont il couvint les chastiaus jus cheoir:
whereby it behooved the castles down to-fall
c'est cist siecles, qui il couvient verser,
this-is this world which it behooves to-overturn
se Deus ne fet la bataille finer.
if God not makes the battle end
Le sens Mellin en couvint fors issir
The sense (of-)Merlin thereof it-behooved out to-go
por deviner qu'estoit a avenir.
for to-divine what-was to happen

Mès Antecriz vient, ce poëz savoir,
But Antichrist comes this you-can know
as maçues qu'Anemis fet mouvoir.
with-the maces that-the-Enemy makes move

Savez qui sont li vil oisel punais
Know-you who are the vile birds stinking
qui tuënt Dieu et ses enfançonèz?
who kill God and his little-children
Li papelart, dont li nons n'est pas nèz.
The hypocrites whereof the name not-is at-all clean
Cil sont bien ort et puant et mauvès;
They are well filthy and stinking and wicked
il ocïent toute la simple gent
they kill all the simple folk
par leur faus moz, qui sont li Dieu enfant.
by their false words who are the (of-)God children
Papelart font le siecle chanceler;
Hypocrites make the world totter
par saint Pere, mal les fet encontrer:
by saint Peter ill them it-is to-meet
il ont tolu joie et solaz et pès.
they have taken-away joy and solace and peace
Cil porteront en Enfer le grant fès.
They will-carry in Hell the great burden

Or nos dont Deus lui servir et amer
Now to-us may-grant God him to-serve and to-love
et la Dame, qu'on n'i doit oblïer,
and the Lady whom-one not-there ought to-forget
et nos vueille garder a touz jorz mès
and us may-he-wish to-guard for all days more
des maus oisiaus, qui ont venin es bès!
from-the evil birds which have venom in-the beaks

Du tres douz non a la Virge Marie

LVII · THE FIVE LETTERS OF MARIA

He expounds the five letters of the Virgin's name. M, since through her God came to free souls from torment; A, first of the alphabet as the Ave comes first; R, seen daily in the host the priest holds; I, straight and noble as her body was; and A, the cry of lament to the Lady who seeks only the sinner's amendment.

Du tres douz non a la Virge Marie
Of-the very sweet name of the Virgin Mary
vous espondrai cinq letres plainement.
to-you I-shall-expound five letters plainly
La premiere est M, qui senefie
The first is M which signifies
que les ames en sont fors de torment;
that the souls thereby are out of torment
car par li vint ça jus entre sa gent
for through her came here down among his folk
et nos geta de la noire prison
and us cast from the black prison
Deus, qui pour nos en sousfri passion.
God who for us thereof suffered passion
Iceste M est et sa mere et s'amie.
This M is both his mother and his-friend

A vient après. Droiz est que je vous die
A comes after Right is that I to-you may-tell
qu'en l'abecé est tout premierement;
that-in the-alphabet it-is all first
et tout premiers, qui n'est plains de folie,
and all first who not-is full of folly
doit on dire le salu doucement
ought one to-say the salutation sweetly
a la Dame qui en son biau cors gent
to the Lady who in her fair body noble
porta le Roi qui merci atendon.
carried the King whose mercy we-await
Premiers fu A et premiers devint hom
First was A and first became man
que nostre loi fust fete n'establie.
before our law were made or-established

Puis vient R, ce n'est pas controuvaille,
Then comes R this not-is at-all invention
qu'erre savons que mult fet a prisier,
for-R we-know that much is to prize
et sel voions chascun jor tout sanz faille,
and so-it we-see each day all without fail
quant li prestres le tient en son moustier;
when the priest it holds in his church
c'est li cors Dieu, qui touz nos doit jugier,
this-is the body (of-)God who all us ought to-judge
que la Dame dedenz son cors porta.
which the Lady within her body carried

Or li prions, quant la mort nous vendra,
Now her let-us-pray when the death to-us will-come
que sa pitiez plus que droiz nous i vaille.
that her pity more than right us there may-avail

I est touz droiz, genz et de bele taille.
I is all straight noble and of fair shape
Tels fu li cors, ou il n'ot qu'enseignier,
Such was the body where there not-was what-to-teach
de la Dame qui pour nos se travaille,
of the Lady who for us herself labors
biaus, droiz et genz sanz teche et sanz pechier.
fair straight and noble without blemish and without sinning
Pour son douz cuer et pour Enfer bruisier
For her sweet heart and for Hell to-break
vint Deus en li, quant ele l'enfanta.
came God in her when she him-bore
Biaus fu et genz, et biau s'en delivra;
Fair he-was and noble and fairly herself-thereof delivered
bien fist senblant Deus que de nos li chaille.
well made semblance God that of us to-him it-matters

A est de plaint: bien savez sanz dotance,
A is of lament well you-know without doubt
quant on dit a, qu'on se plaint durement;
when one says ah that-one oneself laments grievously

et nous devons plaindre sanz demorance
and we ought to-lament without delay
a la Dame qui ne va el querant
to the Lady who not goes else seeking
que pechierres viengne a amendement.
than sinner may-come to amendment
Tant a douz cuer, gentil et esmeré,
So-much she-has sweet heart noble and refined
qui l'apele de cuer sanz fausseté,
who her-calls with heart without falsehood
ja ne faudra a avoir repentance.
ever not will-fail to have repentance

Or li prions merci pour sa bonté
Now her let-us-pray mercy for her goodness
au douz salu qui se conmence Ave
with-the sweet salutation which itself begins Hail
Maria! Deus nous gart de mescheance!
Mary God us may-keep from mischance

Mauvès arbres ne puet florir

LVIII · THE FRUIT OF NATURE

A bad tree cannot flower, and a man without love bears no fruit. The lover bears Nature's fruit, God's gift; whoever loves God gathers it ripe. The green fruit is Adam's sin, his own orchard full of it since he saw his lady. He prays the Mother of God for the good fruit and bids Philip leave his error and sing.

Mauvès arbres ne puet florir,
Bad tree not can flower
ainz seche touz et va crollant;
rather dries all and goes shaking
et hons qui n'aime, sanz mentir,
and man who not-loves without lying
ne porte fruit, ainz va morant.
not bears fruit rather goes dying
Flor et fruit de cointe senblant
Flower and fruit of elegant semblance
porte cil en qui nest amors.
bears he in whom is-born love
En ce fruit a tant de valors
In this fruit there-is so-much of worth
que nus nel porroit elligier,
that anyone not-it could purchase
que de touz maus puet alegier.
for from all ills it-can relieve
Fruit de Nature l'apele on;
Fruit of Nature it-calls one
or vos ai devisé son non.
now to-you I-have told its name

De ce fruit ne puet nus sentir,
Of this fruit not can anyone taste
se Deus ne le fet proprement.
if God not it makes properly
Qui a Dieu amer et servir
Who to God love and serve
done cuer et cors et talent,
gives heart and body and desire
cil queut du fruit trestout avant,
he gathers of-the fruit all first
et Deus l'en fet riche secors.
and God to-him-thereof makes rich succor
Par le fruit fu li premiers plors,
By the fruit was the first weeping
quant Eve fist Adam pechier;
when Eve made Adam sin
mès qui du bon fruit veut mengier
but who of-the good fruit wishes to-eat
Dieu aint et sa Mere et son non,
God may-he-love and his Mother and his name
si queudra le fruit de seson.
so will-gather the fruit of season

Seigneur, de l'arbre dit vos ai
Lords of the-tree told you I-have
de Nature, de qu'amors vient;
of Nature from which-love comes

du fruit meür conté vous ai
of-the fruit ripe told you I-have
que cil quieut qui a Dieu se tient;
which he gathers who to God himself holds
mès dou fruit vert me resouvient
but of-the fruit green to-me it-remembers-in-turn
qui ja en moi ne meürra:
which ever in me not will-ripen
c'est li fruiz en qu'Adans pecha.
this-is the fruit in which-Adam sinned
De ce fruit est plains mes vergiers:
Of this fruit is full my orchard
dès que ma dame vi premiers,
since that my lady I-saw first
oi de s'amor plain cuer et cors,
I-had of her-love full heart and body
ne ja nul jor n'en istra fors.
nor ever any day not-thence will-go out

Bien cuit dou fruit ne gousterai
Well I-think of-the fruit not I-shall-taste
que je cueilli, ançois m'avient
which I gathered rather to-me-it-happens
si conme a l'enfant, bien le sai,
so as to the-child well it I-know

qui a la branche se soustient
who to the branch himself holds-up
et entor l'arbre va et vient
and around the-tree goes and comes
ne ja amont ne montera;
nor ever up not will-climb
ensi mes cuers foloiant va.
thus my heart acting-foolishly goes
Tant par est granz mes desirriers
So much is great my longing
que je en tieng mes granz maus chiers,
that I thereof hold my great ills dear
si sui afinez con li ors
so I-am refined as the gold
vers li, qui est touz mes tresors.
toward her who is all my treasure

Deus! se je pouoie cueillir
God if I could gather
du fruit meür de vous amer,
of-the fruit ripe of you to-love
si com vous m'avez fet sentir
so as you me-have made feel
l'amor d'aval et conparer,
the-love from-below and pay-for
lors me porroie saouler
then myself I-could sate
et venir a repentement.
and come to repentance

Par vostre douz conmandement
By your sweet commandment
me donez amer la meillor:
to-me grant to-love the best
ce est la precïeuse flor
this is the precious flower
par qui vos venistes ça jus,
by whom you came here down
dont li Deables est confus.
whereby the Devil is confounded

Mere Dieu, par vostre douçor
Mother (of-)God by your sweetness
du bon fruit me donez savor,
of-the good fruit to-me give savor
que de l'autre ai je senti plus
for of the-other have I felt more
c'onques, ce croi, ne senti nus!
than-ever this I-believe — felt anyone

Phelipe, lessiez vostre error!
Philip leave your error
Je vos vi ja bon chanteor.
I you saw once good singer
Chantez, et nos dirons desus
Sing and we shall-say above
le chant Te Deum laudamus.
the chant Thee God we-praise

De chanter ne me puis tenir

LIX · THE SPIRITUAL LADY

He cannot keep from singing of the Virgin, since no one who serves her comes to shame and the King of heaven came into her. Whoever is faithful to her will come before her brighter than the morning star. Through her, of David's line, God came to suffer death and free us. He asks her to defend him from damnation.

De chanter ne me puis tenir
From singing not myself I-can hold
de la tres bele esperitaus,
of the very fair spiritual-one
que riens du mont ne puet servir
for anything of-the world not can serve
qui ja viengne honte ne maus;
to-whom ever may-come shame nor ill
que li Rois celestïaus,
for the King celestial
qui en li daigna venir,
who in her deigned to-come
ne porroit mie sousfrir
not could at-all allow
qui la sert q'il ne fust saus.
who her serves that-he not were saved

Quant Deus tant la vout obeïr,
Since God so-much her wished to-obey
qui n'estoit muables ne faus,
who not-was changeable nor false

bien nos i devons dont tenir,
well ourselves there we-ought then to-hold
Dame roïne naturaus!
Lady queen natural
Cil qui vous sera fëaus,
He who to-you will-be faithful
vous li savroiz bien merir;
you him will-know-how well to-reward
devant vos porra venir
before you he-will-be-able to-come
plus clers qu'estoile jornaus.
more bright than-star of-day

Vostre biauté, qui si resplent,
Your beauty which so shines
fet tout le monde resclarcir.
makes all the world brighten
Par vous vint Deus entre la gent
By you came God among the folk
en terre pour la mort sousfrir
on earth for the death to-suffer
et a l'Anemi tolir
and from the-Enemy to-take
nos et geter de torment.
us and to-cast from torment
Par vous avons vengement
By you we-have vengeance
et par vous devons garir.
and by you we-ought to-be-saved

David le sout premierement
David it knew first
que de lui devïez oissir,
that from him you-were to-issue
quant il parla si hautement
when he spoke so highly
par la bouche du Saint Espir.
by the mouth of-the Holy Spirit
Vous n'estes mie a florir,
You not-are at-all to flower
ainz avez flor si poissant:
rather you-have flower so powerful
c'est Deus, qui onques ne ment
this-is God who ever not lies
et par tout fet son plesir.
and through all does his pleasure

Dame, plaine de granz bontez,
Lady full of great goodnesses
de cortoisie et de pitié,
of courtesy and of pity
par vous est touz renluminez
by you is all illumined-anew
li mondes, nès li renoié;
the world even the renegades

quant il seront ravoié
when they will-be put-back-on-the-way
et crerront que Deus soit nez,
and will-believe that God be born
seront sauf, bien le savez.
will-be saved well it you-know
Dame, aiez de nos pitié!
Lady have of us pity

Douce Dame, or vos pri gié
Sweet Lady now you pray I
merci, que me desfendez
mercy that me you-defend
que je ne soie dampnez
that I not be damned
ne perduz par mon pechié!
nor lost by my sin

De grant travail et de petit esploit

LX · THE DEVIL'S HOOKS

The world labors for little and serves the Devil, thrusting God aside; only the Lady's prayers stay God's blow. A mouse provides against winter; we seek only Hell. The Devil fishes with four hooks: covetousness, pride, lechery, and felony. Worthy men are scarce; men now are like false pence. The song goes to the Lady.

De grant travail et de petit esploit
With great labor and with little profit
voi le siecle chargié et enconbré,
I-see the world laden and encumbered
que tant sonmes plain de maleürté
for so-much we-are full of misfortune
que nus ne pense a fere ce q'il doit;
that anyone not thinks to do that which-he ought
ainz avons si le Deable troussé
rather we-have so the Devil taken-up
qu'a lui servir chascuns paine et essaie;
that-to him to-serve each toils and tries
et Dieu, qui ot pour nos la cruël plaie,
and God who had for us the cruel wound
avons mès tuit arriere dos bouté:
we-have now all behind back thrust
mult est hardiz qui pour mort ne s'esmaie.
very is bold who for death not himself-dismays

Deus, qui tout set et tout puet et tout voit,
God who all knows and all can and all sees
nos avroit tost un entredeus geté,
us would-have soon a blow-between cast
se la Dame, plaine de grant bonté,
if the Lady full of great goodness
qui est lez lui, pour nous ne li prioit.
who is beside him for us not to-him prayed
Si tres douz mot plesant et savoré
Her very sweet words pleasing and savory
le grant coroz du grant Seigneur rapaie.
the great wrath of-the great Lord appease
Mult par est fous qui autre amor essaie,
Very much is foolish who other love tries
qu'en cesti n'a barat ne fausseté,
for-in this not-is fraud nor falsehood
ne es autres ne merci ne manaie.
nor in-the others neither mercy nor pardon

La soriz qiert, por son cors garantir
The mouse seeks for its body to-protect
contre l'iver, la noiz et le forment,
against the-winter the nut and the wheat
et nous, chetif! n'alons mès riens querant,
and we wretched not-go more anything seeking
quant nos morrons, ou nos puissons guerir;
when we shall-die where we may be-saved
nous ne cerchons fors qu'Enfer le puant.
we not seek except that-Hell the stinking

Ore esgardez q'une beste sauvage
Now behold that-a beast wild
porvoit de loing encontre son damage,
provides from far against its harm
et nous n'avons ne sens ne escïent;
and we not-have neither sense nor knowledge
il m'est a vis que plain sonmes de rage.
it to-me-is to seeming that full we-are of madness

Deables a geté pour nous sesir
Devil has cast for us to-seize
quatre aimeçons aoschiez de torment:
four hooks notched with torment
Couvoitise lance premierement
Covetousness he-casts first
et puis Orgueil pour sa grant roiz enplir;
and then Pride for his great net to-fill
Luxure va le batel traïnant,
Lechery goes the boat dragging
Felonie les gouverne et les nage.
Felony them steers and them rows
Ensi peschant s'en viennent au rivage,
Thus fishing themselves-thence come to-the shore
dont Deus nos gart par son conmandement,
whence God us may-keep by his commandment
en qui sainz fonz nous feïsmes honmage!
in whose holy font we did homage

Les preudonmes doit on tenir mult chiers
The worthy-men ought one to-hold very dear
la ou il sont et servir et amer,
there where they are both to-serve and to-love
mès a paines en puet on nus trouver,
but with pains thereof can one any find
car il sont mès si com li faus deniers
for they are now so as the false pence
que on ne puet en trebuchet verser,
which one not can in scale to-pour
ainz le gete on sanz coing et sanz balance;
rather it casts one without die and without balance
torz et pechiez en eus fine et conmence.
wrong and sin in them ends and begins
Faus tricheor, bien vous devroit menbrer
False cheats well to-you ought to-remember
que Deus prendra de vos cruël venjance!
that God will-take of you cruel vengeance

A la Dame qui touz les biens avance
To the Lady who all the goods advances
t'en va, chançon! S'el te veut escouter,
thyself-thence go song If-she thee wishes to-hear
onques ne fu nus de meillor cheance.
ever not was anyone of better chance

Conmencerai

LXI · A LAY TO THE VIRGIN

He begins a lay of the best of ladies, fearing that if the Virgin delays her prayers the Devil will take him to the black prison. He begs God to forget justice and unbend his bow so that mercy may come, since without it all will fare ill. He asks the Lady to pray for all, since none will be rescued except through her.

Conmencerai
I-shall-begin
a fere un lai
to make a lay
de la meillour.
of the best
Forment m'esmay,
Greatly myself-I-dismay
que trop par ai
for too much I-have
fet de dolour,
made of grief
dont mi chant torront a plour.
whence my songs will-turn to weeping
Mere Virge savouree,
Mother Virgin savory
se vous fetes demouree
if you make delay
de prïer le haut Seignour,
of praying the high Lord

bien doi avoir grant paour
well I-ought to-have great fear
du Deable, du Felon,
of-the Devil of-the Felon
qui en la noire prison,
who into the black prison
nous veut mener,
us wishes to-lead
dont nus ne puet eschaper;
whence anyone not can escape
et j'ai forfet, douce Dame,
and I-have forfeited sweet Lady
a perdre le cors et l'ame,
to lose the body and the-soul
se ne m'aidiez.
if not me-you-aid
Douz Dieus, aiez
Sweet God have
merci de mes vils pechiez!
mercy of my vile sins
Ou sera merci trouvee,
Where will-be mercy found
s'ele est de vous refusee,
if-it is by you refused
qui tant valez?
who so-much are-worth
Sire, droiture oublïez
Lord justice forget
et destendez vostre corde,
and unbend your cord

si vaigne misericorde
so may-come mercy
pour nous aidier!
for us to-aid
Nous n'avons de droit mestier;
We not-have of justice need
quant seur touz estes puissanz,
since above all you-are powerful
bien devez de voz serganz
well you-ought of your servants
avoir merci.
to-have mercy
Biaus, douz Sire, je vous pri
Fair sweet Lord I you pray
ne me metez en oubli!
not me put in oblivion
Se pitié ne vaint venjance,
If pity not vanquishes vengeance
dont serons nous sanz doutance
then shall-be we without doubt
trop mal mené.
too ill led
Dame, plaine de bonté,
Lady full of goodness
vostre douz mot savouré
your sweet words savory
ne soient pas oublïé!
not be at-all forgotten
Prïez pour nous!
Pray for us

Jamès ne serons rescous,
Ever not we-shall-be rescued
se ne le sonmes par vous,
if not it we-are by you
de voir le sai.
of truth it I-know
Ci lesserai;
Here I-shall-leave
et Dieus nous doint sanz delai
and God to-us may-grant without delay
avoir son secours verai!
to-have his succor true

CONON DE BÉTHUNE

Les Chansons de Conon de Béthune

The Songs of Conon de Béthune

Chançon legiere a entendre

I · A SONG TO LEARN

He will make a song easy to learn and sing, since no other messenger will show his grief to the best lady born. He has hidden his martyrdom from everyone and ought to tell it to her alone; if she forgets him, he will not forget her. Her beauty makes his ills so pleasing that he dies joyful. The envoy is to Noblet.

Chançon legiere a entendre
Song light to understand
ferai, car bien m'est mestiers
I-shall-make for well to-me-is need
ke chascuns le puist aprendre
that each it may learn
et c'on le chant volentiers;
and that-one it may-sing willingly
ne par autres messaigiers
nor by other messengers
n'iert ja ma dolors mostree
not-will-be ever my grief shown
a la millor ki soit nee.
to the best who may-be born

Tant est sa valors doblee
So-much is her worth doubled
c'orgeus et hardemens fiers
that-pride and boldness proud
seroit, se je ma pensee
it-would-be if I my thought
li descovroie premiers;
to-her uncovered first
mais besoins et desiriers
but need and longing
et çou c'on ne puet atendre
and that which-one not can wait
fait maint hardement emprendre.
makes many-a boldness be-undertaken

Tant ai celé mon martire
So-much I-have concealed my martyrdom
tos jors a tote la gent
all days from all the folk
ke bien le devroie dire
that well it I-ought to-say
a ma Dame solement,
to my Lady only
k'Amors ne li dit noient;
for-Love not to-her says anything
ne por quant, s'ele m'oblie,
not for all-that if-she me-forgets
ne l'oublierai je mie.
not her-shall-forget I at-all

Por quant, se je n'ai aïe
For all-that if I not-have help
de li et retenement,
from her and retaining
bien fera et cortoisie
well she-will-do and courtesy
s'aucune pitiés l'em prent.
if-some pity her-thereof takes
Au descovrir mon talent
At-the uncovering my desire
se gart bien de l'escondire,
herself may-she-guard well from the-refusing
s'ele ne me velt ochirre.
if-she not me wishes to-kill

Fols sui ki ne li ai dite
Fool I-am who not to-her have told
ma dolor, ki est si grans.
my grief which is so great
Bien deüst estre petite
Well it-ought to-be little
par droit, tant sui fins amans;
by right so-much I-am true lover
mais je sui si meschaans
but I am so unlucky
ke quanques drois m'i avance
that whatever right me-there advances
me retaut ma mescheance.
from-me takes-back my mischance

Tous i morrai en soffrance,
Wholly there I-shall-die in sufferance
mais sa beautés m'est garans,
but her beauty to-me-is protector
de ma Dame, et la samblance
of my Lady and the semblance
ki tos mes maus fait plaisans,
which all my ills makes pleasing
si ke je muir tous joians;
so that I die all joyful
ke tant desir sa merite
for so-much I-desire her reward
ke ceste mors me delite.
that this death me delights

Noblet, je sui fins amans,
Noblet I am true lover
si aim la millor eslite
so I-love the best chosen
dont onques cançons fust dite.
whereof ever song was said

Si voiremant con cele don je chant

II · THE CHESS PLAYER

His lady is worth more than all others, and he desires her love as the sick desire health. Once he could counsel others; now, like a man who sees clearly at another's chess but is mated in his own game, he cannot play. He dares not tell her his pain, like a champion who learns to fence and forgets it on the field.

Si voiremant con cele don je chant
As truly as she of-whom I sing
valt melz que totes les bones qui sont,
is-worth better than all the good-ones who are
et je l'aim plus que rien qui soit el mont,
and I her-love more than anything which may-be in-the world
si me doint Deus s'amor senz decevoir;
so to-me may-grant God her-love without deceiving
que tel desir en ai et tel voloir,
for such desire thereof I-have and such will
ou tant ou plus, Deus en seit la verté,
either as-much or more God thereof knows the truth
si con malades desirre santé,
so as sick-man desires health
desir je li et s'amor a avoir.
desire I her and her-love to have

Or sai je bien que riens ne puet valoir
Now know I well that anything not can avail
tant con celi de cui j'ai tant chanté,
so-much as her of whom I-have so-much sung

c'or ai veü et li et sa bealté
for-now I-have seen both her and her beauty
et si sai bien que tant a de valor
and so I-know well that so-much she-has of worth
que je doi faire et outrage et folor
that I ought to-do both outrage and folly
d'amer plus halt que ne m'avroit mestier;
of-loving more high than — to-me-would-have need
et non por cant maint povre chevalier
and not for all-that many-a poor knight
fait riches cuers venir a halte honor.
makes (a-)rich heart come to high honor

Ainz que fusse sospris de ceste amor,
Before that I-was seized by this love
savoie je autre jent conseillier,
knew I other folk to-counsel
et or sai bien d'altrui geu enseignier
and now I-know well of-other game to-teach
et si ne sai mie lo mien juër;
and so not I-know at-all the mine to-play
si sui con cil qui as eschas voit cler
so I-am as he who at-the chess sees clear
et qui tres bien ensengne as autres gens,
and who very well teaches to-the other folk
et kant il jue, si pert si son sens
and when he plays so loses so his sense
qu'il ne se seit escore de mater.
that-he not himself knows-how to-rescue from being-mated

Hé! las, dolanz, je ne sai tant chanter
Ah alas sorrowful I not know-how so-much to-sing
que ma Dame parçoive mes tormenz,
that my Lady may-perceive my torments
n'encor n'est pas si granz mes hardemanz
nor-yet not-is at-all so great my boldness
ke je li os dire les mals que trai,
that I to-her dare to-tell the ills that I-bear
ne devant li n'en os parler ne sai;
nor before her not-thereof I-dare speak nor know-how
et kant je sui aillors devant autrui,
and when I am elsewhere before another
lors i parol, mais si pou m'i dedui
then there I-speak but so little myself-there I-delight
k'un anui valt li deduiz que j'en ai.
that-a trouble is-worth the delight that I-thereof have

Encor devis comment je li dirai
Yet I-devise how I to-her shall-tell
la grant dolor que j'en trais senz anui,
the great grief that I-thereof bear without trouble
ke tant l'ador et desir, kant g'i sui,
for so-much her-I-adore and desire when I-there am
que ne li os descovrir ma raison;
that not to-her I-dare to-uncover my thought
si va de moi con fait del champion
so it-goes with me as does with-the champion
qui de lon tens aprent a escremir,
who for long time learns to fence

et kant il vient ou champ as cous ferir,
and when he comes into-the field at-the blows to-strike
si ne seit rien d'escu ne de baston.
so not knows anything of-shield nor of staff

Mout me semont Amors ke je m'envoise

III · THE WORDS OF ARTOIS

Love bids him sing when he should be silent, for the French blamed his speech before the Champenois and the Countess, and the Queen and the King her son reproved him. His words are not French of France but are understood in French, and those who scorned his words of Artois are ill bred. He will ask his lady's love.

Mout me semont Amors ke je m'envoise,
Much me summons Love that I myself-gladden
quant je plus doi de chanter estre cois;
when I more ought of singing to-be quiet
mais j'ai plus grant talent ke je me coise,
but I-have more great desire that I myself may-quiet
por çou s'ai mis mon chanter en defois;
for this so-I-have put my singing in ban
ke mon langaige ont blasmé li François
for my language have blamed the French
et mes cançons, oiant les Champenois
and my songs in-bearing the Champenois
et la Contesse encoir, dont plus me poise.
and the Countess also whereof more me it-grieves

La Roïne n'a pas fait ke cortoise,
The Queen not-has at-all done as courteous-one
ki me reprist, ele et ses fieus, li Rois.
who me reproved she and her son the King
Encoir ne soit ma parole franchoise,
Although not be my speech French

si la puet on bien entendre en franchois;
so it can one well understand in French
ne chil ne sont bien apris ne cortois,
nor they not are well taught nor courteous
s'il m'ont repris se j'ai dit mos d'Artois,
if-they me-have reproved if I-have said words of-Artois
car je ne fui pas norris a Pontoise.
for I not was at-all nourished at Pontoise

Dieus! ke ferai? Dirai li mon coraige?
God what I-shall-do I-shall-tell her my heart
Li irai je dont s'amor demander?
Her shall-go I then her-love to-ask
Oïl, par Dieu! car tel sont li usaige
Yes by God for such are the customs
c'on n'i puet mais sans demant riens trover;
that-one not-there can more without asking anything find
et se jo sui outraigeus del trover,
and if I am outrageous of-the composing
se n'en doit pas ma Dame a moi irer,
so not-thereof ought at-all my Lady with me to-anger
mais vers Amors, ki me font dire outraige.
but toward Love who me make say outrage

Ahi! Amors, com dure departie

IV · THE HARD PARTING

Ah Love, how hard to part from the best lady: his body goes to God in Syria, his heart stays with her. Whoever fails God now will be failed in greater need. Shame on the fit who stay; clergy, old men, and chaste ladies share the pilgrimage. Death there is sweet, and the lost holy place must be avenged.

Ahi! Amors, com dure departie
Ah Love how hard parting
me convenra faire de la millor
me will-behoove to-make from the best
ki onques fust amee ne servie!
who ever was loved or served
Dieus me ramaint a li par sa douçour,
God me may-lead-back to her by his sweetness
si voirement con j'en part a dolor!
as truly as I-thence part with grief
Las! k'ai je dit? Ja ne m'en part je mie!
Alas what-have I said Ever not myself-thence part I at-all
Se li cors va servir Nostre Signor,
If the body goes to-serve Our Lord
mes cuers remaint del tot en sa baillie.
my heart remains of-the all in her keeping

Por li m'en vois sospirant en Surie,
For her myself-thence I-go sighing into Syria
car je ne doi faillir mon Creator.
for I not ought to-fail my Creator

Ki li faura a cest besoig d'aïe,
Who him will-fail at this need of-help
saiciés ke il li faura a grignor;
know that he him will-fail at greater
et saicent bien li grant et li menor
and may-know well the great and the lesser
ke la doit on faire chevallerie
that there ought one to-do knighthood
ou on conquiert Paradis et honor
where one conquers Paradise and honor
et pris et los et l'amor de s'amie.
and worth and praise and the-love of one's-friend

Dieus est assis en son saint iretaige;
God is besieged in his holy heritage
ore i parra con cil le secorront
now there it-will-appear how those him will-succor
cui il jeta de la prison ombraje,
whom he cast from the prison shadowy
quant il fu mis ens la crois ke Turc ont.
when he was put on the cross which Turks have
Honi soient tot chil ki remanront,
Shamed be all those who will-remain
s'il n'ont poverte ou viellece ou malaige!
if-they not-have poverty or old-age or sickness
Et cil ki sain et jone et riche sont
And those who healthy and young and rich are
ne poevent pas demorer sans hontaige.
not can at-all remain without shame

Tot li clergié et li home d'eaige
All the clergy and the men of-age
qui ens ausmogne et ens biens fais manront
who in alms and in good deeds will-abide
partiront tot a cest pelerinaige,
will-share all in this pilgrimage
et les dames ki chastement vivront
and the ladies who chastely will-live
et loiauté feront ceaus ki iront;
and loyalty will-do (to-)those who will-go
et s'eles font par mal consel folaige,
and if-they do by ill counsel folly
a lasques gens mauvaises le feront,
with slack folk wicked it they-will-do
car tot li boin iront en cest voiaige.
for all the good will-go on this voyage

Ki chi ne velt avoir vie anuieuse
Who here not wishes to-have life troublesome
si voist por Dieu morir liés et joieus,
so may-be-go for God to-die glad and joyful
car cele mors est douce et savereuse
for that death is sweet and savory
dont on conquiert le resne presïeus,
whereby one conquers the kingdom precious
ne ja de mort n'en i morra uns sels,
nor ever of death not-thereof there will-die one alone
ains naistront tot en vie glorïeuse;
rather will-be-born all in life glorious

et saiciés bien, ki ne fust amereus,
and know well who not were amorous
mout fust la voie et boine et deliteuse.
very would-be the way both good and delightful

Dieus! tant avons esté preus par huiseuse,
God so-much we-have been valiant by idleness
or i parra ki a certes iert preus;
now there it-will-appear who in earnest will-be valiant
s'irons vengier la honte dolereuse
so-we-shall-go to-avenge the shame grievous
dont chascuns doit estre iriés et honteus;
whereof each ought to-be angered and ashamed
car a no tans est perdus li sains lieus
for in our time is lost the holy place
ou Dieus soffri por nos mort angoisseuse.
where God suffered for us death anguished
S'or i laissons nos anemis morteus,
If-now there we-leave our enemies mortal
a tos jors mais iert no vie honteuse.
for all days more will-be our life shameful

Bien me deüsse targier

V · THE TITHERS

He does more for God than any lover, glad in soul though grieving in body. Those who tithe the crusaders would be God's enemies to spend it so, and he will not stay with tyrants crossed for pay. The Count is avenged on base barons who foul their own nest. Any he offends may take it up with his master of Oissi.

Bien me deüsse targier
Well myself I-ought to-hold-back
de chançon faire et de mos et de chans,
from song making and from words and from tunes
quant me convient eslongier
since me it-behooves to-go-far
de la millor de totes les vaillans,
from the best of all the worthy-ones
si em puis bien faire voire vantance,
so thereof I-can well make true boast
ke je fas plus por Dieu ke nus amans,
that I do more for God than any lover
si en sui mout endroit l'ame joians,
so thereof I-am very as-to the-soul joyful
mais del cors ai et pitié et pesance.
but of-the body I-have both pity and heaviness

On se doit bien efforchier
One oneself ought well to-strive
de Dieu servir, ja n'i soit li talans,
of God to-serve even not-there be the desire

et la char vaintre et plaissier,
and the flesh to-vanquish and to-bend
ki tos jors est de pechier desirans;
which all days is of sinning desirous
adont voit Dieus la doble penitance.
then sees God the double penance
Hé! las, se nus se doit sauver dolans,
Ah alas if anyone himself ought to-save sorrowful
dont doit par droit ma merite estre grans,
then ought by right my merit to-be great
car plus dolans ne se part nus de France.
for more sorrowful not himself parts anyone from France

Vous ki dismés les croisiés,
You who tithe the crusaders
ne despendés mie l'avoir ensi;
not spend at-all the-wealth thus
anemi Dieu en seriés.
enemies (of-)God thereof you-would-be
Dieus! ke porront faire si anemi,
God what will-be-able to-do his enemies
quant tot li saint trambleront de dotance
when all the saints will-tremble with fear
devant Celui ki onques ne menti!
before Him who ever not lied
Adont seront pecheor mal bailli,
Then will-be sinners ill treated
se sa pitiés ne cuevre sa poissance.
if his pity not covers his power

Ne ja por nul desirier
Nor ever for any longing
ne remanrai chi avoc ces tirans,
not I-shall-remain here with these tyrants
ki sont croisiet a loier
who are crossed for hire
por dismer clers et borgois et serjans;
for to-tithe clerks and burghers and sergeants
plus en croisa covoitiés ke creance.
more thereof crossed covetousness than faith
Et quant la crois n'en puet estre garans,
And since the cross not-thereof can be protector
a teus croisiés sera Dieus mout soffrans,
to such crusaders will-be God very patient
se ne s'en venge a peu de demorance.
if not himself-thereof he-avenges with little of delay

Li Quens s'en est ja vangiés,
The Count himself-thereof is already avenged
des haus barons, qui or li sont faillit.
on-the high barons who now to-him are failed
C'or les eüst anpiriés,
Would-that-now them he-had harmed
qui sont plus vil que onques mais ne vi!
who are more vile than ever before — I-saw
Dehait li bers qui est de tel sanblance
Curse the baron who is of such semblance
con li oixel qui conchïet son nit!
as the bird which fouls its nest

Po en i a n'ait son renne honi,
Few thereof there are (who-)not-has his realm shamed
por tant qu'il ait sor ses homes possance.
for so-much that-he may-have over his men power

Qui ces barons empiriés
Who these barons worsened
sert sans eür, ja n'ara tant servi
serves without fortune ever not-will-have so-much served
k'il lor em prenge pitiés;
that-it to-them thereof may-take pity
pour çou fait boin Dieu servir, ke je di
for this it-makes good God to-serve as I say
qu'en lui n'afiert ne eür ne kaance;
for-in him not-belongs neither fortune nor chance
mais ki mieus sert, et mieus li est meri.
but who better serves and better to-him is rewarded
Pleüst a Dieu k'Amors fesist ausi
Might-it-please to God that-Love did likewise
ensvers tos ceaus qui ens li ont fiance.
toward all those who in her have trust

Or vos ai dit des barons ma sanblance;
Now to-you I-have told of-the barons my opinion
si lor an poise de ceu que je di,
if to-them thereof it-grieves of that that I say
si s'an praingnent a mon mastre d'Oissi,
so themselves-thereof may-they-take to my master of-Oissi
qui m'at apris a chanter tres m'anfance.
who me-has taught to sing from my-childhood

Se raige et derverie

VI · THE SHE-WOLF

If madness and love's distress have made him speak folly, no one should blame him, since Love has betrayed him. His lady is fairer than an image but, like the she-wolf who chooses the worst of the wolves, has a vile heart. He renders her homage back and leaves her: the ground where he set his care is dry and bears no fruit.

Se raige et derverie
If madness and frenzy
et destrece d'amer
and distress of-loving
m'a fait dire folie
me-has made say folly
et d'amors mesparler,
and of-love misspeak
nus ne m'en doit blasmer.
anyone not me-thereof ought to-blame
S'ele a tort m'i fausnie,
If-she at wrong me-there betrays
Amors, qui j'ai servie,
Love whom I-have served
ne me sai ou fïer.
not myself I-know where to-trust

Amors, de felonie
Love of felony
vous vaurai esprover;
you I-shall-wish to-prove

tolu m'avés la vie
taken from-me-you-have the life
et mort sans deffïer.
and killed without defying
La m'avés fait penser
There me-you-have made think
ou ma joie est perie;
where my joy is perished
cele qui jou em prie
she whom I thereof pray
me fait d'autre esperer.
me makes of-other hope

Plus est belle k'imaige
More she-is fair than-image
cele ke je vos di,
she that I to-you tell
mais tant a vil coraige,
but so-much she-has vile heart
anuieus et failli,
vexing and base
k'ele fait tot ausi
that-she does all just-so
com la leuve sauvaige
as the she-wolf wild
ki des leus d'un boskaige
which of-the wolves of-a wood
trait le pieur a li.
draws the worst to her

N'a pas grant vasselaige
Not-has at-all great prowess
fait, s'ele m'a traï;
done if-she me-has betrayed
nus ne l'en tient por saige
anyone not her-thereof holds for wise
ki son estre ait oï;
who her being may-have heard
mais puis k'il est ensi
but since that-it is thus
k'ele a tort m'i desgaige,
that-she at wrong me-there releases
je li renc son homaige
I to-her render her homage
et si me part de li.
and so myself I-part from her

Mout est la terre dure,
Very is the land hard
sans eve et sans humor
without water and without moisture
ou j'ai mise ma cure,
where I-have put my care
mais n'i keudrai nul jor
but not-there I-shall-gather any day
fruit ne foille ne flor,
fruit nor leaf nor flower

s'est bien tans et mesure
so-is well time and measure
et raisons et droiture
both reason and right
ke li rende s'amor.
that to-her I-render her-love

Belle doce Dame chiere

VII · THE ABBEY OF THE NEEDY

His lady's beauty so took him that he would have come back from Paradise for her love, though he never wronged her. In anger he tells some of his ills: curse on the covetous, false heart that sent him to Syria. He will weep no more for her, since she is the Abbey of the Needy, and he will not love her.

Belle doce Dame chiere,
Fair sweet Lady dear
vostre grans beautés entiere
your great beauty entire
m'a si pris
me-has so taken
ke, se iere em Paradis,
that if I-were in Paradise
si revenroie je arriere,
so would-come-back I back
por convent ke ma proiere
for covenant that my prayer
m'eüst mis
me-had put
la ou fuisse vostre amis
there where I-might-be your friend
ne vers moi ne fuissiés fiere,
nor toward me not you-were fierce

car ainc ens nule maniere
for ever in any manner
ne forfis
not I-transgressed
par coi fuissiés ma guerriere.
by which you-might-be my enemy

Ne lairai ke je ne die
Not I-shall-leave that I — may-say
de mes maus une partie
of my ills a part
come irous.
as angry-one
Dehaiz ait cuers covoitos,
Curse may-have heart covetous
fausse, plus vaire ke pie,
false more speckled than magpie
ki m'envoia en Surie!
which me-sent into Syria
Ja por vous
Ever for you
n'avrai mais les ieus plorous.
not-I-shall-have more the eyes weeping

Fous est ki en vous se fie,
Fool is who in you himself trusts
ke vos estes l'Abeïe
for you are the-Abbey
as Soffraitous,
of-the Needy
si ne vous amerai mie.
so not you I-shall-love at-all

Tant ai amé c'or me convient haïr

VIII · THE RING

He has loved so much he must now hate, yet hopes to regain a loyal love. A lady must not love him to betray him, lest she hear ill like the false Chapelaine. Those who say he erred over a willow covering and a ring he dragged are perjured: he did right, since the ring sealed the bond that betrayed him.

Tant ai amé c'or me convient haïr
So-much I-have loved that-now me it-behooves to-hate
et si ne quier mais amer,
and so not I-seek more to-love
s'en tel lieu n'est c'on ne saice traïr
if-in such place not-it-is that-one not knows-how to-betray
ne dechevoir ne fausser.
nor to-deceive nor to-falsify
Trop longement m'a duré ceste paine
Too long to-me-has lasted this pain
k'Amors m'a fait endurer;
that-Love me-has made endure
et non por quant loial amor certaine
and not for all-that loyal love certain
vaurai encoir recovrer.
I-shall-wish yet to-recover

Ki or vauroit loial amor trover
Who now would-wish loyal love to-find
si viegne a moi por coisir!
so may-he-come to me for to-choose

Mais bien se doit belle dame garder
But well herself ought fair lady to-guard
k'ele ne m'aint pour traïr,
that-she not me-may-love for to-betray
k'ele feroit ke fole et ke vilaine,
for-she would-do as foolish-one and as churlish-one
s'em porroit tost mal oïr,
so-thereof she-could soon ill hear
ausi com fist la fause Chapelaine,
just as did the false Chapelaine
cui tos li mons doit haïr.
whom all the world ought to-hate

Assés i a de celes et de ceaus
Plenty there are of those-women and of those-men
ki dient ke j'ai mespris
who say that I-have erred
de çou ke fis covreture de saus,
of this that I-made covering of willow
mais mout a boin droit le fis,
but very with good right it I-did
et de l'anel ki fu mis en traïne,
and of the-ring which was put in dragging
mais a boin droit i fu mis,
but with good right there it-was put
car par l'anel fu faite la saisine
for by the-ring was made the seizin
dont je sui mors et traïs.
whereby I am dead and betrayed

A moult boen droit en fix ceu ke j'en fix,
With very good right thereof I-did that which I-thereof did
se Deus me doinst boens chevals!
so God me may-grant good horses
Et cil ki dient ke i ai mespris
And those who say that there I-have erred
sont perjuré et tuit fauls.
are perjured and all false
Por ceu dechiet bone amor et descline
For this declines good love and decays
que on lor souffre les mals,
that one to-them allows the ills
et cil ki cellent lor faulse covine
and those who conceal their false dealing
font les pluxors deloiauls.
make the most-folk disloyal

L'autrier un jor aprés la Saint Denise

IX · AT BÉTHUNE

At Béthune after Saint Denis's day he recalls those who falsely say he sang basely of ladies; he sang of only one, who deserved it. Punishing a thief should not offend the loyal. He has served his old lady long enough: another love fills his heart, the best in France, yet he fears that her worth will scorn him.

L'autrier un jor aprés la Saint Denise
The-other-day one day after the Saint Denis
fui a Betune, ou j'ai esté sovent.
I-was at Béthune where I-have been often
La me sosvint de gent de male guise
There to-me it-remembered of folk of evil fashion
ki m'ont mis sus mençoigne a entïent:
who me-have put upon lie with intent
ke j'ai chanté des dames laidement;
that I-have sung of-the ladies basely
mais il n'ont pas ma chançon bien aprise:
but they not-have at-all my song well learned
je n'en chantai fors d'une solement,
I not-thereof sang except of-one only
qui bien forfist ke venjance en fu prise.
who well transgressed that vengeance thereof was taken

Si n'est pas drois ke on me desconfise,
So not-is at-all right that one me may-discomfit
et vous dirai bien par raison coment:
and to-you I-shall-tell well by reason how

car se on fait d'un fort larron justise,
for if one does of-a strong thief justice
doit il desplaire as loiaus de noient?
ought it to-displease to-the loyal of anything
Nenil, par Diu! qui raison i entent;
No by God who reason there understands
mais la raisons est si arriere mise
but the reason is so behind put
ke çou c'on doit loer blasment la gent
that that which-one ought to-praise blame the folk
et loent çou que nus autres ne prise.
and praise that which any other not prizes

Dame, lonc tans ai fait vostre servise,
Lady long time I-have done your service
la merci Deu! c'or n'en ai mais talant,
the mercy (of-)God that-now not-thereof I-have more desire
que m'est ou cuer une autre amor assise
for to-me-is in-the heart an other love set
que me requiert et alume et esprant
which me asks and lights and kindles
et me semont d'amer si hatement,
and me summons to-love so highly
c'an li n'en a ne orgoil ne faintise;
that-in her not-thereof there-is neither pride nor pretense
et jel ferai, ne puet estre autrement,
and I-it shall-do not it-can be otherwise
si me metrai dou tout an sa franchise.
so myself I-shall-put of-the all in her nobleness

A la millor del roiaume de France,
To the best of-the kingdom of France
voire del mont, ai mon cuer atorné,
truly of-the world I-have my heart turned
et non por quant pavor ai et dotance
and not for all-that fear I-have and doubt
ke sa valors ne me tiegne en vilté,
that her worth — me may-hold in baseness
car tant redoc orgelleuse beauté;
for so-much I-dread proud beauty
et Dieus m'en doinst trover bone esperance,
and God me-thereof may-grant to-find good hope
k'en tot le mont n'a orgoill ne fierté
for-in all the world not-is pride nor fierceness
k'Amors ne puist plaissier par sa poissance.
that-Love not can bend by her power

L'autrier avint en cel autre païs

X · TROY IN RUINS

A lady who refused a knight her love in her prime offers it now, pale and faded, and he answers that she thought of it too late. She says she was mocking him; he replies that her worth, like Troy, is now only ruins. She boasts of her rank and her suitors, but he says a lady is loved for beauty, courtesy, and wisdom, not lineage.

L'autrier avint en cel autre païs
The-other-day it-happened in that other country
c'uns chevaliers eut une dame amee.
that-a knight had a lady loved
Tant com la dame fu en son bon pris,
So-long as the lady was in her good worth
li a s'amor escondite et veee.
to-him she-has her-love refused and denied
Puis fu un jors k'ele li dist: «Amis,
Then was a day that-she to-him said Friend
mené vous ai par parole mains dis;
led you I-have by word many days
ore est l'amors coneüe et provee.
now is the-love known and proved
Des or mais sui tot a vostre devis.»
From now on I-am all at your choice

Li chevalliers le regarda el vis,
The knight her regarded in-the face
si la vit mout pale et descoulouree.
so her saw very pale and discolored

«Dame», fait il, «certes mal sui baillis
Lady says he certainly ill I-am treated
ke n'eüstes piech'a ceste pensee.
that not-you-had long-since this thought
Vostres cler vis, ki sambloit flors de lis,
Your bright face which seemed flower of lily
est si alés, dame, de mal em pis
is so gone lady from bad into worse
k'il m'est a vis ke me soiés emblee.
that-it to-me-is to seeming that from-me you-are stolen
A tart avés, dame, cest consell pris.»
Too late you-have lady this counsel taken

Quant la dame s'oï si ramprosner,
When the lady herself-heard so mocked
grant honte en ot, si dist par sa folie:
great shame thereof she-had so said by her folly
«Par Dieu, vassal, jel dis por vos gaber.
By God vassal I-it said for you to-mock
Quidiés vos dont k'a chertes le vos die?
Think you then that-in earnest it to-you I-may-say
Onques nul jor ne me vint em penser.
Ever any day not to-me came in thought
Sariés vos dont dame de pris amer?
Would-know you then lady of worth to-love
Nenil, par Dieu! ains vos prendroit envie
No by God rather you would-take desire
d'un bel vallet baisier et acoler.»
of-a fair youth to-kiss and to-embrace

— «Dame», fait il, «j'ai bien oï parler
Lady says he I-have well heard speak
de vostre pris, mais ce n'est ore mie;
of your worth but this not-is now at-all
et de Troie rai jou oï conter
and of Troy have-in-turn I heard tell
k'ele fu ja de mout grant signorie;
that-it was once of very great lordship
or n'i puet on fors les plaices trover.
now not-there can one except the sites find
Et si vous lo ensi a escuser
And so you I-advise thus to excuse
ke cil soient reté de l'iresie
that those be charged with the-heresy
qui des or mais ne vous vauront amer.»
who from now on not you will-wish to-love

— «Par Dieu, vassal, mout avés fol pensé,
By God vassal very you-have foolish thought
quant vous m'avés reprové mon eaige.
when you me-have reproached my age
Se j'avoie tot mon jovent usé,
If I-had all my youth used
si sui jou riche et de si haut paraige
so am I rich and of so high lineage
c'om m'ameroit a petit de beauté.
that-one me-would-love with little of beauty

Encoir n'a pas un mois entir passé
Yet not-has at-all a month entire passed
ke li Marchis m'envoia son messaige,
that the Marquis me-sent his message
et li Barrois a por m'amor josté.»
and the Barrois has for my-love jousted

— «Par Dieu, dame, ce vos a mout grevé
By God lady this you has much grieved
ke vos fiés tos jors ens signoraige;
that you trust all days in lordship
mais tel set ont ja por vos sospiré,
but such seven have already for you sighed
se vos estiés fille au Roi de Cartaige,
if you were daughter to-the King of Carthage
ki ja mais jor n'en aront volenté.
who ever more day not-thereof will-have will
On n'aime pas dame por parenté,
One not-loves at-all lady for kinship
mais quant ele est belle et cortoise et saige.
but when she is fair and courteous and wise
Vos en savrés par tans la verité.»
You thereof will-know in time the truth

COLIN MUSET

Les Chansons de Colin Muset

The Songs of Colin Muset

Volez oïr la muse Muset

I · THE GARLAND

One May morning in an orchard he made a garland, and a laughing damsel called him to fiddle. He sang to her in the meadow; her blond hair and fair body made his heart leap, and she repaid him with a kiss and more. Now Colin Muset has piped for her, shared good morsels and strong wine, and still courts.

Volez oïr la muse Muset?
Wish-you to-hear the piping (of-)Muset
En mai fu fete, un matinet,
In May it-was made one early-morning
en un vergier flori, verdet,
in an orchard flowered green
au point du jour,
at-the point of-the day
ou chantoient cil oiselet
where sang those little-birds
par grant baudor,
with great mirth
et j'alai fere un chapelet
and I-went to-make a garland
en la verdor.
in the greenery
Je le fis bel et cointe et net
I it made fair and elegant and neat
et plain de flor.
and full of flower

Une dancele
A damsel
avenant et mult bele,
comely and very fair
gente pucele,
noble maiden
bouchete riant,
little-mouth laughing
qui me rapele:
who me calls-back
«Vien ça, si vïele
Come here so fiddle
* * *
(lacuna)
ta muse en chantant
thy piping in singing
tant mignotement.»
so daintily

J'alai a li el praelet
I-went to her in-the little-meadow
atout la vïele et l'archet,
with the fiddle and the-bow
si li ai chanté le muset
so to-her I-have sung the little-piping
par grant amour:
with great love

«J'ai mis mon cuer en si bon cuer
I-have put my heart in so good heart
espris d'amors...»,
kindled with-love
et quant je vi son chief blondet
and when I saw her head blond
et sa color
and her color
et son gent cors amoreuset
and her noble body lovely
et si d'ator,
and so of-array
mon cuer sautele
my heart leaps
pour la damoisele;
for the damsel
mult renouvele
much renews
ma joie souvent.
my joy often
Ele ot gounele
She had gown
de drap de Castele
of cloth of Castile
qui restencele.
which sparkles
Douz Deus, je l'aim tant
Sweet God I her-love so-much
de cuer loiaument!
with heart loyally

Quant j'oi devant li vïelé
When I-had before her fiddled
pour avoir s'amour et son gré,
for to-have her-love and her favor
elle m'a bien guerredoné,
she me-has well rewarded
soe merci,
her mercy
d'un besier a ma volenté,
with-a kiss at my will
Deus! que j'aim si!
God how I-love so
Et autre chose m'a donné
And other thing me-she-has given
com son ami,
as her friend
que j'avoie tant desirré:
which I-had so-much desired
or m'est meri!
now to-me-it-is rewarded
Plus sui en joie
More I-am in joy
que je ne soloie,
than I — was-wont
quant cele est moie
since she is mine
que je tant desir;
whom I so-much desire

je n'en prendroie
I not-for-her would-take
n'avoir ne mounoie;
nor-wealth nor money
pour riens que voie
for anything that I-may-see
ne m'en qier partir;
not myself-thence I-seek to-part
ançois vueil morir.
rather I-wish to-die

Or a Colin Muset musé
Now has Colin Muset piped
et s'a a devise chanté
and so-has at wish sung
pour la bele au vis coloré,
for the fair-one with-the face colored
de cuer joli.
with heart merry
Maint bon morsel li a doné
Many-a good morsel to-her he-has given
et departi
and shared
et de bon vin fort a son gré,
and of good wine strong at her liking
gel vous affi.
I-it to-you affirm

Ensi a son siecle mené
Thus he-has his life led
jusques ici.
up-to here
Oncor dognoie,
Yet he-courts
en chantant maine joie,
in singing he-leads joy
mult se cointoie,
much himself he-adorns
qu'Amors veut servir,
for-Love he-wishes to-serve
si a grant joie
so he-has great joy
el vergier ou dognoie,
in-the orchard where he-courts
bien se conroie,
well himself he-arrays
bon vin fet venir
good wine he-makes come
trestout a loisir.
all at leisure

Moult m'anuie d'iver ke tant a duré

II · A MERRIER SUMMER

He is weary of the long winter, and now that the season is renewed he must be merrier than ever, since his fair, blond lady has bidden it and restored his despairing heart. Slanderers have made the world discourteous, but a loyal lover can have great joy. Her gray eyes and sweet smile keep him gay.

Moult m'anuie d'iver ke tant a duré,
Much me-vexes of-winter that so-long has lasted
ke je ne voi rossignol en bruel ramé,
that I not see nightingale in thicket branched
et des ke je voi le tens renovelé,
and since that I see the season renewed
si me covient ke je soie en cest esté
so me it-behooves that I be in this summer
plus mignoz et envoisiez ke n'aie esté.
more dainty and merry than I-may-have been

Bone dame belle et blonde l'a loué,
Good lady fair and blond it-has counseled
s'est bien droiz ke j'en face sa volenté,
so-is well right that I-thereof may-do her will
ke j'avoie tout le cuer desesperé.
for I-had all the heart despaired
Par son doulz comandement l'ai recovré;
By her sweet command it-I-have recovered
or a mis en moult grant joie mon pensé.
now she-has put in very great joy my thought

Ja de joie faire ne serai eschis,
Ever of joy making not I-shall-be shy
puis ke ma dame le veult, au simple vis,
since that my lady it wishes with-the simple face
et g'i ai si por s'amor mon pensé mis
and I-there have so for her-love my thought put
ke ne poroie trover, ce m'est avis,
that not I-could find this to-me-is opinion
dame de si grant valor ne de tel pris.
lady of so great worth nor of such renown

Mesdisant ont tout le mont en mal point mis,
Slanderers have all the world in bad state put
ke li siecles n'est mais cortois ne jolis,
for the world not-is more courteous nor merry
et nonporcant ki seroit loials amis,
and nevertheless who would-be loyal friend
k'il ne fust fols ne vilains ne mal apris,
that-he not were fool nor churl nor ill taught
cil poroit avoir grant joie a son devis.
he could have great joy at his wish

Sa beauté et si vair ueil et ses doulz ris
Her beauty and her gray eyes and her sweet laugh
me tiennent mignot et gai; plus sui jolis
me keep dainty and gay more I-am merry
ke je n'avoie ainz esté, ce vos plevis.
than I had ever been this to-you I-pledge
C'est por la meillor ki soit jusc'a Paris.
This-is for the best who may-be up-to Paris

Sospris sui d'une amorette

III · THE PRINCESS OF TUDELA

He is taken with the daughter of the king of Tudela, fair and blond, in a robe of cloth of gold, a golden garland with sapphires and emeralds, and a jeweled silk girdle. He saw her one morning beside a rosebush, shining like the morning star, and forgot himself until she was gone. He will go to her country to ask for her love.

Sospris sui d'une amorette
Seized I-am by-a little-love
d'une jone pucelette:
by-a young little-maiden
bele est et blonde et blanchette
fair she-is and blond and white
plus que n'est une erminette,
more than is a little-ermine
s'a la color vermeillette
so-has the color rosy
ensi com une rosette.
just as a little-rose

Itels estoit la pucele,
Such was the maiden
la fille au roi de Tudele;
the daughter to-the king of Tudela
d'un drap d'or qui reflambele
of-a cloth of-gold which gleams
ot robe fresche et novele,
she-had robe fresh and new

mantel, sorcot et gonele:
mantle surcoat and gown
mout sist bien a la donzele.
very sat well to the damsel

En son chief ot chapel d'or
On her head she-had garland of-gold
ki reluist et estancele;
which shines and sparkles
saphirs, rubiz ot encor
sapphires rubies she-had also
et mainte esmeraude bele.
and many-an emerald fair
Biaus Deus, et c'or fusse j'or
Fair God and would-that-now were I-now
amis a tel damoisele!
friend to such damsel

Sa ceinture fu de soie,
Her girdle was of silk
d'or et de pieres ovree;
with-gold and with stones worked
toz li cors li reflamboie,
all the body to-her gleams
ensi fut enluminee.
thus she-was illumined

Or me doinst Deus de li joie,
Now to-me may-grant God of her joy
k'aillors nen ai ma panseie!
for-elsewhere not I-have my thought

G'esgardai son cors gai
I-regarded her body gay
qui tant me plaist et agree.
which so-much me pleases and suits
Je morrai, bien lo sai,
I shall-die well it I-know
tant l'ai de cuer enameie!
so-much her-I-have with heart loved
Se Deu plaist, non ferai,
If (to-)God it-pleases not I-shall-do
ainçois m'iert s'amors donee!
rather to-me-will-be her-love given

En un trop bel vergier
In an exceedingly fair orchard
la vi cele matinee
her I-saw that morning
juer et solacier;
to-play and to-disport
ja par moi n'iert obliee,
ever by me not-she-will-be forgotten

car bien sai, senz cuidier,
for well I-know without supposing
ja si bele n'iert trovee.
ever so fair not-will-be found

Lez un rosier s'est assise
Beside a rosebush herself-is seated
la tres bele et la sennee;
the very fair and the wise
ele resplant a devise
she shines at wish
com estoile a l'anjornee;
as star at the-daybreak
s'amors m'esprent et atise
her-love me-kindles and stirs
qui enz el cuer m'est entree.
which within in-the heart to-me-is entered

El regarder m'obliai
In-the looking myself-I-forgot
tant qu'ele s'en fu alee.
until that-she herself-thence was gone
Deus! tant mar la resgardai,
God so-much in-an-ill-hour her I-looked-at
quant si tost m'est eschapee,
since so soon from-me-she-is escaped

que ja mais joie n'avrai
for ever more joy not-I-shall-have
se par li ne m'est donee!
if by her not to-me-is given

Tantost com l'oi regardee,
As-soon as her-I-had regarded
bien cuidai qu'ele fust fee.
well I-thought that-she were fairy
Ne lairoie por riens nee
Not I-would-leave for anything born
qu'encor n'aille en sa contree,
that-yet I-may-go into her country
tant que j'aie demandee
until that I-may-have asked
s'amor ou mes fins cuers bee.
her-love where my true heart aims

Et s'ele devient m'amie,
And if-she becomes my-friend
ma granz joie iert acomplie,
my great joy will-be fulfilled
ne je n'en prendroie mie
nor I not-for-it would-take at-all
lo roialme de Surie,
the kingdom of Syria

car trop meine bone vie
for exceedingly leads good life
qui aime en tel seignorie.
who loves in such lordship

Deu pri qu'il me face aïe,
(To-)God I-pray that-he me may-make help
que d'autre nen ai envie.
for of-other not I-have desire

En mai, quant li rossignolet

IV · THE FLAGEOLET

In May he makes a willow flageolet that only a man who spends freely and loves truly can play, and gives his garland to Garnier, who does both. His blonde keeps him so gay he forgets his debts. He is Colin Muset, who eats capons and cakes, lodges by her where a host gives credit, and will not trot after a bad lord.

En mai, quant li rossignolet
In May when the little-nightingales
chantent cler ou vert boissonet,
sing clear in-the green little-bush
lors m'estuet faire un flajolet,
then me-behooves to-make a flageolet
si le ferai d'un saucelet,
so it I-shall-make of-a little-willow
qu'il m'estuet d'amors flajoler
for-it me-behooves of-love to-pipe
et chapelet de flor porter
and garland of flower to-wear
por moi deduire et deporter,
for myself to-delight and to-disport
qu'adès ne doit on pas muser.
for-ever not ought one at-all to-dally

L'autrier en mai, un matinet,
The-other-day in May one early-morning
m'esveillerent li oiselet,
me-woke the little-birds

s'alai cuillir un saucelet,
so-I-went to-gather a little-willow
si en ai fait un flajolet;
so thereof I-have made a flageolet
mais nuns hons n'en peut flajoler
but any man not-thereon can pipe
s'il ne fait par tout a loer
if-he not is through all to praise
en bel despendre et en amer
in fair spending and in loving
tot sanz faintise et sanz guiler.
all without pretense and without cheating

Garnier, cui je vi joliet,
Garnier whom I saw merry
celui donrai mon chapelet.
to-him I-shall-give my garland
De bel despendre s'entremet,
Of fair spending himself-he-busies
en lui nen a point de regret,
in him not there-is a-whit of regret
et por ce li vuil je doner
and for this to-him wish I to-give
qu'il aimme bruit et hutiner
for-he loves noise and to-revel
et aimme de cuer sanz fauser;
and loves with heart without falsehood
ensi le covient il ovrer.
thus him behooves it to-work

La damoisele au chief blondet
The damsel with-the head blond
me tient tot gai et cointelet;
me keeps all gay and spruce
en tel joie le cuer me met
in such joy the heart to-me she-puts
qu'il ne me sovient de mon det:
that-it not to-me remembers of my debt
honiz soit qui por endeter
shamed be who for getting-in-debt
laira bone vie a mener!
will-leave good life to lead
Adès les voit on eschaper,
Ever them sees one escape
a quel chief qu'il doie torner.
at what end that-it may turn

L'en m'apele Colin Muset,
One me-calls Colin Muset
s'ai mangié maint bon chaponet,
so-I-have eaten many-a good little-capon
mainte haste, maint gastelet
many-a roast many-a little-cake
en vergier et en praelet,
in orchard and in little-meadow
et quant je puis l'oste trover
and when I can the-host find
qui veut acroire et bien prester,
who wishes to-give-credit and well to-lend

adonc me preng a sejorner
then myself I-take to sojourn
selon la blondete au vis cler.
beside the little-blonde with-the face bright

N'ai cure de roncin lasser
Not-I-have care of nag to-tire
après mauvais seignor troter:
after bad lord to-trot
s'il heent bien mon demander,
if-they hate well my asking
et je, cent tanz, lor refuser.
and I hundred times their refusing

Or veul chanter et soulacier

V · A LOYAL CRAFT

He wants to sing and make merry, since he knows no craft so loyal. If his sweet friend helps him he will prosper, though envious folk keep him away, and one should shun their company. He is wholly his lady's and will lead a good life whatever the chatterers say. To last in the world, be worthy, give freely, and love loyally.

Or veul chanter et soulacier
Now I-wish to-sing and to-solace
et faire joie et renvoisier,
and to-make joy and to-make-merry
ke ne sai si loial mestier;
for not I-know so loyal craft
por ce ne le veul je laissier.
for this not it wish I to-leave
Se ma douce amie
If my sweet friend
cui je ne hé mie
whom I not hate at-all
me veult faire aïe,
me wishes to-make help
bien puis esploitier.
well I-can succeed
Sa grant cortoisie
Her great courtesy
m'a randu la vie,
me-has rendered the life

mais gent plain d'envie
but folk full of-envy
m'en font esloignier.
me-thence make go-far
Adès se painent d'encuser
Ever themselves they-strive to-accuse
ceuls ki bien aimment sens fausser,
those who well love without falsehood
si s'en doit on moult bien garder
so oneself-thence ought one very well to-guard
et lor compaignie eschuer.
and their company to-eschew

Je veul bien ma dame noncier
I wish well (to-)my lady to-announce
ke je sui tous siens sens trichier,
that I am wholly hers without cheating
ne ja de li partir ne quier;
nor ever from her to-part not I-seek
adès veul estre en son dongier.
ever I-wish to-be in her power
Trestoute ma vie
All my life
menrai bone vie;
I-shall-lead good life
fine Amor m'en prie,
true Love me-thereof prays
ki m'i puet aidier.
who me-there can aid

Je nel lairai mie
I not-it shall-leave at-all
por la gent haïe;
for the folk hated
lor grant vilenie
their great baseness
ne prise un denier;
not I-prize a penny
ne servent fors ke de jangler,
not they-serve except that of chattering
ne nuls hons nes doit escouter;
nor any man not-them ought to-heed
ja por eus ne lairai l'amer,
ever for them not I-shall-leave the-loving
ne ma grant joie a demener.
nor my great joy to lead

Ki est mauvais bien est chetis;
Who is wicked well is wretched
il valt assez mieus morz que vis.
he is-worth much better dead than alive
Proudons n'en iert ja entrepris:
Worthy-man not-thereof will-be ever hampered
adès croist et hausse ses priz.
ever grows and rises his worth

Prouesce est loee,
Prowess is praised
mauvestiés blamee,
wickedness blamed
gent desesperee
folk despairing
font adès le pis.
do ever the worst
Ma dame honoree,
My lady honored
ki a honor bee,
who to honor aims
sa joie est doublee
her joy is doubled
nes en paradis.
even in paradise
Ki bien veult au siecle durer
Who well wishes in-the world to-last
si soit prous et sache doner
so let-him-be valiant and know-how to-give
et loiaument aint senz fausser:
and loyally let-him-love without falsehood
ensi puet sa joie finer.
thus can his joy fulfill

Une novele amorette que j'ai

VI · MERCY

A new love makes him sing, not for rose or lily but for the blonde he will die for unless mercy helps. He asks, begs, wishes, and desires mercy of her alone and will love her loyally though slanderers keep him waiting. He heard her sing in an orchard at the start of May, and he will wait for her at leisure, since good service cannot perish.

Une novele amorette que j'ai
A new little-love that I-have
me fait chanter et renvoisier;
me makes sing and make-merry
lo cuer en ai amoroset et gai,
the heart thereof I-have loving and gay
ne ja de ceu partir ne quier.
nor ever from that to-part not I-seek
Rose ne lis ne florette de glai
Rose nor lily nor little-flower of iris
ne lo me fait recomencier,
not it to-me makes begin-again
fors la blondette por cui je morrai,
except the little-blonde for whom I shall-die
se merci ne m'i puet aidier.
if mercy not me-there can aid
Merci demanz, merci requier,
Mercy I-ask mercy I-request
merci vuel et merci desir.
mercy I-wish and mercy I-desire
A la blonde lo vuel proier,
To the blonde it I-wish to-pray

k'autre ne m'en porroit garir,
for-other not me-thereof could cure
n'autre ne m'en porroit aidier,
nor-other not me-thereof could aid
n'autre n'est tant a mon plaisir.
nor-other not-is so-much to my pleasure
Je la servirai senz dangier,
I her shall-serve without resistance
se tout ne lo me vuet merir.
if all not it to-me she-wishes to-reward

Bele et blondette, je vos amerai
Fair and little-blonde I you shall-love
de boen cuer leal et entier,
with good heart loyal and entire
ne ja de vos ne me departirai;
nor ever from you not myself I-shall-depart
miez me lairoie depecier.
rather myself I-would-let cut-to-pieces
En ceste bone pensee serai,
In this good thought I-shall-be
ne nuns ne m'en poroit getier;
nor anyone not me-thence could cast
mais trop me tienent en malvais delai
but too-much me hold in bad delay
felon mesdisant losengier.
cruel slandering flatterers

Je redout tant lor encombrier,
I dread so-much their hindrance
que trop se peinent de traïr
for too-much themselves they-strive to betray
cels qui bien aiment senz dangier,
those who well love without resistance
ne ja ne les en voi joïr.
nor ever not them thereof I-see enjoy
Bien se doit la blonde gaitier,
Well herself ought the blonde to-watch
k'adès vuelent d'anui servir,
for-ever they-wish with-trouble to-serve
ne moi ne li nen ont mestier
neither me nor her not they-have use
por nostre joie departir.
for our joy to-divide

L'autrier un jor a l'entree de mai,
The-other-day one day at the-entry of May
l'oï chanter en un vergier,
her-I-heard sing in an orchard
mais onques mais si bele n'esgardai,
but ever before so fair not-I-looked-at
ceu vos porroie fiancier.
this to-you I-could pledge

Deus, tres douz Deus, et quele amorette ai,
God very sweet God and what little-love I-have
s'ele la me vuet outroier,
if-she it to-me wishes to-grant
ne ja mais jor senz joie ne serai,
nor ever more day without joy not I-shall-be
se de s'amor puis esploitier.
if of her-love I-can succeed
Je desir tant li embracier
I desire so-much her to-embrace
et li veoir et li oïr,
and her to-see and her to-hear
se de li ai un douz baisier
if from her I-have a sweet kiss
nus mals ne me poroit venir;
any ill not to-me could come
ne m'en porroient forjugier
not me-thereof could dispossess
malvaise gent par lor mentir.
evil folk by their lying
Con que me doie delaier,
How ever me she-may delay
je l'atendrai tot a loisir,
I her-shall-await all at leisure

ke fine amors me fait cuidier
for true love me makes think
boens servises ne puet perir.
good service not can perish

Trop volentiers chanteroie

VII · THE WORLD GONE WRONG

He would sing if the world were worth it, and sings anyway because Love forbids him a sorrowful heart. Were he God he would remake the world with better people, since the rich grow meaner the more they have and die like the poor. He praises the lord of Waignonrut, steadfast as a diamond, and the count of Widemont.

Trop volentiers chanteroie
Exceedingly willingly I-would-sing
se je savoie coment,
if I knew how
et bone vie menroie
and good life I-would-lead
se li siecles valoit tant
if the world were-worth so-much
qui me tormente forment,
which me torments greatly
et nomporqant tote voie
and nevertheless all the-same
chanterai joieusement,
I-shall-sing joyfully
que bone Amors lo m'aprent.
for good Love it me-teaches

Puis k'Amors vuet que je soie
Since that-Love wishes that I be
liez et renvoisiez sovent,
glad and merry often

et mes fins cuers s'i outroie
and my true heart itself-there grants
si tres debonairement,
so very graciously
se li siecles se repent,
if the world itself repents
nule riens je n'i donroie,
any thing I not-there would-give
ke bone Amors me deffent
for good Love me forbids
que ja n'aie cuer dolant.
that ever I-may-have heart sorrowful

Amors m'aprent et chastoie
Love me-teaches and chastens
d'un trop bel chastiement,
with-a exceedingly fair chastening
k'en compaignie ne voise
that-in company not I-may-go
de nule malvaise gent,
of any evil folk
car de lor acointemant
for from their acquaintance
a nul jor mielz ne valdroie.
on any day better not I-would-be-worth
Il sont de fol escient;
They are of foolish mind
au dïable les comant.
to-the devil them I-commend

Se g'iere Deus, je feroie
If I-were God I would-make
lo siecle tot altrement,
the world all otherwise
et meillor gent i metroie,
and better folk there I-would-put
car cist n'i valent neient.
for these not-there avail anything
Kant plus ont or et argent,
When more they-have gold and silver
vair et gris et dras de soie,
vair and gray and cloths of silk
tant sont moins large metant;
so-much they-are less generous spending
plus que jeus usure prent.
more than Jew usury takes

Cist siecles faut et desvoie
This world fails and strays
chascun jor trop malement,
each day too badly
et kant plus vos en diroie,
and how-much more to-you thereof I-would-say
je n'i voi home joiant,
I not-there see man joyful

et si muerent alsiment
and so they-die likewise
a tot mil mars en monoie
with all thousand marks in money
come cil qui n'a neient;
as he who not-has anything
trop se mainent folement.
too-much themselves they-conduct foolishly

Mon boen seignor prieroie
My good lord I-would-pray
de Waignonrut, lo vaillant,
of Waignonrut the valiant
que por Deu ne se recroie:
that for God not himself he-may-desist
il fu nez en boen croissant.
he was born in good waxing
Molt a mis son pris avant,
Much he-has put his worth forward
qu'il ne false ne ne ploie,
for-he not falters nor not bends
ne nule foiz ne desment,
nor any time not gives-way
ne que piere d'aÿmant.
no-more than stone of-diamond

De Waignonrut la menroie
From Waignonrut it I-would-lead
a Widemont maintenant.
to Widemont at-once
Lo boen conte prieroie,
The good count I-would-pray
k'adès a lo cuer joiant;
who-always has the heart joyful
molt en dient bien la gent;
much thereof say well the folk
au siecle a bien fait sa voie,
in-the world he-has well made his way
que nus hom ne li deffant
that any man not to-him forbids
tant con lo savront vivant.
so-long as him they-will-know living

Quant voi lo douz tens repairier

VIII · A DESCORT FOR THE DUCHESS

When the sweet season returns his grief should ease, but love's delays kill him. He is Love's liege man and asks his lady's pity, though he dares not pray to her; whoever would enjoy love must endure. He asks her for a smile and will serve her all his life, and brings his descort to the good duchess, who loves pleasure and giving.

Quant voi lo douz tens repairier,
When I-see the sweet season return
que li rosignols chante en mai,
when the nightingale sings in May
et je cuiz que doie alegier
and I think that ought to-lighten
li mals et la dolors que j'ai,
the ill and the grief that I-have
adonc m'ocient li delai
then me-kill the delays
d'amors, qui les font engregnier.
of-love which them make worsen
Las! mar vi onques son cor gai,
Alas in-an-ill-hour I-saw ever her body gay
s'a ma vie ne lo conquier!
if-in my life not it I-conquer

Amors de moi ne cuide avoir pechiez
Love of me not thinks to-have sin
por ceu que sui ses hom liges sosgiez.
for this that I-am her man liege subject
Douce dame, pregne vos en pitiez!
Sweet lady may-take you thereof pity
Qui plus s'abaisse, plus est essauciez.
Who more himself-lowers more is exalted

Et qant si grant chose empris ai
And since so great thing undertaken I-have
con de vostre amor chalengier,
as of your love to-claim
toz tens en pardons servirai,
all times in gift I-shall-serve
se tost n'en ai altre loieir.
if soon not-thereof I-have other reward
Ma tres douce dame honoree,
My very sweet lady honored
je ne vos os nes proier;
I not you dare even to-pray
cil est mout fols qui si haut bee
he is very foolish who so high aims
ou il nen ose aprochier.
where he not dares to-approach

Mais tote voie
But all the-same
tres bien revoudroie
very well I-would-wish-in-turn
vostre amors fust moie
your love were mine
por moi ensengnier,
for me to-teach
car a grant joie
for with great joy
vit et s'esbanoie
lives and himself-disports
cui Amors maistroie;
whom Love masters
meuz s'en doit proisier.
better himself-thereof ought to-prize

Qui bien vuet d'amors joïr
Who well wishes of-love to-enjoy
si doit soffrir
so ought to-suffer
et endurer
and to-endure
qan k'ele li vuet merir;
whatever that-she him wishes to-reward
au repentir
at-the repenting
ne doit panser,
not ought to-think

c'om puet bien, tot a loisir,
for-one can well all at leisure
son boen desir
his good desire
a point mener.
to point to-lead
Endroit de moi criem morir
In-respect of me I-fear to-die
meuz que garir
rather than to-recover
par bien amer.
by well loving

Se je n'ai la joie grant
If I not-have the joy great
que mes fins cuers va chacent,
which my true heart goes hunting
deffenir m'estuet briement.
to-end me-behooves briefly
Douce riens por cui je chant,
Sweet thing for whom I sing
en mon descort vos demant
in my descort of-you I-ask
un ris debonairemant,
a laugh graciously
s'en vivrai plus longemant;
so-thereby I-shall-live more long
moins en avrai de torment.
less thereof I-shall-have of torment

Bele, j'ai si grant envie
Fair-one I-have so great desire
d'embracier vostre cors gent,
of-embracing your body noble
s'Amors ne m'en fait aïe,
if-Love not me-thereof makes help
j'en morrai coiteusement.
I-thereof shall-die hastily
Amors ne m'en faudrat mie,
Love not me-thereof will-fail at-all
car je l'ai trop bien servie
for I her-have exceedingly well served
et ferai tote ma vie
and shall-do all my life
senz nule fause pansee.
without any false thought
Preuz de tote gent loee
Worthy by all folk praised
plus que nule qui soit nee,
more than any who may-be born
se vostre amors m'est donee,
if your love to-me-is given
bien iert ma joie doublee.
well will-be my joy doubled

Mon descort ma dame aport
My descort (to-)my lady I-bring
la bone duchesse, por chanter;
the good duchess for to-sing
de toz biens a li m'acort,
of all good-things to her myself-I-accord
k'ele aime deport, rire et juer.
for-she loves pleasure laughing and playing

Dame, or vos voil bien mostrer
Lady now to-you I-wish well to-show
que je ne sai vostre per
that I not know your peer
de bone vie mener
of good life leading
et de leialment amer.
and of loyally loving
Adès vos voi enmender
Ever you I-see improve
en vaillance et en doner.
in valor and in giving
Nel lassiez ja por jangler,
Not-it leave ever for chattering
que ceu ne vos puet grever.
for this not you can grieve

Ancontre le tens novel

IX · TRIBOUDEL

In spring his heart is gay and he makes a triboudel, loving noise, feasting, and mirth; God confound whoever does not love joy. Flutes, drums, and garlands please him more than a castle. A knight who jousts well deserves a lady's ring, a miser goes to the Devil, and he will spend his mantle on geese, beef, fish, and wine.

Ancontre le tens novel
Against the season new
ai le cuer gai et inel
I-have the heart gay and nimble
au termine de pascor;
at-the term of spring
lors veul faire un triboudel,
then I-wish to-make a triboudel
car j'ain moult tribu martel,
for I-love much hubbub hammering
bruit et barnage et baudor,
noise and lordly-show and mirth
et quant je sui en chastel
and when I am in castle
plain de joie et de revel,
full of joy and of revel
la veul estre et nuit et jor.
there I-wish to-be both night and day
Triboudaine et triboudel!
Triboudaine and triboudel

Deus confonde le musel
God may-confound the snout
ki n'aime joie et baudor!
who not-loves joy and mirth

De toute joie m'est bel,
Of all joy to-me-it-is fair
et quant j'oi le flaütel
and when I-hear the little-flute
soner avuec le tabor,
sound with the drum
damoiselles et donzel
damsels and squires
chantent et font grand revel,
sing and make great revel
chascuns a chapel de flour,
each has garland of flower
la verdure et li brondelz
the greenery and the branches
et li douls chans des oisels
and the sweet song of-the birds
me remet en grant baudour.
me puts-back in great mirth
Triboudainne, triboudel!
Triboudaine triboudel
Plus sui liés, par saint Marcel!
More I-am glad by saint Marcel
ke tels a chastel ou tour.
than such has castle or tower

Ki bien broche le poutrel
Who well spurs the colt
et tient l'escu en chantel
and holds the-shield in slant
au comencier de l'estor
at-the beginning of the-battle
et met la lance en estel,
and puts the lance in splinters
por mielz vaincre le cembel
for better to-win the tourney
vait assembler a meillor,
goes to-join with better
cil doit bien avoir joel
he ought well to-have jewel
de belle dame et anel
from fair lady and ring
par druerie et amor.
by love-dealing and love
Triboudainne, triboudel
Triboudaine triboudel
por la belle au chief blondel
for the fair-one with-the head blond
ki a fresche la color!
who has fresh the color

Tels amasse en un moncel
Such heaps in a pile
mil mars et fait grant fardel
thousand marks and makes great bundle
ki vit a grant deshonor:
who lives in great dishonor
ja n'en avra bon morcel
ever not-thereof he-will-have good morsel
et dïable en ont la pel,
and devils thereof have the skin
cors et ame sens retor.
body and soul without return
Por ceu veul jeu mon mantel
For this wish I my mantle
despandre tost et inel
to-spend soon and nimbly
en bone ville a sejor.
in good town at sojourn
Triboudainne, triboudel!
Triboudaine triboudel
Ke valt avoirs en fardel,
What is-worth wealth in bundle
s'on nel despent a honor?
if-one not-it spends with honor

Quant je la tieng ou prael
When I her hold in-the little-meadow
tout entor clos d'arbrissels
all around closed with-shrubs
en esté a la verdour
in summer at the greenery
et j'ai oies et gastel,
and I-have geese and cake
poissons, tartes et porcel,
fish tarts and piglet
buef a la verde savor,
beef with the green sauce
et j'ai le vin en tonel,
and I-have the wine in cask
froit et fort et friandel
cold and strong and dainty
por boivre a la grant chalor,
for to-drink in the great heat
miels m'i aim k'en un batel
better myself-there I-love than-in a boat
en la mer en grant poour.
on the sea in great fear
Triboudainne, triboudel!
Triboudaine triboudel
Plus aim le jeu de prael
More I-love the game of little-meadow
ke faire malvais sejor.
than to-make bad sojourn

En ceste note dirai

X · ROAST GOOSE

He sings of a new love for whom he will be merry and wear garlands. Since he first saw her he cannot sleep, and he will die of loving unless she keeps him, and he is wholly hers. He asks a kiss of his fair, blond friend. She will be served roast goose and wine, and Colin Muset begs her not to forget solace and love.

En ceste note dirai
In this tune I-shall-say
d'une amorete que j'ai,
of-a little-love that I-have
et pour li m'envoiserai
and for her myself-I-shall-gladden
et bauz et joianz serai:
and blithe and joyful I-shall-be
l'en doit bien pour li chanter
one ought well for her to-sing
et renvoisier et jouer
and to-make-merry and to-play
et son cors tenir plus gai
and one's body to-keep more gay
et de robes acesmer
and with robes to-adorn
et chapiau de flors porter
and garland of flowers to-wear
ausi comme el mois de mai.
just as in-the month of May

Tres l'eure que l'esgardai
From the-hour that her-I-regarded
onc puis ne l'entroubliai,
ever since not her-I-forgot
ainz i pens et penserai;
rather there I-think and shall-think
quant la vois ne puis durer,
when her I-see not I-can endure
ne dormir, ne reposer.
nor sleep nor rest
Biau tres douz Deus, que ferai?
Fair very sweet God what I-shall-do
La paine que pour li trai
The pain that for her I-bear
ne sai conment li dirai.
not I-know how to-her I-shall-tell
De ce sui en grant esmai
Of this I-am in great dismay
oncore a dire li ai.
yet to say to-her I-have
Quant merci n'i puis trouver
Since mercy not-there I-can find
et je muir por bien amer,
and I die for well loving
amoreusement morrai.
lovingly I-shall-die

Je ne cuit pas ensi morir,
I not think at-all thus to-die
s'ele mi voloit retenir
if-she me wished to-retain
en bien amer, en biau servir;
in well loving in fair serving
et du tout sui a son plesir,
and of-the all I-am at her pleasure
ne je ne m'en qier departir,
nor I not myself-thence seek to-depart
mes toz jorz serai ses amis.
but all days I-shall-be her friend

Hé! bele et blonde et avenant,
Ah fair and blond and comely
cortoise et sage et bien parlant,
courteous and wise and well speaking
a vous me doig, a vous me rent,
to you myself I-give to you myself I-render
et tout sui vostres sanz faillir.
and wholly I-am yours without failing
Hé! bele, un besier vous demant,
Ah fair-one a kiss of-you I-ask
et se je l'ai, je vous creant
and if I it-have I to-you promise
nul mal ne m'en porroit venir.
any ill not to-me-thereof could come

Ma bele douce amie,
My fair sweet friend
la rose est espanie:
the rose is blossomed
desouz l'ente florie
beneath the-graft flowered
la vostre conpaignie
the your company
m'i fet mult grant aïe.
me-there does very great help
Vos serez bien servie
You will-be well served
de crasse oe rostie
with fat goose roasted
et bevrons vin sus lie,
and we-shall-drink wine on lees
si merrons bone vie.
so we-shall-lead good life

Bele tres douce amie,
Fair very sweet friend
Colin Muset vos prie
Colin Muset you prays
por Deu n'obliez mie
for God not-forget at-all
solaz ne compagnie,
solace nor company
amors ne druerie,
love nor love-dealing

si ferez cortoisie!

so you-will-do courtesy

Ceste note est fenie.

This tune is ended

Colins Musès, je me plaing d'une amor

XI · COLIN AND JAMES

James of Amiens complains to Colin of a love he served loyally without finding pity, whose sweet looks are traitors. Colin bids him leave the folly, since a burgher's wife loves only a full purse. James leaves the false one for the fairest and best. Colin turns to capons in garlic sauce, good wine, and a warm fire, but James cannot forgo love.

«Colins Musès, je me plaing d'une amor
Colin Muset I myself complain of-a love
ke longuement ai servie
which long I-have served
de loial cuer, n'ains pitié ∗∗∗
with loyal heart nor-ever pity (lacuna)
n'i poi trover nen aïe,
not-there I-could find nor help
s'i truis je moult semblanz de grant douçor,
so-there find I many semblances of great sweetness
mais ce m'est vis ke il sont traïtor,
but this to-me-is seeming that they are traitors
ke bouche et cuers ne s'i acordent mie.
for mouth and heart not themselves-there accord at-all

«Jakes d'Amiens, laissiés ceste folor!
James of-Amiens leave this folly
Fuiés fausse druerie,
Flee false love-dealing
n'en biau semblant ne vos fiés nul jor:
nor-in fair semblance not yourself trust any day

cil est musars ki s'i fie!
he is fool who himself-there trusts
Puis ke trovés son cuer a menteor,
Since that you-find her heart for liar
se plus l'amés, sovant duel et irour
if more her-you-love often grief and wrath
en averés et pis ke je ne die.
thereof you-will-have and worse than I — may-say

«Colin Muset, ne m'iert pas deshonor,
Colin Muset not to-me-will-be at-all dishonor
se de li fais departie.
if from her I-make parting
Puis c'ai trové son samblant tricheor,
Since that-I-have found her semblance cheating
porchacerai moi d'amie,
I-shall-procure for-me of-friend
car je li ai veü faire tel tour
for I her have seen make such turn
et tel samblant et tel ensaigne aillors,
and such semblance and such sign elsewhere
par coi je haz li et sa compaignie.
by which I hate her and her company

«Jakes d'Amiens, il n'est duels ne irour
James of-Amiens there not-is grief nor wrath
fors ki vient de jalousie.
except which comes from jealousy

Povres amans souffre mainte dolor
Poor lover suffers many-a grief
ki bee a grant signorie,
who aims at great lordship
et un usage a borjoise tous jors:
and one custom has burgher's-wife all days
ja n'amera, tant soit de grant richour,
ever not-she-will-love so-much be-he of great riches
home, s'il n'a la borse bien garnie.
man if-he not-has the purse well furnished

«Colins Musès, gentils dame ait honor
Colin Muset noble lady may-have honor
ki a ceu ne bee mie,
who to that not aims at-all
mais la ou voit sen, prouesce et valour,
but there where she-sees sense prowess and worth
joliveté, cortoisie!
gaiety courtesy
La fausse lais por ceu, si m'en retour
The false-one I-leave for this so myself-thence I-turn
a la belle, la blonde et la meillor
to the fair-one the blond-one and the best
ki onkes fust d'amors nul jor proïe.
who ever was of-love any day prayed

«Jakes d'Amiens, et j'errant m'en retour
James of-Amiens and I-at-once myself-thence turn
as chapons en jance aillie
to-the capons in sauce garlicked
et as gastiaus ki sont blanc come flor
and to-the cakes which are white as flower
et au tres bon vin sor lie.
and to-the very good wine on lees
As bons morsels ai donee m'amor
To-the good morsels I-have given my-love
et as grans feus parmi ceste froidour:
and to-the great fires amid this cold
faites ensi, si menrés bone vie.
do thus so you-will-lead good life

«Colin Muset, kier t'aise et ton sejor,
Colin Muset seek thy-ease and thy sojourn
et je querrai d'amors joie et baudor,
and I shall-seek of-love joy and mirth
car consirer d'amors ne me puis mie.»
for to-forgo of-love not myself I-can at-all

Sire cuens, j'ai vïelé

XII · LORD COUNT

He has fiddled before the count and been paid nothing, and his purse is empty. When he comes home with nothing his wife mocks him as Lord Frozen with a bag stuffed with wind; when he comes home with a full sack and a gray robe, she drops her distaff and hugs him, the servants kill two capons, and he is lord of his house.

Sire cuens, j'ai vïelé
Lord count I-have fiddled
devant vous en vostre ostel,
before you in your lodging
si ne m'avez riens doné
so not me-you-have anything given
ne mes gages aquité:
nor my wages paid
c'est vilanie!
this-is baseness
Foi que doi sainte Marie,
Faith that I-owe holy Mary
ensi ne vous sieurré mie.
thus not you I-shall-follow at-all
M'aumosniere est mal garnie
My-purse is ill furnished
et ma boursse mal farsie.
and my purse ill stuffed

Sire cuens, car conmandez
Lord count now command
de moi vostre volenté.
of me your will
Sire, s'il vous vient a gré,
Lord if-it to-you comes to liking
un biau don car me donez
a fair gift now to-me give
par courtoisie!
by courtesy
Talent ai, n'en doutez mie,
Desire I-have not-thereof doubt at-all
de raler a ma mesnie:
of going-back to my household
quant g'i vois boursse esgarnie,
when I-there go purse unfurnished
ma fame ne me rit mie,
my wife not at-me laughs at-all

ainz me dit: «Sire Engelé,
rather to-me says Lord Frozen
en quel terre avez esté,
in what land you-have been
qui n'avez riens conquesté?
who not-have anything gained
* * *
(lacuna)
aval la ville.
down the town

Vez com vostre male plie!
See how your bag bends
Ele est bien de vent farsie!
It is well with wind stuffed
Honiz soit qui a envie
Shamed be who has desire
d'estre en vostre compaignie!»
of-being in your company

Quant je vieng a mon ostel
When I come to my lodging
et ma fame a regardé
and my wife has regarded
derrier moi le sac enflé,
behind me the sack swollen
et je qui sui bien paré
and I who am well dressed
de robe grise,
in robe gray
sachiez qu'ele a tost jus mise
know that-she has soon down put
la conoille sanz faintise;
the distaff without pretense
ele me rit par franchise,
she at-me laughs by nobleness
ses deus braz au col me plie.
her two arms at-the neck to-me she-bends

Ma fame va destrousser
My wife goes to-unpack
ma male sanz demorer;
my bag without delaying
mon garçon va abuvrer
my boy goes to-water
mon cheval et conreer;
my horse and to-groom
ma pucele va tuer
my maid goes to-kill
deus chapons pour deporter
two capons for to-enjoy
a la jansse alie;
with the sauce garlicked
ma fille m'aporte un pigne
my daughter me-brings a comb
en sa main par cortoisie.
in her hand by courtesy
Lors sui de mon ostel sire
Then I-am of my lodging lord
a mult grant joie sanz ire
with very great joy without anger
plus que nuls ne porroit dire.
more than anyone — could say

Devers Chastelvilain

XIII · CASTLES AND LORDS

A robe comes to him from Chastelvilain, whose lord is the best castellan from here to Navarre and fears neither king. Choiseul is not worth two eggs to him now, its wealth put into cows and oxen. He goes to Soilli, whose lord has often given him robes. He has lost two castles, whose two lords have given up arms and tourneys.

Devers Chastelvilain
From-toward Chastelvilain
me vient la robe au main
to-me comes the robe at-the morning
com uns oitours norrois.
as a goshawk Norse
Bon jor doint Deus demain
Good day may-grant God tomorrow
le seignor que tant ain!
the lord whom so-much I-love
Proudons est et cortois;
Worthy-man he-is and courteous
de ci qu'en Navarrois
from here up-to Navarre
n'a si bon chastelain;
not-is so good castellan
de son chastel a plain
of his castle in full
ne doute il les deus rois.
not fears he the two kings

Or vos di que Choisues
Now to-you I-say that Choiseul
ne me vaut mais deus oes,
not to-me is-worth more two eggs
qui me soloit valoir.
which to-me was-wont to-avail
Tot mainjuent vermues
Wholly eat purple-cloths
vermin et escurues:
vermin and squirrel-furs
n'en puis mais point avoir;
not-thereof I-can more a-whit have
et s'ont mis lor avoir
and so-they-have put their wealth
en vaiches et en bues,
into cows and into oxen
et s'ont fait uns murs nues,
and so-they-have made some walls bare
que Deus gart de cheoir!
which God may-keep from falling

Or m'en vois a Soilli:
Now myself-thence I-go to Soilli
pieç'ai que n'assenai
long-since-I-have that not-I-arrived
a si bone maison.
at so good house
Le seigneur demandai;
The lord I-asked-for

maintes foiz m'a donné
many times me-he-has given
robes et maint bel don.
robes and many-a fair gift
Ce n'est pas en pardon
This not-is at-all in vain
se j'en sui retornez:
if I-thither am returned
s'il n'est empeorez,
if-he not-is worsened
j'en avrai guierredon.
I-thereof shall-have guerdon

Perdu ai deus chastelx,
Lost I-have two castles
dont je sui mult engres,
whereof I am very vexed
et bien m'en doit chaloir;
and well to-me-thereof ought to-matter
c'est Vignoriz, Rignez.
this-is Vignoriz Rignez
Deus seignors i a belx,
Two lords there are fair
qui ne doignent valoir,
who not deign to-avail
s'ont mis a nonchaloir
so-they-have put to neglect
armes et les cembelx.
arms and the tourneys

Il n'ont part ou mantel,
They not-have part in-the mantle
foi que doi saint Eloir!
faith that I-owe saint Eloi

Deus! com m'ont mort norrices et enfant

XIV · NURSES AND CHILDREN

Nurses, children, and domineering ladies have ruined him: they have spoiled many a good house for minstrels, and the husbands dare not grumble. Since they obey so well, he bids each keep his house, raise his children, and shun others' houses, and so grow rich, careless of blame. He takes his jewel to Choiseul and Soilli.

Deus! com m'ont mort norrices et enfant
God how me-have killed nurses and children
et les dames, qui trop sunt a cheval!
and the ladies who too-much are on high-horse
Maint bon hostel nos ont chaciez a mal
Many-a good lodging us have chased to ill
et les mariz voincuz outreement,
and the husbands vanquished utterly
cil qui n'osent un tot soul mot grondir.
those who not-dare a all single word to-grumble
A lor hosteus les poïssiés veïr:
At their lodgings them you-could see
assez pueent faire comandement,
plenty they-can make command
mais c'est a gas, c'on n'en fera neant.
but this-is in jest for-one not-thereof will-do anything

Puisqu'il sunt si dou tout obediant,
Since-they are so of-the all obedient
or lor ferai un mout bon assenal:
now to-them I-shall-make a very good warning

desormais gart uns chascuns son ostal!
henceforth may-keep one each his lodging
Ensi porront estre riche et menant;
Thus they-will-be-able to-be rich and wealthy
et si pansent de lor enfanz norrir
and so let-them-think of their children to-nourish
et bien pansent des hosteus eschuir!
and well let-them-think of-the lodgings to-shun
Ansi porront estre riche et poissant,
Thus they-will-be-able to-be rich and powerful
et pou lor chaut dou blasme de la gent.
and little to-them matters of-the blame of the folk

Droit a Choisuel vuil mon chemin tenir
Straight to Choiseul I-wish my road to-hold
et a Soilli par Clermont resortir,
and to Soilli by Clermont to-go-back
si lor ferai de mon joel present,
so to-them I-shall-make of my jewel present
que trop m'est bel de lor amendement.
for exceedingly to-me-is fair of their amendment

Quant je voi yver retorner

XV · A WINTER HOST

When winter comes he would like to settle with a generous host who does not count the cost, with pork, beef, mutton, mallards, pheasants, venison, capons, and cheeses, a wife as courteous as her husband, and a host who is not jealous; then he would not ride muddy after a stingy prince.

Quant je voi yver retorner,
When I see winter return
lors me voudroie sejorner.
then myself I-would-wish to-sojourn
Se je pooie oste trover
If I could host find
large, qui ne vousist conter,
generous who not would-wish to-count
qu'eüst porc et buef et monton,
who-had pork and beef and mutton
maslarz, faisanz et venoison,
mallards pheasants and venison
grasses gelines et chapons
fat hens and capons
et bons fromages en glaon,
and good cheeses in wicker

et la dame fust autresi
and the lady were likewise
cortoise come li mariz,
courteous as the husband

et touz jors feïst mon plesir
and all days did my pleasure
nuit et jor jusqu'au mien partir,
night and day until-the my parting
et li hostes n'en fust jalous,
and the host not-thereof were jealous
ainz nos laissast sovent touz sous,
rather us left often all alone
ne seroie pas envious
not I-would-be at-all eager
de chevauchier toz boous
of riding all muddy
apres mauvais prince angoissoux.
after bad prince grasping
