

TROILUS & CRESSIDA



GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A Complete Modernisation by

A. S. KLINE

Published with Selected Illustrations

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ABOUT THIS WORK

Troilus and Criseyde is a re-telling, in the Middle English vernacular, of the legendary tale of Troilus and Cressida, which is set during the Trojan War. Chaucer composed the poem in *rime royale*, probably in the 1380's and the finished and highly polished work is often considered his finest achievement. The narrative appears to have been based by Chaucer on the tale *Il Filostrato* in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and though a tragedy in essence Chaucer introduced elements of humour, while drawing a sensitive portrait of Troilus as the deserted lover, and Criseyde as the unfortunate betrayer. Classed as a courtly romance, the poem helped to bring the Medieval Renaissance to English literature, with a subtle blend of classical story, medieval courtliness and English character depiction. The eloquent and cynical Pandarus who leads Criseyde astray (hence the obsolete term '*pandar*' for a pimp or procurer), is a type that recurs in later literature, for example as the Shakespearean characters Iago in *Othello* and Iachimo in *Cymbeline*.

This version aims to provide a readable and accessible modernisation of the poem while preserving Chaucer's rhymes and diction wherever possible, at the same time eliminating all archaic words which would require marginal notes to explain.



'Tisiphone takes revenge on Athamas and Ino'
Crispijn van de Passe (I), 1602 - 1607
The Rijksmuseum

BOOK I - TROILUS'S LOVE

1.

Troilus's double sorrow for to tell,
he that was son of Priam King of Troy,
and how, in loving, his adventures fell
from grief to good, and after out of joy,
my purpose is, before I make envoy.
Tisiphone [p. 449], do you help me, so I might
pen these sad lines, that weep now as I write.

2.

I call on you, goddess who does torment,
you cruel Fury, sorrowing ever in pain:
help me, who am the sorrowful instrument
who (as I can) help lovers to complain.
Since it is fitting, and truth I maintain,
for a dreary mate a woeful soul to grace,
and for a sorrowful tale a sorry face.

3.

For I, who the God of Love's servants serve,
not daring to Love, in my inadequateness,
pray for success, though death I might deserve,
so far am I from his help in darkness.
But nevertheless, if this should bring gladness
to any lover, and his cause avail,
Love take my thanks, and mine be the travail.

4.

But you, lovers that bathe in gladness,
if any drop of pity is in you,
remember all your past heaviness
that you have felt, and how others knew
the same adversity: and think how, too,
you have felt Love dare to displease
if you have won him with too great an ease.

5.

And pray for those that may have been
in Troilus's trouble, as you'll later hear,
that love bring them solace in heaven:
and also, for me, pray to God so dear
that I might have the power to make clear
such pain and woe as Love's folk endure
in Troilus's unhappiest adventure.

6.

And also pray for those that have despaired
of love, and never can recover:
and also those by falsity impaired,
by wicked tongues, beloved one, or lover,
And so ask of God the benign mover,
to grant them soon to pass from this place,
that have despaired of Love's grace.

7.

And also pray for those that are at ease,
that God might grant them to persevere,
and send them power their lovers to please,
that it might, for Love, be worship and a pleasure.
For that I hope will be my soul's best measure:
to pray for those who Love's servants be,
and write their woes, and live in charity.

8.

And so as to have, for them, compassion
as though I were their own brother dear,
now listen to me, with all good intention:
for now I'll go straight to my matter, here,
in which you may the double-sorrows hear
of Troilus's love of Cressid, she, by his side,
and how she forsook him before she died.

9.

It is well known how the Greeks, strong
in arms, with a thousand ships, went
there to Troy, and the city long
besieged, near ten years without stint,
and in diverse ways, and with sole intent,
to take revenge for the rape of Helen, done
by Paris, they strove there as one.

10.

Now it fell out that in the town there was
living a lord, of great authority,
a powerful priest who was named Calchas,
in science a man so expert that he
knew well that Troy would fall utterly,
by the answer of his god that was called thus:
Dan Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus.

11.

So when this Calchas knew by his divining,
and also by answer from this Apollo,
that the Greeks would such a host bring
that, through it, Troy must be brought low,
he planned out of the town to go.
For he well knew by prophecy Troy would
be destroyed, whether or not it should.

12.

For which purpose to depart quietly
was the clear intent of this far-seeing man,
and to the Greek host, most carefully
he stole away: and they with courteous hand
gave him both worship and service, and
trusted that he had cunning in his head
for every peril they might have to dread.

13.

A noise rose up when this was first spied,
through all the town, and generally was spoken,
that Calchas was fled as a traitor and allied
with them of Greece: and vengeful thoughts were woken
against him who had so falsely his faith broken:
and it was said: 'He and all his kin, as one,
are worthy to be burnt, skin and bone.

14.

Now Calchas had left behind, in this mischance,
all ignorant of this false and wicked deed,
his daughter, who was doing great penance:
for she was truly in fear of her life, indeed,
like one that does not know what advice to heed,
for she was both a widow and alone,
without a friend to whom she dared to moan.



'Cressida'
The Stratford gallery (p233, 1859) -
Palmer, Henrietta Lee, b. 1834
Internet Archive Book Images

15.

Cressida was the name this lady owned:
and to my mind, in all of Troy's city
none was as fair, surpassing everyone.
So angelic was her native beauty,
that like a thing immortal seemed she,
as does a heavenly and perfect creature
sent down here to put to shame our nature.

16.

This lady that all day heard in her ears
her father's shame, his falsity and treason,
nearly out of her wits with sorrows and fears,
in her full widow's habit of silken brown,
before Hector on her knees she fell down,
and with a piteous voice, tenderly weeping,
asked mercy of him, her own pardon seeking.

17.

Now this Hector was full of pity by nature,
and saw that she was distressed by sorrow,
and that she was so fair a creature.
Out of his goodness he cheered her now
and said: 'Let your father's treason go
with all mischance: and you yourself in joy
live, while you wish, here with us in Troy.'

18.

And all the honour that men have as yet
done you, as fully as when your father was here,
you shall have, and your body shall men protect,
in so far as I can enquire or hear.’
And she thanked him humbly, full of cheer,
and would have all the more, if it had been his will,
and took her leave, and home, and held her still.

19.

And in her house she lived with such company
as her honour obliged her to uphold:
and while she was dwelling in that city
kept her estate, and both of young and old
was well beloved, and well, of her, men told,
but whether she had children then or no,
I have not read, therefore I let it go.

20.

Things fell out as they do in war’s affair,
between those of Troy and the Greeks, oft:
for some days the men of Troy it cost dear,
and often the Greeks found nothing soft
about Troy’s folk. And so Fortune up aloft,
and down beneath, began to wheel them both
after their course, while they were still wrath.

21.

But how this town came to destruction
it falls not within my purpose to tell:
for it would be here a long digression
from my matter, and delay you too long as well.
But the Trojan exploits as they fell
out, in Homer, *Dares, or Dictys* [p. 449], might
whosoever read them, as they write.

22.

But though the Greeks them of Troy shut in,
and besieged their city all about,
they would not leave off their old religion,
so as to honour their gods, being truly devout:
but foremost in honour, without doubt,
they had a relic, called the *Palladion* [p. 449],
that they trusted beyond all other ones.

23.

And so it befell, when there came the time
of April when the meadow was spread
with new green (of lusty Ver the prime)
and sweet smelling flowers, white and red,
in sundry ways worshipped (as I have read)
the folk of Troy, in their observance old,
and used Palladion's feast to hold.



'Diomed with the Palladium'
Six Greek sculptors (pl27, 1915) -
Gardner, Ernest Arthur, 1862-1939
Internet Archive Book Images

24.

And to the temple, with best garments on,
many went in a crowd to the rite,
to hear the service for Palladion:
And in particular many a lusty knight,
many a lady fresh, and maiden bright,
full well arrayed, the highest and the least,
yea, both for the season and the feast.

25.

Among these other folk was Cressida
in widow's habit black: but nonetheless,
just as our *first letter*^[p. 449] is now an 'A',
in beauty first, so stood she matchless.
Her good looks gladdened all the press.
Never was seen a thing praised so far,
nor, under black cloud, so bright a star,

26.

as Cressid was, as folk said, everyone,
that beheld her in her black dress:
and yet she stood humbly and still alone,
behind other folk, in little space or less,
and near the door, ever in shame's distress,
simple in clothing, with an air of cheer,
with a confident look and manner.

27.

This Troilus, used, as he was, to guide
his young knights, led them up and down,
through that large temple, on every side,
beholding all the ladies of the town,
now here, now there, for he owned
no task that might rob him of his rest,
but began to say whom he liked least or best.

28.

And in his walk he soon began to watch
if knight or squire of his company
began to sigh or let his eyes catch
on any woman that he could see.
He would smile and hold it as a folly,
and say to him: 'God knows, she sleeps softly,
free of love for you, while you turn endlessly.

29.

I have heard tell, by God, of your way of living,
you lovers, and your mad observance,
and such labour as folk have in the winning
of love: and in the keeping, what grievance:
and when your prey is lost, woe and penance.
O very foolish, weak and blind you be:
there is not one who warned by another can be.'

30.

And with that word he began to wrinkle his brow,
as if to say: 'Lo, is this not wisely spoken?'
At which the god of Love showed anger's token,
ready with spite, set on revenge, all woken.
He showed at once his bow had not been broken:
for suddenly he hit him, through and through:
who can pluck as proud a peacock as him too.

31.

O blind world! O blind intention!
How often all the effect falls *contraire*
of arrogance and foul presumption:
for caught are the proud, and the debonair.
This Troilus has climbed up the stair,
and little knows he must again descend.
But, every day, things that fools trust in end:

32.

as proud *Bayard*^[p. 449] begins to shy and skip
from the right course (perked up by his corn),
till he receives a lash from the long whip:
then he thinks 'Though I prance before,
all others, first in the traces, fat and newly-shorn,
yet I am but a horse, and a horse's law
I must endure, and with my fellows draw.'

33.

So fared it with this fierce and proud knight
though he a worthy king's son were,
and thought nothing had ever had such might
against his will, so as his heart to stir,
yet with a look his heart had taken fire,
that he, but now, who was most in pride above,
suddenly was most subject unto love.

34.

Thereby take example of this man,
you wise, proud and worthy folks all,
to scorn Love, which so soon can
the freedom of your hearts take in thrall
For ever it was, and ever it shall befall,
that Love is he that all things may bind,
for no man may undo the law of kind.

35.

That this be true is proven, and true yet:
for this I mind you know, all or some.
Men do not think folk can have greater wit
than they whom Love has most overcome,
and strongest folk are with it stunned,
the worthiest and greatest of degree:
this was and is, and still men shall it see.

36.

And truly it is fitting it be so,
for the very wisest have with it been pleased:
for they that have been foremost in woe
with love have been comforted most, and eased.
And often it has the cruel heart appeased,
and worthy folk made worthier of name,
and causes most to dread vice and shame.

37.

Now since it may not be well withstood,
and is a thing so virtuous, of its kind,
do not refuse to be bound by Love,
since as he pleases he may you bind.
The branch is best that can bend and be entwined,
than that that breaks: and so with you I plead
to follow him that so well can you lead.

38.

But to go on telling, in more detail,
of this king's son of whom I told,
and let other things be collateral:
of him I mean my tale to unfold,
both of his joy and of his cares cold:
and all his work as touching on this matter,
since I began it I'll thereto refer.

39.

Within the temple he went him forth, toying,
this Troilus, with everyone about,
on this lady and now on that looking,
whether she were of the town or without:
and it fell by chance that through a crowd
his eye pierced, and so deep it strayed
that on Cressid it smote, and there it stayed.

40.

And suddenly he found himself marvelling,
and began to look more closely with careful eye.
‘O mercy, God’: thought he, ‘where were you living,
that are so fair and goodly to describe?’
Therewith his heart began to spread and rise,
and he soft sighed, lest him men might hear,
and caught again at his first look of cheer.

41.

She was not among the least for stature,
but all her limbs so well answering
to womanhood, that no creature
was ever less mannish in seeming:
and the pure air of her being
showed well that men in her might guess
honour, estate, and womanly nobleness.

42.

To Troilus, right wondrously, all in all,
her being begins to please, her looks appear
somewhat disdainful, for she lets fall
her glance a little aside in such manner,
as if to say: 'What may I not stand here?'
And after that her face fills with light,
that he never thought to see so good a sight.

43.

And from her look, in him there grew the quick
of such great desire and such affection,
that in his heart's bottom began to stick
of her his fixed and deep impression:
And though before he had gazed up and down,
he was glad now his horns in to shrink:
he hardly knew how to look or wink.

44.

Lo, he that declared himself so cunning,
and scorned those that love's pains drive,
was full unaware that Love had his dwelling
within the subtle streams of her eyes,
that suddenly he thought he felt dying
straight, with her look, the spirit in his heart.
Blessed be Love, that can folk so convert!

45.

She, this one in black, pleasing to Troilus,
above all things he stood to behold:
of neither his desire, nor why he stood thus,
did he show a sign, or by a word told,
bur from afar, the same aspect to hold,
on other things his look he sometimes cast
and again on her, while ceremonies last.

46.

And after this, not completely bested,
out of the temple all easily he went,
repenting him that he had ever jested
at Love's folk, lest, fully, the descent
of scorn fell on himself: but what it meant,
lest it were known on every side,
his woe he began to dissimulate and hide.

47.

When he was from the temple so departed
he straight away to his palace turns,
right with her look pierced through, and through-darted,
feigning that all in joy he sojourns:
and all his looks and speech hide his concerns,
and also, from Love's servants all the while,
to mask himself, at them he began to smile.

48.

And said: 'Lord! You all live in such delight,
you lovers: for the most cunning of you, in it,
that serves most attentively and serves aright
has harm from it as often as he has profit:
you are repaid again, yea, and God knows it!
Not well for well, but scorn for good service:
in faith, your order is ruled in good wise!

49.

In unsure outcome lie all your attentions,
except in some small points where you strive,
and nothing asks for such devotions
as your faith does, and that know all alive.
But that is not the worst, as I hope to thrive:
but if I told you the worst point I believe,
though I spoke truth, you would at me grieve.

50.

But take this: what you lovers often eschew,
or else do with good intention,
often your lady will it misconstrue
and call it harm, in her opinion:
And yet if she for other reason
be angered, she will soon complain to you,
Lord! Well is him that might be of your crew.'

51.

But for all this, when he could he chose his time
to hold his peace, no other point being gained.
For love began his feathers so to lime,
that scarcely to his own folk he feigned
that other busy needs him detained.
For woe was him: he knew not what to do,
but told his folk, wherever they wished, to go.

52.

And when he was in his chamber alone,
down upon the bed's foot he took his seat,
and first he began to sigh, and often groan,
and thought on her like this so without cease,
so that as he sat awake his spirit dreamed
that he saw her in the temple, and the same
true manner of her look, and began again.

53.

So he began to make a mirror of his mind,
in which he saw all wholly her figure:
and so that he could well in his heart find
that it was to him a right true venture
to love such a one, and, dutiful what's more
in serving her, he might still win her grace,
or else hold one of her servants' place.

54.

Imagining that labour nor pain
might ever for so good a one be lost
as she, nor himself, for his desire, be shamed,
if all were known, but valued and borne
above all lovers more so than before:
so he argued in his beginning,
all unaware of his woe coming.

55.

So he purposed love's craft to pursue,
and thought that he would work most secretly,
first to hide his desire, closely mewed,
from every person born, and completely,
unless he might gain anything thereby:
remembering that love too widely blown
yields bitter fruit, though sweet seed be sown.

56.

And over all of this yet more he thought
what to speak of, and what to hold in,
and what might urge her to love he sought,
and with a song at once to begin,
and began aloud, himself out of sorrow to win.
For, with good hope, he gave his full assent
to loving Cressid, and nothing to repent.

57.

And of his song not only the sense,
as my author wrote, named *Lollins* [p. 449],
but plainly, save our tongue's difference,
I dare say truly all that Troilus
said in his song, lo! every word thus
as I shall say it: and who might wish can hear,
lo! in the next verse he can find it here.

58.

'If no love is [p. 449], O God, what feel I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whence comes my woe?
If it be evil, a wonder, thinketh me,
when every torment and adversity
that comes of it seems savoury I think,
for I ever thirst the more the more I drink.

59.

And if for my own pleasure I burn,
whence comes my wailing and complaint?
If harm delights me, why complain then?
I know not why, unwearied, I still faint.
O living death, O sweet harm strangely meant,
how, in me, are you there in such quantity,
unless I consent that so it be?

60.

And if I so consent, I wrongfully
complain, indeed: buffeted to and fro,
all rudderless within a boat am I
amid the sea, between winds two
that against each other always blow.
Alas! What is this wondrous malady?
Through heat of cold, through cold of heat I die.'

61.

And to the god of Love thus said he
with piteous voice: 'O lord, now yours is
my spirit, which ought yours to be.
I thank you, lord, that have brought me to this:
but whether goddess or woman, she is
I know not, that you cause me to serve,
but as her man I will ever live and love.

62.

You stand in her eyes so mightily,
as in a place worthy of your line,
and so, lord, if my service or I
may please you, so be to me benign:
For my royal estate I here resign
into her hand, and full of humble cheer
become her man, as to my lady dear.



'Achilles and Polyxena'
Franz Ertinger, after Peter Paul Rubens, 1679
The Rijksmuseum

63.

In him, never deigning to spare blood royal,
the fire of love, saved from which God me bless,
spared him not in any degree, for all
his virtue and his excellent prowess:
but held him as his slave in low distress
and burned him so, in various ways, anew,
that sixty times a day he lost his hue.

64.

So much, day by day, his own thought,
for lust of her, began to quicken and increase,
that every other charge he set at nought:
Therefore often, his hot fire to cease,
to see her goodly looks he began to press:
for to be eased thereby he truly yearned,
and ever the nearer he was, the more he burned.

65.

For ever the nearer the fire, the hotter it is:
this, I think, know all this company.
But were he far or near, I dare say this,
by night or day, for wisdom or folly,
his heart, that is his breast's eye,
was ever on her, that fairer was when seen
than ever Helen was, or *Polyxene* [p. 450].

66.

Ever of the day there passed not an hour
but that to himself a thousand times he said:
‘Good goodly one, whom I serve for and labour
as best I can, now, would to God, Cressid,
you might take pity on me before I am dead.
My dear heart, alas! my health, my beauty,
my life is lost lest you take pity on me.’

67.

All other fears were from him fled,
both of the siege and his own salvation,
in him desire no other offspring bred
but arguments to this conclusion,
that she on him would have compassion,
and he to be her man while he might endure:
lo! such his life, and from his death the cure.

68.

The sharp fatal showers, that their arms proved,
which Hector and his other brethren showed
were not to make him even once moved:
and yet was he, wherever men walked or rode,
one of the best, and longest time abode,
where peril was, and ever took such trouble
in arms, that to think of it was a marvel.

69.

But no hatred of the Greeks he had,
nor any rescue of the town,
made him, there in arms, battle-mad,
but only, lo, this one reason,
to please her better through his renown:
From day to day in arms he so sped,
that all the Greeks, like death, did him dread.

70.

And henceforth, as love deprived him of sleep,
and made his food his foe, and as his sorrow
began to multiply, so that to whoever might keep
a watch, it showed in his hue, eve and morrow,
therefore the name he began to borrow
of another sickness, lest, of him, men learned
that the hot fire of love him burned.

71.

And said he had a fever and fared amiss:
but how it was, I cannot truly say,
whether his lady understood not this,
or feigned she did not, either way,
I think that not for a single day
it seemed did she consider what he sought,
nor his pain, nor whatsoever he thought.

72.

But then fell to this Troilus such woe,
that he was almost mad: for ever his dread
was this, that she had loved some man so
that she would never of him take any heed:
for thought of which he felt his heart bleed.
Nor of his woe dared he begin
to tell, for a whole world to win.

73.

But when he had a space from his care,
he began, like this, to himself to complain:
he said: 'O fool, you are now in the snare,
who formerly mocked at love's pain:
now you are caught, now gnaw at your own chain:
you were accustomed each lover to reprehend
for that from which you cannot yourself defend.

74.

What will every lover now say of thee
if this be known, but ever in your absence
laugh in scorn and say: "Lo, there goes he
that is the man of such great sapience,
that held us lovers least in reverence:
now, thanks be to God, he may go in the dance
of those that Love moves feebly to advance.

75.

But O, you woeful Troilus, if only God would,
since you must love because of your destiny,
set your heart on such a one that should
see all your woe: even though she lacked pity:
but all so cold in love towards thee
your lady is as frost in winter moon,
and you consumed, as snow in fire is, soon.”

76.

Would God I were arrived in that port
of death, to which my sorrow will me lead!
Ah, lord, to me it would be a great comfort:
then I'd be done languishing in fear indeed
for if my hidden sorrow blows on the breeze
I shall be mocked a thousand times
more than that fool whose folly men tell in rhymes.

77.

But now help me God, and you sweet, for whom
I moan, caught, yea, never a man so fast.
O mercy, dear heart, and help me from
death: for I, while my life may last,
more than myself will love you to the last.
And with some friendly look, gladden me, sweet,
though with never another promise me you greet.’

78.

These words, and full many another too,
he spoke, and called ever in his complaint
her name, so as to tell her his woe,
till he near drowned in salt tears, faint.
All for nothing, she did not hear his plaint:
and when he thought about that folly
a thousand-fold his woe began to multiply.

79.

Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
a friend of his, that was named Pandarus,
came in unnoticed and heard him groan,
and saw his friend in such care and distress.
‘Alas!’ he said, ‘what has caused all this?
O mercy, God! What mishap may this mean?
Have the Greeks made you so, ill and lean?

80.

Or have you some remorse of conscience,
and have now fallen into some devotion,
and wail for your sin and your offence,
and have, through fear, caught contrition?
God save them that have besieged our town
and can so send our jollity amiss,
and bring our lusty folk to holiness!’

81.

These words he said, and that was all,
so that he might him angry make,
and with anger down his sorrow might fall,
for the time being, and his courage wake.
But well he knew, as far as tongues spoke,
there never was a man of greater hardiness
than him, or one who more desired worthiness.

82.

‘What chance,’ said Troilus, ‘or what venture
has led you to see my languishing,
because I am refused by every creature?
But for the love of God, at my crying,
go hence away: for certainly my dying
will distress you, and I needs must die:
therefore go now, there is no more to say.

83.

But if you think that I am sick for dread,
it is not so, and therefore scorn not:
there is something of which I take heed
more than anything the Greeks have wrought,
which is my cause of death, for sorrow and thought.
But though of its secret I do not now divest,
do not be angered. I hide it for the best.’

84.

This Pandarus, nearly melted from pity and ruth,
often repeated: 'Alas! what may this be?
Now friend,' he said, 'if ever love or truth
has been, or is, between you and me,
never do me such a cruelty
to hide from your friend such great distress
do you not know that it is I, Pandarus?

85.

I will share with you all your pain,
if it be that I can do you no comfort,
as is a friend's right, truth to say,
to share woe just as to happiness support.
I have and shall, through true or false report,
in wrong and right, loved you all my life.
Hide not your woe from me: tell it outright.

86.

Then began this sorrowful Troilus to sigh,
and he said thus: 'God grant it is for the best
to tell it you: since it is as you like,
I will tell it, though my heart should burst:
and I well know you cannot give me rest.
But lest you think I do not trust in thee,
now listen, friend, for thus it stands with me.

87.

Love, against which whosoever defends
himself most, him least of all avails,
with despair so sorrowful me offends,
that straight unto death my heart sails.
And desire so burningly me assails,
that to be slain would be a greater joy
to me than to be king of Greece or Troy.

88.

Let this suffice, my true friend Pandarus,
that I have said, for now you know my woe:
And, for the love of God, my cold sadness,
hide it well, I tell it to no one more.
For harms might follow, more than two,
if it were known: but be you in gladness,
and let me die, unknown by my distress.'

89.

'How have you thus, unkindly and so long
hid this from me, you fool?' said Pandarus:
Perhaps, it may be, you after someone long,
so that my advice now might be help to us.'
'This were a wondrous thing,' said Troilus:
'You could never in love your self do this:
how the devil can you bring me to bliss?'

90.

'Yea, Troilus, now listen,' said Pandarus,
'fool though I be: it often happens so,
that one who through excess does evil fare
by good counsel can keep his friend from woe.
I have myself often seen a blind man go
where one fell down who could look clear and wide:
so a fool may often be a wise man's guide.

91.

A whetstone is no carving instrument,
and yet it makes sharp carving tools:
and where you see my time has been misspent
avoid you that, as though 'twere taught in schools.
So, often wise men have been warned by fools.
If you do so, your wit's made well aware
that by its contrary is everything declared.

92.

For how might sweetness ever have been known
to him that never tasted bitterness?
No man may be inwardly glad, I own,
that never was in sorrow or some distress.
Ever white by black, and shame by worthiness,
each set by the other, more so seem,
as men may see: and so the wise deem.

93.

Since this, of two contraries, is the law,
I, that have so often in love found
grievances, ought to be able, all the more,
to counsel you in those that you confound,
and you ought never to with ill abound
if I desire with you to share
your heavy charge: it will be less to bear!

94.

I know well that it is with me
as when, to your brother Paris, a shepherdess
who was named Oenone,
wrote in complaining of her wretchedness.
You saw the letter that she wrote, I guess.'
'No, never yet, indeed,' said Troilus.
'Now,' said Pandarus, 'listen: it was thus:

95.

"Phoebus, that first found the art of medicine,"
she wrote, "and could find, for each one's care,
remedy, and aid by herbs he was knowing in:
yet to himself his cunning was impaired:
for love had him so bound in a snare,
all for the daughter of the King Admete,
that all his craft could not his sorrow beat."

96.

'Right so, I am, unhappily for me:
I love one best, and that afflicts me sore.
And yet perhaps I can give aid to thee,
if not myself: reproach me no more.
I have no cause I know it well to soar
as a hawk does that has a mind to play:
but for your help still something I can say.

97.

And of one thing right sure you can be,
that even though I die in torture's pain,
I indeed shall never betray thee.
No, by my troth, I do not intend
to keep your from your love, though it were Helen,
who is your brother's wife, if I should know it is.
Let her be who she be, and love her as you wish.

98.

Therefore of my friendship be full assured,
and tell me plainly what is your end
and the final cause of woe that you endure:
for, do not doubt, what I intend
is not in any way to reprehend
you, in so speaking, since no one can part
a man from love unless that's in his heart.

99.

And know well that both of these are vices –
to mistrust all, or else offer all love, -
but I know that the mean of both no vice is,
since to trust some people is to prove
one's truth, and for you I would remove
your wrong belief, and make you trust that there is
one you can tell your woe to: and tell me if you wish.

100.

The wise man says: "Woe to him who is alone,
since, if he falls, he has no help to rise."
But since you have a friend, tell your moan.
For it is not the easiest way to my eyes
to win love, so they teach us, the wise,
to wallow and weep like Niobe the queen,
whose tears can yet in marble still be seen.

101.

Let be your weeping and your dreariness,
and let us lessen woe by other speech:
so may your woeful time seem the less:
delight not in woe your woe to seek,
as do those fools that their sorrows increase
with sorrow, when they meet misadventure,
and do not wish to find another cure.

102.

Men say: "To wretchedness it is consolation
to see another fellow in his pain."
That ought well to be our opinion,
since both you and I of love complain.
So full of sorrow am I, truth to say,
that certainly no more hard misfortune
can sit on me, because there is no space.

103.

Please God, you are not afraid of me,
that I would entice away your lady:
you know yourself whom I love, indeed,
as I best can, a long while since you see.
And since you know it is not guilefully,
and since I am he you trust the most,
tell me some part, since all my woe you know'st.'

104.

Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said:
But long he lay, as still as dead he were.
And after this he lifted up his head,
and to Pandarus's voice he lent his ear.
And he cast up his eyes, so that in fear
was Pandarus, lest than in a frenzy
he should fall, or else soon die:

105.

And cried: 'Awake!' wondrously sharp:
'What? Do you slumber in a lethargy?
Or are you like an ass, to the harp,
that hears sound when men the strings play,
But in his mind, of that, no melody
sinks in to gladden him, since he
so dull is of his bestiality.'

106.

And with that Pandar his words constrained:
but Troilus yet him no word answered,
since to tell was not his intent,
to any man ever, for whom it was he suffered.
For it is said: 'Man often makes a rod
with which the maker is himself beaten
in sundry ways,' as the wise know for certain,

107.

And particularly, to his mind's telling,
what touches on love should a secret be:
since of itself it would enough out-spring
unless it were governed carefully
and sometimes it is craft to seem to flee
from the thing which in effect men hunt close.
All this Troilus began in his heart to gloss.

108.

But nonetheless when he had heard him cry
‘Awake!’ he began to sigh wondrous sore,
and said: ‘Friend, though I silent lie,
I am not deaf: now peace and cry no more,
since I have heard your words and your lore:
But suffer me my mischief to bewail,
since your proverbs may me not avail.

109.

Nor have you now another cure for me:
and I will not be cured, I will die.
What know I of the queen Niobe?
Forget your old examples, pray, say I.’
‘No,’ said Pandarus, ‘that is why I say,
such is a fool’s delight to sit and weep
his woe, but never a remedy to seek.

110.

Now I know that reason in you fails.
But tell me: if I knew who she were,
for whom in all this distress you ail,
would you dare to let me whisper in her ear
your woe (as you dare not yourself for fear),
and beseech her to have some pity on you?’
‘Why no,’ he said, ‘by God, and by my truth!’

111.

‘What? not if it were as carefully,’ said Pandarus,
‘as though my own life rested on this need?’
‘No, for certain, brother,’ said Troilus.
‘And why?’ – ‘Because you never could succeed.’
‘Are you sure of that?’ – Yes, that is so, indeed,’
said Troilus, ‘whatever you would see done,
she’ll not, by such a wretch as I, be won.’

112.

Said Pandarus: ‘Alas! what may this be,
that you are in despair so causelessly?
What? Does the lady not live? Bless me!
How do you know that you are so unworthy?
Such evil’s not always sent so incurably.
Why, do not deem impossible your cure,
since things to come are often at a venture.

113.

I well grant you that you endure woe
as sharp as does *Tityus* [p. 450] in hell,
whose stomachs birds tear at for evermore,
those they call vultures, as books tell.
But I cannot endure that you dwell
in so foolish an opinion,
that of thy woe there is no termination.



'Tityus in hell'
Cornelis Cort, after Titiaan, 1566
The Rijksmuseum

114.

But because of your coward's heart,
and your anger and foolish wilfulness,
through mistrust, you will not your sorrows impart:
nor in your own cause do business,
even to give a reason more or less,
but lie there as he that to nothing can stretch.
What woman could ever love such a wretch?

115.

How can she think otherwise of your death
(if you die, and she not know why that is)
but that through fear you yielded up your breath
because the Greeks have so besieged us ?
Lord! What reward then you will have from this!
This she will say, and all the town as one:
“The wretch is dead, the devil have his bones.”

116.

You may weep here alone and cry and kneel:
but love a woman so she knows it not,
and she'll repay you with what you cannot feel:
unknown, unkissed, and lost, is what's unsought.
What! Many a man has love full dearly bought,
who has his lady twenty winter's blessed,
yet never has his lady's mouth he kissed.

117.

What? Should he therefore fall into despair,
or be cowardly to his own ruin,
or slay himself, though his lady still be fair?
No, no, but ever and a day be fresh and green
to serve and love his dear heart's queen,
and think it is a prize (her to serve)
a thousand times more than he can deserve.

118.

And of that word took heed our Troilus,
and thought now what a folly he was in,
and how the truth was told by Pandarus,
that by slaying himself he could not win,
but both do an unmanly thing and a sin,
and of his death his lady not to blame,
since of his woe she'd never know the name.

119.

And with that thought he began to sorely sigh,
and said: 'Alas! What is it best to do?'
To which Pandar answered: 'If you like,
the best is for you tell me your woe,
and have my promise, if you do not find this so,
that I am your helper before too long,
have me drawn in pieces, and then hung.'

120.

‘Yes, so you say,’ said Troilus then: ‘Alas!
But, God knows, it is none the better so:
it would be hard to help in this case,
since I well know that Fortune is my foe,
none of the men that can ride or go,
may the harm of her cruel wheel withstand:
for as she wills she plays with free or bond man.

121.

Said Pandarus: ‘Then you blame Fortune
in anger, yes, for the first time I see.
Do you not know that Fortune is common
to every manner of man in some degree?
And yet you have this comfort, God help me,
that as her joys must vanish and be gone,
so must her sorrows pass, every one.

122.

For if her wheel ever ceased to turn,
she would no longer Fortune be.
Now, since her wheel may not sojourn,
it may be that her mutability
the thing yourself would wish will do for thee:
or that she be not far from you in helping?
Perhaps you may have cause to sing.

123.

And so will you accept what I beseech?
let your woe be, and your gazing at the ground:
For he who wants help from his leech,
he must first reveal his wound.
To Cerberus in hell may I be bound,
if, were it all for my sister, all your sorrow,
I would not will that she be yours tomorrow.

124.

Look up I say and tell me who she is
now, so that I can satisfy your need.
Do I know of her? For love of me tell this,
then I would have more hope that I'd succeed.'
Then began Troilus's vein to bleed,
for he was hit, and grew all red with shame.
'Aha!' said Pandar, 'here begins the game.'

125.

And with that word he began him to shake
and said: 'Thief! You shall her name tell.'
But then poor Troilus began to quake
as though men were to lead him into hell,
and said: 'Alas! Of all my woe the well:
then is my sweet foe called Cressid,'
and almost from fear of that word was dead.

126.

And when Pandarus heard her name given
Lord, he was glad and said: 'Friend so dear,
now you are right, by Jupiter's name in heaven,
Love has set you right: be of good cheer:
since of good name and wisdom and manner
she has enough, and also gentleness.
If she is fair, you know yourself, I guess.

127.

I have never seen one more bounteous
in her position, nor gladder, nor of speech
a friendlier, nor a more gracious
to do good, nor less had need to seek
for what to do: and all this better to be
high in honour, as far as she may stretch,
a king's heart seems by hers that of a wretch.

128.

And therefore look you of good comfort to be:
for certain, this is the main point itself
of noble and well ordered courage, namely
for a man to be at peace with himself.
So ought you, for it is nothing else
but good to love well, and in a worthy place:
you ought not to call it fortune, but grace.

129.

And also think (and with this joyful be)
that since your lady is virtuous in all,
so it follows that there is some pity
amongst these virtues in general:
and therefore see that you, in special,
seek out nothing that is against her name:
for virtue does not stretch itself to shame.

130.

But it is well that I was born
to see you set in so good a place:
for, by my truth, in love I would have sworn
you never would have won to so fair a grace.
And you know why? Because you used to chase
away Love in scorn, and for spite him call
“Saint Idiot, lord of these fools all.”

131.

How often have you made your foolish japes,
and said that Love’s servants everyone
in foolishness were all God’s apes:
and some would munch their food alone,
lying abed, and pretend to groan,
and some you said had a pale fever,
and prayed to God they should not recover:

132.

And some of them took on about the cold,
more than enough, so you said full often:
and some have often feigned, and told
how they are awake, when they sleep soft:
and so they would have talked themselves aloft,
and nevertheless were fallen at the last,
so you said, and jested quick and fast.

133.

Yet you said that for the most part
these lovers used to speak in general,
and thought that it was a surer art
for not failing with one to attempt them all.
Now might I jest about you, if I should at all.
But nevertheless, or may I hope to die today,
you are none of those, that I dare say.

134.

Now beat your breast and say to the god of Love,
“Your pardon, lord! For now I repent
if I mis-spoke, since now I also love.”
Say it with all your heart, and good intent.’
Said Troilus: ‘Ah, lord! I do consent,
and pray to you my jests to forgive,
and I will jest no more while I live.’

135.

'You speak well,' said Pandar: 'and now I hope
that you have the god's wrath all appeased:
and since you have wept many a drop,
and said those things with which your god is pleased,
now let God grant only that you are eased:
and think that she from whom comes all your woe
hereafter may your comfort be also.

136.

For the same ground that bears the baneful weed.
also bears the wholesome herbs, as often
near the foul nettle, rough and thick, breed
the roses sweet, and smooth, and soft:
and near the valley rises the hill aloft:
and after the dark night the glad morrow:
and also joy is near the end of sorrow.

137.

Now look to be moderate with your bridle,
and, for the best, wait for the tide,
or else all our labour will be idle:
he hastes well who wisely can abide.
Be diligent and true, and all thoughts hide.
Be joyful, free, persevere in your service,
and all will be well, if you work like this.

138.

But he who is scattered in every place
is nowhere whole, as wise clerks say in this:
what wonder is it such-like gain no grace?
And see you how it goes with some men's courtship?
As well go plant a tree or herb like this
and on the morrow pull it up alive:
it is no wonder it can never thrive.

139.

And since the god of Love has you bestowed
in a place fitting for your worthiness,
stand fast, since to a good port you have rowed:
and for yourself, despite your heaviness,
always hope on: for unless dreariness
or over-haste, ill-luck to our two labours send,
I hope of this to make a good end.

140.

And do you know why I am less concerned
of this matter with my niece to treat?
because I have heard it said by the wise and learned,
"There never was man or woman made complete
that was disinclined to feel love's heat,
celestial love, or love of humankind":
Therefore some grace I hope in her to find.

141.

And to speak of her especially,
thinking of her beauty, her youthful brow,
it does not suit her to love celestially
as yet, though she would and could I allow.
But truly, it suits her best right now
a worthy knight to love and cherish,
and if she does not, I call that a vice.

142.

So I am, and will be always, ready
to take some pains for you in this service:
since to please you both thus hope I
afterwards: since you are wise in this,
and can your council keep, and so it is
that no man shall the wiser of it be,
and so we may be gladdened, all three.

143.

And, by my truth, right now, I have of thee
a good opinion in my mind, I guess:
and what it is I wish you now to see.
I think since Love, out of his goodness,
has converted you from wickedness,
that you will be the best pillar, I believe,
of all his creed, and most will his foes grieve.

144.

For reason why: see how these wise clerks,
that have erred the most against the law
and have been converted from their wicked works
through God's grace, who wishes them to Himself to draw:
then are they folk who hold God most in awe,
and are the strongest in faith, I understand,
and can an error best of all withstand.'

145.

When Troilus had heard that Pandar assented
to be his helper in loving of Cressid,
he became by woe, as it were, less tormented,
but his love grew hotter, and so he said,
with sober look, although his heart played:
'Now blissful Venus help, before I die
you Pandar to deserve my thanks thereby.

146.

But, dear friend, how will my woe be less
till it be done? And good friend tell me this:
how will you tell her of me and my distress?
Lest she be angered, this my great fear is,
or will not hear or credit how it is.
And that it comes from you, all this I fear,
from her uncle, she'll not such things hear.'

147.

Said Pandarus: 'You might have as great a care
lest the man might fall out of the moon!
Why, lord! I hate in you this foolish fare!
Why - attend to that which you have to do!
By God's Love I ask from you a boon,
leave me alone, and it will work for the best.'
'Why, friend,' he said, 'well do then as you wish.'

148.

'But listen, Pandar, one more word: I would
that you should not suspect in me such folly
that I might desire for my lady what could
touch on harm or any villainy:
for certainly I would rather die
than that she, of me, things understood
except those which might work to her good.'

149.

Then Pandar laughed and at once replied:
'And *I* your pledge? Fie! All men wish so:
I would not care if she stood and heard
what you have said: But farewell, I will go:
Adieu! Be glad! God speed us both two!
Give me this labour and this business,
and from my efforts yours be all that sweetness.'

150.

Then Troilus began to his knees to fall,
and seizing Pandar in his arms held him fast,
and said: 'Now fie on the Greeks all!
Yet, by faith, God will help us at the last:
and be certain, if my life shall last,
and with God's help, lo, some of them shall smart:
and pardon me that this boast leaves my heart.

151.

Now Pandar, I can nothing more say,
but – wise, you know, you may, you are all!
My life, my death, whole in your hand I lay:
help now,' he said. 'Yes, by my truth, I shall.'
'God repay you friend: in this so special,'
said Troilus, 'that you recommend me
to her that to the death may command me.'

152.

Pandarus, then desirous to serve
his good friend, then said in this manner:
'Farewell, and know I will your thanks deserve:
have here my promise, good tidings you will hear.' –
And went his way thinking on this matter,
and how he might best ask her for grace,
and find a time for it, and a place.

153.

For any man that has a house to found
does not rush the work he must begin
with rash hand, but waits a moment and
sends his heart's intent out from within
first of all his purpose for to win.
All this Pandar in his heart thought
and planned his work out wisely before he wrought.

154.

But Troilus then no longer lay down,
but up at once upon his steed, the bay,
and in the field he played the lion:
Woe to the Greek that met with him that day.
And in the town, from that time, he in his way
so winning was, and won him such good grace,
that each man loved him that looked on his face.

155.

For he became the friendliest of men,
the gentlest and also the most free,
the sturdiest, and best knight, then
that in his time was, or might ever be.
Gone were his jests and his cruelty,
his loftiness and his aloofness,
and each of them changed to a goodness.

156.

Now let's leave Troilus awhile, he's found
to be like a man who is hurt sore,
and is somewhat eased of his wound,
but is not well until he heals the more:
and, an easy patient, obeys the lore
of him that sets about his cure:
and so his own fortune does endure.

BOOK II - LOVE ENCOURAGED

1.

Out of these black waves for to sail,
O wind, O wind, begin the weather to clear:
for in this sea the boat has such travail,
that with my cunning I can hardly steer.
This sea I call the tempestuous matter
of the despair that Troilus was in:
but now the first days of hope begin.

2.

O lady mine, you who are called *Clio* [p. 450],
speed me from this time forward, be my muse,
to rhyme this book well, till I have so
done. I need no other art to use,
since, to every lover, I make excuse
that of my own feeling I take no flight,
but out of Latin into my own tongue write.



'Clio'
Hendrick Goltzius, 1592
The Rijksmuseum

3.

Therefore I will have neither thanks nor blame
for all this work, but pray you humbly,
blame me not if any word be lame:
for as my author said, so say I.
And though I speak of love unfeelingly,
that is no wonder, for it nothing new is:
a blind man cannot judge well what the hue is.

4.

You know also that forms of speech change
within a thousand years, and words, lo!
that had a value, now wondrous odd and strange
we think them: and yet they spoke them so,
and did as well in love as men do now.
And to win love in sundry ages,
in sundry lands, there were sundry usages.

5.

And therefore whether it happens, anywise,
that there be any lover in this place,
that listens, as this story shall devise,
to how Troilus came to his lady's grace:
and thinks, I would not love so purchase:
or wonders at his speech and his doing,
I cannot know: but for me there is no wondering.

6.

For every man that to Rome went
took not the same route, in the same manner:
and in some lands the game were lost to all intent,
if they did in love as men do here,
as open in their doings, or as they appear,
in their visiting, their formalities, or
in speech, as they say, each country has its law.

7.

And there have scarcely been in this place two
that have, in love, said and done like in all:
since for your purpose this thing may please you,
and you no way, yet say it all you do or shall.
And some men carve a tree, some a stone wall,
as it chances: but since I have begun,
I shall follow my author if I can.

8.

In May, that mother is of months glad,
when fresh flowers, blue, and white, and red,
quicken again, that winter has made dead,
and with balm is every meadow full fed:
when Phoebus does his bright beams spread
right in *the white bull* [p. 450], it so occurred
as I shall sing, on May's day the third,

9.

that Pandarus, for all his wise speech,
felt his own part of love's shots so keen,
that though he could so well of loving preach,
it often made his colour by day true green:
it so chanced that on that day he had been
crossed in love, and with woe to bed he turned,
and before the day, in many a torment churned.

10.

The swallow, *Procne* [p. 450], with a sorrowful lay,
when morning came began her lamenting,
why she new-altered was: and ever lay
Pandar in bed, half in a slumbering,
till she so near to him made her twittering
of how Tereus began her sister forth to take,
that with her noise he began to wake.

11.

And began to call, and address himself to rising,
remembering the errand to be run
for Troilus, and his great undertaking:
and cast a chart, with good aspects for the moon
to do a journey, and took his way quite soon
to his niece's palace close beside.
Now *Janus* [p. 450], god of entries, be his guide!



'Procne Revealing Itys's Head to Tereus'
Wilhelm Janson (Holland, Amsterdam), Antonio Tempesta
(Italy, Florence, 1555-1630)
The Rijksmuseum



'Janus Opens the Door'
Robert van Audenaerd, after Carlo Maratti, 1685 - 1723
The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

12.

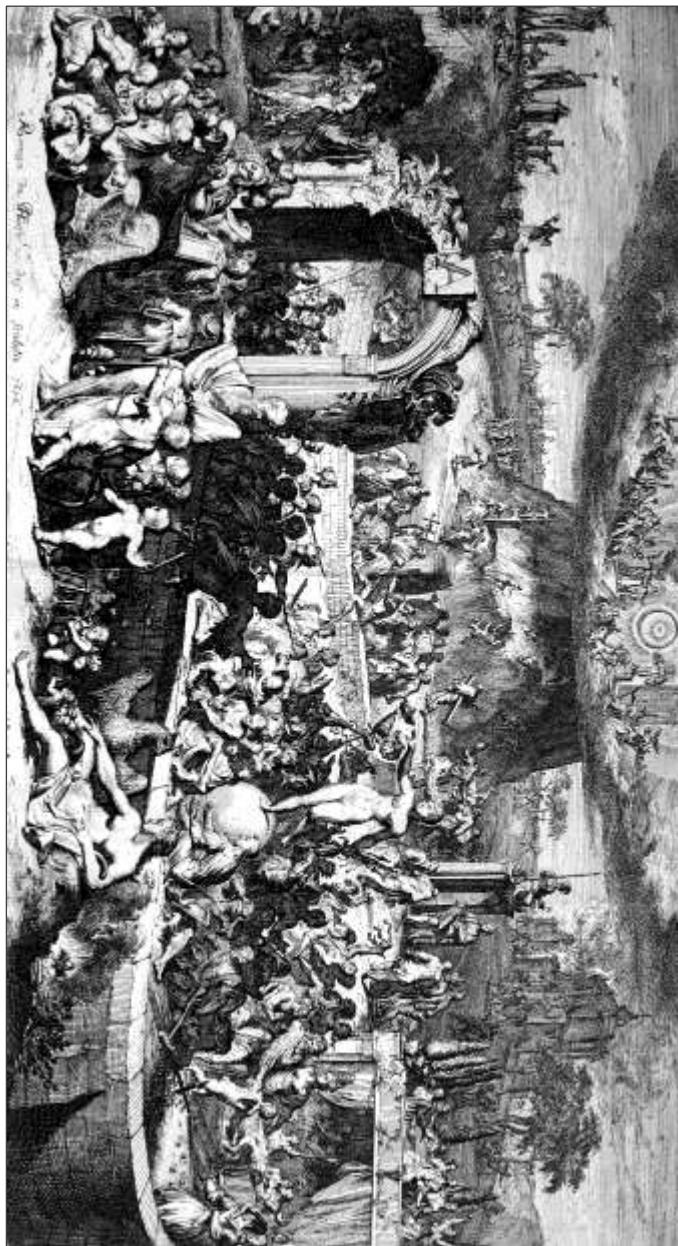
When he was come to his niece's place,
'Where is my lady?' to her folk said he.
And they told him, and in he began to pace,
and found two other ladies sitting, and she
within a paved parlour: and the three
hearing a maiden reading the story to them
of the siege of *Thebes* [p. 451], while it pleased them.

13.

Said Pandarus: 'Madame, God bless thee,
and all your book and all the company!'
'Ah, my uncle, welcome indeed,' said she:
and up she rose, and by the hand, in a trice,
she took him fast, and said, 'This night thrice,
may it turn to good, I dreamed of you!'
And with that word she sat him down too.

14.

'Yes, niece, you will fare well and better too,
if God will, all this year,' said Pandarus.
'But I am sorry I have interrupted you
listening to the book you praise thus:
for God's love, what does it say? Tell it us.
Is it of love? Oh teach me some good from there!'
'Uncle, 'she said, 'your mistress is not in here.'



'Siege of Thebes'

Epicteti Enchiridium una cum Cebetis
Thebani tabula Graec. & Lat. (p226, 1723)

Gronovius, Jacobus, 1645-1716

Schröder, Johann Caspar Hooghe, Romeyn de, 1645-1708
Internet Archive Book Images

15.

At that they laughed and then she said:
‘This romance is of Thebes that we read:
and we heard about King *Laius* [p. 451] who is dead
through *Oedipus* [p. 451] his son, and all that deed:
and here we stopped at these letters red,
how the bishop (as the book can tell)
Amphiarauus [p. 451], fell through the ground to hell.’

16.

Said Pandarus: ‘All this I know myself,
and all the siege of Thebes, its woe and care:
for there have been made out of it books twelve.
But let this be and tell me how you are:
Away with your veil, and show your face bare:
Away with your book, rise up, and let us dance,
and let us show the May month’s observance.

17.

‘Ah, God forbid,’ she said, ‘are you mad?
Is that the life a widow has, God save?
By God, you fill with me such dread,
you are so wild, it seems as if you rave.
It would suit me better in a cave
to rest, and read on holy saint’s lives:
let maidens go and dance, and young wives.

18.

‘As ever I may thrive,’ said Pandarus,
‘I could still tell a thing to make you play.’
‘Now uncle dear,’ she said, ‘tell it us
for God’s love: is the siege then done away?
I am so fearful of Greeks that I die.’
‘No, no,’ he said, ‘as ever I may thrive!
It is a thing of those worth any five.’

19.

‘Ah, holy God!’ she said, ‘what thing is that?
What! Better than any five such? Oh, no, I guess!
For all the world I cannot imagine what
it could be: some jest, I think, is this:
and, unless you yourself say what it is,
my wit is far too slender, far too lean:
so help me God, I know not what you mean.’

20.

‘And I tell you, that never shall by me
this thing be told to you, so may I thrive.
‘And why so, uncle mine, why so?’ said she.
‘By God,’ he said, ‘that I will tell as blithe:
for there would be no prouder woman alive,
if you knew it, in all the town of Troy:
I jest not, if ever I might have joy.’

21.

The she began to wonder more than before
a thousand fold, and down her eyes cast.
For never, since the time she had been born,
had she so desired to know a thing, and fast:
and with a sigh she said to him at last:
'Now, uncle mine, I will not tease you,
nor ask again what may displease you.'

22.

So after this with many words glad,
and friendly tales, and with merry cheer
they played and entered into this and that
of many a strange and glad and deep matter,
as friends do when they meet together,
until she began to ask how Hector fared
that was the town's wall and the Greeks' scourge.

23.

'Full well, I thank God,' said Pandarus,
'except that in his arm he has a little wound:
and so is his brave brother Troilus
the wise, a worthy Hector the second,
in whom every virtue likes to abound,
as all truth, and all gentleness,
wisdom, honour, freedom, and worthiness.'

24.

'In good faith, uncle,' she said, 'that I like:
they fare well, God save both the two!
For truly I hold it fitting and right
a king's son in arms well to do,
and to have good qualities too.
For great power and moral virtue here
are seldom seen in one person clear.

25.

'In good faith that is so,' said Pandarus:
but in truth the king has two sons say I,
that is to say, Hector and Troilus,
that certainly, though I should die,
are as void of vices, without lie,
as any men that live under the sun,
their might and knowledge is well known.

26.

Of Hector there is no need to tell:
in all this world there is no better knight
than he, that is of worthiness a well:
and he has still more virtue than might.
This is known by many, worthy and right.
The same praise has Troilus, I say to you.
God help me so, I know not such a two.'

27.

‘By God,’ said she, ‘of Hector that is true:
of Troilus the same belief have I.
For certain, men say that he too
in arms does day by day so worthily,
and bears him here at home so courteously
to everyone, that all the praise has he
of them that I would most wish to praise me.’

28.

‘You speak the truth, I think, ‘ said Pandarus,
for yesterday whoever is with him and sees,
he might have wondered at Troilus:
for never yet so thick a swarm of bees
flew, as the Greek from him flees.
And through the field, in every man’s ear,
there was no cry but ‘Troilus is here!’

29.

‘Now here, now there, he hunted them so fast,
there was but Greeks’ blood; and Troilus,
now he hurt them, and them all down he cast:
ay, where he went it happened thus:
he was their death, and shield and life to us:
so that that day there was no one dare withstand
him as he held his bloody sword in hand.

30.

Add too that he is the friendliest man
of great position I ever saw in my life:
and whenever he wishes, best fellowship can
offer to such as he thinks worthy to thrive.’
And with that word then Pandarus, as blithe,
took his leave and said: ‘I will go hence.’
‘No, I would be to blame, my uncle,’ said she then.

31.

‘What makes you weary thus so soon,
especially of women? Will you so?
No sit down: by God I have business with you,
for you to speak your wisdom before you go.’
And everyone who was near to them so,
hearing that, began far from them to stand,
while those two dealt with what they had on hand.

32.

When the story was all brought to an end
about her estate and its governance,
Pandarus said: ‘Now it is time I went:
but still I say, rise and let us dance,
and cast your widow’s dress, at a chance:
why do you wish yourself to disfigure,
since to you has fallen so fine an adventure?’



'Minerva'
Jan Harmensz. Muller, 1598 - 1602
The Rijksmuseum

33.

‘Ah, well remembered, for love of God’ said she,
‘shall I not learn what you mean by this?’
‘No this thing needs leisure,’ then said he,
‘and it would grieve me greatly, as it is,
if I told it and you took it amiss.
Yes, it were better to hold my tongue still
than say a truth that was against your will.

34.

For niece, by the Goddess *Minerva* [p. 451],
and *Jupiter* [p. 451], who makes the thunder ring,
and by the blissful *Venus* [p. 451] that I serve,
you are the woman, in this world living,
except my lovers, to my knowing,
that I best love, and loathest am to grieve:
and that you know yourself, I believe.’

35.

‘I know, my uncle,’ she said, ‘grant mercy:
I have ever found your friendship true:
I am to no man beholden truly,
so much as you, and have so little repaid you:
and with the grace of God, if I can so do,
through my own fault, I’ll never you offend,
and if I have before now, I’ll make amend.

36.

But for the love of God I you beseech,
as you are him whom I most love and trust,
leave off your obscure manner of speech,
tell all to me, your niece, as you must.'
And with that word her uncle now her kissed,
and said: 'Gladly, beloved niece, my dear,
take in good part all that I tell you here.'

37.

With that she began her eyes down to cast,
and Pandarus began to cough a mite,
and said: 'Niece, always, lo! at the last,
however much some men take delight
with subtle art their tales to make bright,
yet, for all that, in their intention,
their tale is all to form a conclusion.

38.

And since the end is every tale's strength,
and the end of this matter looks so fittingly,
why should I paint it or draw it out at length
to you, who have been my friend so faithfully?'
And with that word he began inwardly
to behold her, and gaze upon her face,
and said: 'On such a mirror fall such grace!'

39.

Then thought he thus: 'If I my tale spin
too long, or make procession any while,
it will be one she'll take less pleasure in,
and think I would her willfully beguile.
For tender wits think all a cunning wile
that they cannot plainly understand:
so I must find the glove to fit the hand.'

40.

And he looked at her quite intently,
and she was aware that he beheld her so,
and said: 'Lord! So closely you study me!
Did you not know me till now? What say you? No?'
'Yes, yes,' he said, 'and better before I go:
but by my truth I wondered now if ye
have had good luck, for now men shall it see.'

41.

For everyone some goodly adventure
is sometimes shaped, if he can receive it:
and if when it comes he chooses to ignore
it willfully, and take no notice of it,
lo, neither chance nor fortune cause it,
but simply his own sloth and wretchedness:
and such a one is to be blamed, I guess.

42.

Good adventure, O fair niece, have ye
readily found, if you can it grasp:
and for the love of God and of me
seize it now lest adventure lapse.
Why should I longer story of it make?
Give me your hand for in this world is none
if this pleases you, who fortune so shines on.

43.

And since I speak with good intention
as I have told you truly here before,
and love as truly your honour and renown,
as that of any creature to this world born:
by all the oaths that I have you sworn,
if you are angered or think these lies,
I shall never see you again with these eyes.

44.

Do not be aghast or quake: why should you?
and do not change, from fear so, your hue:
for indeed, the worst of this is through.
And though my tale as now be to you new,
yet trust me always, and you will find me true:
and if it were a thing I thought unfitting,
to you I would not such a tale bring.'

45.

'Now my good uncle, for god's love I pray'
she said, 'Be quick and tell me what it is:
since I am both aghast at what you'll say,
and yet also I long to know of this.
For whether it be good or something amiss
say on, let me not in this fear dwell.'
'So I will do: now listen, I shall tell.

46.

Now, my niece, the king's dear son,
the good, wise, worthy, fresh and free,
who always wishes what he does well done,
the noble Troilus, so loves thee,
that, unless you aid him, it will his bane be.
Lo, here is all of it, what more say I?
Do what you will, to make him live or die.

47.

But if you let him die, I'll take my life:
have here my truth, niece: I will not lie,
I would cut my throat with this knife.'
At this the tears burst from his eyes,
and he said: 'If you cause us both to die,
both guiltless, then good fishing you've enjoyed.
What do you gain if we are both destroyed?

48.

Alas, he who is my lord so dear,
that true man, that noble gentle knight,
who desires nothing but your friendly cheer,
I see him dying though he stands upright:
and hastens on, with all his might,
to be cut down, if fortune gives assent.
Alas that God you such beauty sent!

49.

If it be so that you so cruel be
that in his death you no take no interest
(he so true and worthy, as you see),
no more than that of trickster or of wretch:
if you be such, your beauty may not stretch
as far as atonement for so cruel an act:
it is good to consider well before the fact.

50.

Woe to the fair gem that is virtueless!
Woe to the herb also that does no good!
Woe to that beauty that is ruthless!
Woe to the man who treads others underfoot!
And you, that are of beauty the crop and root,
if, with all that, in you there is no ruth,
then it's sad you are alive, by my truth.

51.

And also think well that this is no fraud:
for I would rather you and I and he
were hanged, than that I should be his bawd,
so high that men might all openly us see.
I am your uncle: it would be shame to me,
as well as you, if I gave assent,
through abetting him, and he your honour rent.

52.

Now understand, that I do not desire
to bind you to him formally,
but only that you show him better cheer
than you have done till now, and be
more kind, so his life is saved, at the least.
This all and some, and plainly, is my intent.
God help me so, I have no other meant.

53.

Lo this request is reasonable, it is:
there is no cause for doubt, by God no:
I think the worst that you might dread is this,
that men would wonder to see him come and go:
Against that I straight away argue so,
that ever man, unless he's a fool by kind,
will judge it friendship's love in his mind.

54.

What? Who will judge, though he see a man
to temple go, that he the images eat?
Think, then, how well and wisely he can
govern himself, that nothing he forgets,
that, where he comes, praise and thanks he gets:
and add to that, he shall come here so seldom,
what matter that all the town beheld him?

55.

Such love between friends rules all this town:
and hide yourself with that cloak, forever so:
And as God is ever my salvation,
as I have said, your best is to do so,
but always, good niece, to soothe his woe,
soften a little your disdain,
that for his death you are not to blame.'

56.

Cressida who heard him speak in this wise,
thought: 'I shall find out what his meaning is.'
'Now uncle,' she said, 'what would you devise,
what do you think I should make of this?'
'That is well said,' he answered: best it is
for you to love him again for his loving,
as love for love is just rewarding.

57.

Think then how age wastes, every hour,
in every one of you, a part of beauty:
and therefore, before age you devours,
go love, for old no man will want thee.
Let this proverb as a law to you be:
“ ‘Aware too late’, said Beauty, ‘when it’s past.’ ”
And age defeats disdain at the last.

58.

The king’s fool is given to cry aloud,
when he thinks a woman is too high:
“So long may you live, and just as proud,
till the crow’s-feet grow under your eye,
and send for a mirror then for you to pry
in, where you may see your face tomorrow!”
Niece, I cannot wish you greater sorrow.’

59.

With this he ceased, and cast down his head
and she burst out weeping at once,
and said: ‘Alas, for woe! Why am I not dead?
For in this world all faith is gone.
Alas what would strangers to me have done
when he I thought the best friend to me,
tells me to love, yet should forbid me?’



'Achilles Swears an Oath to Avenge
the Dead Patroclus, Killed by Hector'
Bartolomeo Pinelli, Italian, 1781 - 1835
Yale University Art Gallery

60.

Alas! I could have trusted, doubtless,
that if I through any misadventure
had loved either him, or *Achilles* [p. 451],
Hector [p. 451] or any mortal creature,
you would have had of mercy no measure
for me, but always reproached me,
this false world, alas!, who may it believe?

61.

What? Is this all the joy and all the feast?
Is this your counsel: is this my blissful case?
Is this, of your promise, the true bequest?
Is all this specious argument, alas,
only for this sin? O lady mine, *Pallas* [p. 451],
you in this dreadful case for me provide,
for I am so astonished that I die.'

62.

With that she began sorrowfully to weep.
'Ah, can you do no better?' said Pandarus:
'By God, I shall come here no more this week:
not, before God, if I am mistrusted thus.
I see full well you care little for us,
or of our death. Alas! I'm a sad wretch!
If he might live, it's no matter where I fetch.



'Mars'
Abraham Bloteling, after Gerard de Lairesse, 1682
The Rijksmuseum

63.

O cruel god, O merciless *Mars* [p. 451],
O *Furies* [p. 451] Three of hell, to you I cry
never let me out of this house depart,
if I meant any harm or villainy!
But since I see my lord must needs die,
and I with him, here I confess, and say I
that wickedly you cause us both to die.

64.

But since it pleases you that I be dead,
by *Neptune* [p. 452], that is god of the sea,
from this time forth I never shall eat bread
until my own heart's blood I see:
for certain, I shall die as soon as he.' –
And up he started, and his way he sought,
till she again him by the sleeve caught.

65.

Cressid, who was well nigh dead of fear,
as she was the fearfulest one there might
be, and not only heard in her ear,
but saw, the sad earnestness of the knight,
and in his prayer nothing but what was right,
and the more harm that might befall, as he said,
she began to relent, and was sore afraid.



'Neptune Stabbing a Sea Horse'
Maarten van Heemskerck, c. 1550 - c. 1560
The Rijksmuseum

66.

And thought thus: 'Misfortunes fall thickest
always, for love, and in such manner because
men are cruel in themselves and wicked.
And if this man should kill himself, alas!
in my presence, that will be no solace.
What men would think of it I cannot say:
it behoves me with great subtly to play.'

67.

And with a sorrowful sigh she said times three:
'Ah, lord! To me has fallen such mischance!
For my estate now lies in jeopardy,
and my uncle's life lies in the balance,
but nonetheless, with God's governance,
I shall do so, that my honour I shall keep,
and he his life': and she ceased to weep.

68.

'Of two harms, the lesser is the one to choose:
I would rather show him some good cheer,
in honour, than my uncle's life to lose.
You say you nothing else of me require?'
'No indeed,' he said, 'my own niece dear.'
'That's well,' she said, 'and I will take great pain:
I shall my heart against my will constrain.

69.

‘But I will not show him a false hand:
I cannot ever love a man, nor may
against my will: otherwise, I will be fond,
saving my honour, and please him from day to day:
I never once would have wished to say nay
to it, except for fears that are but fantasy.
But ceaseth the cause: ceaseth the malady.

70.

And here I make a protestation,
that in this process if you deeper go,
for certain, not for your preservation,
though you are dying, both of you,
nor though all the world that day is my foe,
will I ever for him show greater ruth.’
‘I accept that,’ said Pandar, ‘by my truth.

71.

‘But may I have a perfect trust,’ said he,
‘that in this thing you promise to me here,
you will keep to it, truly, for me?’
‘Yes, certainly,’ she said, ‘my uncle dear.’
‘And that I shall have no cause in this matter,’
he said, ‘to complain at you, or preach?’
‘Why, no, indeed: what need of further speech?’

72.

Then they fell to talking of other tales glad,
till at the last, 'O good uncle,' she said, 'so,
for love of God that both of us has made,
tell me how you first learnt of his woe:
does no one know but you?' He said: 'No.'
'Can he speak well of love?' she said, 'I pray
tell me, that I may better myself array.'

73.

Then Pandarus began a little to smile,
and said, 'By my truth, you I will tell.
The other day, but past a little while,
in the palace garden, by a well,
he and I spent half a day, so it fell,
purely to speak about a strategy
to defeat the Greeks and make the victory.

74.

Soon after that we began to leap,
and hurl our spears, to and fro,
till at the last he said he would sleep,
and on the grass he laid himself down, so:
and I began to roam, to and fro,
till I heard, as I walked alone,
how he began woefully to groan.

75.

Then I began to tread softly behind,
and certainly, and truth to say,
as I recall again to my mind,
he began, to Love, thus to complain.
and said: "Lord have pity on my pain,
though I have been a rebel in intent:
now *mea culpa*, lord! I repent.

76.

O God, who at your discretion
decree the death, by just providence,
of everyone, my humble confession
accept with favour, and send me such penance
as pleases you: but from despair's lance
(that may separate my soul from thee),
be you my shield, in your benignity.

77.

For certain, Lord, she has me so sore wounded
who stood there in black, with the gaze of her eye,
that to my heart's depth it has sounded,
because of which I know that I must needs die.
This is the worst thing: I dare not show why:
and all the hotter the coals glow red,
that men cover with ashes pale and dead."

78.

With that he dropped his head straight down,
and began to mutter, I know not what, truly.
And I at that began to turn around:
and acted as if no knowledge of it had I:
and came again and stood nearby,
and said: "Awake! you sleep far too long:
it seems that love does not make you to long,

79.

who sleeps so deep no man can you wake.
Who ever saw before so dull a man?"
"Well, friend," he said, "let your head ache
for love, and let me live as I can."
But though, for woe, he was pale and wan,
yet he showed then as fresh a countenance
as though he were leading off the next dance.

80.

This lasted, until, the other day,
it happened I came roaming all alone
into his chamber, and found that he lay
on his bed: but such a human groan
I never heard, and what was his moan
I know not: since, as I was nearing,
all suddenly he left off his complaining.

81.

which filled me with some suspicion,
and I came near, and found he wept sore
and, as God is, I know, my salvation,
I never felt pity for anyone more.
For neither with invention, nor lore,
could I for certain him from death keep:
so that for him I still feel my heart weep.

82.

And God knows never since I was born
did I preach so hard to any man before,
and never was to any man so sworn,
before he told me, who could be his cure.
But now to rehearse to you all his speech,
or all his woeful words for me to sound,
don't bid me, or I'll fall to the ground.

83.

But to save his life, and not for ought
else, and not to harm you, I so labour:
and for the love of God, who has us wrought,
so that he and I might live, show him great favour.
Now have I plainly opened my heart to yours:
and since you know that my intent is clean,
take note of it, for I no evil mean.

84.

And right good luck, I pray to God, have you,
who have caught such a one without a net:
if you are wise as you are fair to view,
then in the ring is the ruby well set.
There will never be two so well met,
when you are wholly his, as he is yours:
may mighty God grant that we see those hours!

85.

‘No, I spoke nothing of that, ah!’ said she,
‘God help me, you twist everything so.’
‘O mercy, dear niece,’ quickly answered he,
‘Whatever I said I meant for well not woe,
by Mars the god, who with steel helmet goes.
Now do not be angry, my blood, niece dear.’
‘Well now,’ she said, ‘it is forgiven here.’

86.

With this he took his leave, and home he went:
and lord! how he was glad, well satisfied.
Cressid arose, delaying not a moment,
but straight into her closet she did glide,
and still as a stone sat her down inside,
and every word he had said began to wind,
up and down, as it passed through her mind:

87.

and some astonishment possessed her thought,
in that new situation. But when she
fully considered it, she found nought
perilous, or why in fear she ought to be,
for man may love the possibility
of a woman so, his heart may burst in two,
yet she not love him again, unless she choose.

88.

But as she sat alone and thought thus,
the sound rose of a skirmish, from without,
and men cried in the street: 'See, Troilus
has just now put the Greek horde to rout!'
With that all her household began to shout:
'Ah, come and see, open the lattice wide,
for through this street he must to the palace ride:

89.

from that gate, another way there's none,
of Dardanus, where open is the chain.'
With that he came with all his folk at once
at easy pace, riding in groups twain,
happy, as this, his day, was, truth to say,
wherefore, as men have it, may not altered be
all that must happen of necessity.

90.

This Troilus sat on his bay steed,
all armed, save his head, full richly,
and his horse was wounded (and began to bleed)
on which he rode at gentle pace full softly.
But such a knightly sight, truly,
as to look on him, was without fail,
to look on Mars, that is god of war's tale.

91.

So like a man of arms and a knight
he was seen, full of high prowess:
for he had both the body and the might
to do the thing, as well as hardiness.
And then to see him in his armour dressed,
so fresh, so young, so active seemed he,
it was a very heaven him to see.

92.

His helmet was cut through in twenty places,
that by a cord hung down his back behind:
his shield was scarred, by swords and by maces,
in which men might many an arrow find
that had pierced horn, and sinew and rind.
And ever the people cried: 'Here comes our joy,
and, next his brother, holder-up of Troy.'

93.

For which he blushed a little red for shame
(when he heard the people on him cry),
so that to see it was a noble game,
how soberly he cast down his eye.
Cressida began on his looks to spy,
and let them so softly into her heart sink,
that to herself she said: 'What do I drink?'

94.

For with her own thought she blushed all red,
remembering truly thus: 'Lo, this is he
that my uncle swears must soon be dead
unless I have mercy on him and pity.'
And with that thought, for pure shame, she
began to draw in her head, and fast,
while he and all the people passed.

95.

And began to cast about, roll up and down,
within her thought, his excellent prowess,
and his state, and also his renown,
his wit, his form, and his nobleness:
but most in favour was that his distress
was all for her, and she though it a ruth
to kill such a man, if he meant it in truth.

96.

Now might some envious person mutter thus:
"This was a sudden love: how can it be
that she so easily loved Troilus
right at first sight, yes, very easily?
Now, who says it, never prosper thee!
For everything has to begin somehow
before it can be done, without a doubt.

97.

For I do not say that she so suddenly
gave him her love, but that she inclined
to like him first, and I have told you why:
and after that his manhood, how he pined,
made love within her dig his mine,
by which due process and by good service
he won her love, and not with suddenness.

98.

And also blissful Venus well arrayed
sat in her *seventh house* [p. 452] of heaven so,
well disposed, and good aspects made,
to help poor Troilus in his woe.
And truth to tell she was not a foe
to Troilus either, at his nativity,
God knows, and all the quicker prospered he.

99.

Now let us leave off Troilus for a throw,
who rides away, and let us turn fast
to Cressida, who hung her head full low,
where she sat alone, and began to cast
her thought on how to behave at the last,
if it so was, her uncle would no less
for Troilus, on her, continue to press.

100.

And lord! so she began in her thoughts to argue
this matter, the which I have you told,
of what was best to do, and what eschew,
thoughts she plaited often in many a fold.
Now her heart was warm, now it was cold:
and what she thought, a little of it I'll write,
as much as my author has brought to light.

101.

She thought it good that Troilus's person
she knew by sight, and so his nobleness,
and thus she said: 'Though it is not done
to grant love so, yet given his worthiness,
it would be honour with light heart and gladness,
in honesty, with such a lord to deal,
for my support, and also for his weal.

102.

I know indeed my king's son is he:
and since in seeing me he takes delight,
if I were his sight utterly to flee,
perhaps he might hold me in despite,
through which I might end in a worse plight.
Now would I be wise, hate to purchase,
without need, where I might meet with grace?

103.

In everything, I know, there is measure.
For though a man forbids drunkenness,
he does not forbid that every creature
be drink-less forever, or so I guess.
And since I know that I cause his distress,
I ought not for that him to despise,
since it is true he means well in my eyes.

104.

And moreover I have known for a long time gone
his character is good, and he's not foolish.
Nor a boaster, men say, certain he's none:
he is too wise to enter into vice:
nor will I ever him so cherish
that he may boast of it, with just cause:
he will never bind me to such a clause.

105.

Now the worst case of all indeed is,
that men might think that he loved me:
what dishonour would it be to me, this?
Can I stop him doing it? No indeed!
I know also, and often hear and see,
men love women all this town about:
be they the worse? Why no, there is no doubt.

106.

I think also how he might have
of all this town the loveliest
to be his love, and she her honour save:
for out and out he is the worthiest,
except for Hector, who is the best.
And yet his life lies all in my care:
but such is love, and destiny's affair.

107.

That he loves me, a wonder that is not:
since I well know myself, God prosper me,
although I wish no one to know my thought,
I am one of the fairest, there might be
and goodliest, to any man who can see:
and so men say in all the town of Troy.
What wonder is it if in me he joy?

108.

I am my own mistress, quite at ease,
I thank God, as befitting my state:
young, and free in meadows that please,
without jealousy or fierce debate.
No husband shall say to me, “checkmate!”
For either they are full of jealousy,
or masterful, or chasing novelty.

109.

‘What shall I do? To what purpose live I thus?
Shall I not love, if that pleases me best?
What, heaven knows! I am not religious!
And though I settle my heart to rest
upon this knight, who is the worthiest,
keeping always my honour and my name,
in all justice, it will do me no shame.’

110.

But just as when the sun shines bright
in March, that often changes face,
and a cloud is born with the wind in flight
to overspread the sun for a space,
a cloudy thought through her soul began to pace,
that overspread her bright thoughts all,
so that for fear she almost began to fall.

III.

The thought was this: 'Alas! Since I am free,
should I love now, and put in jeopardy
my independence, enslave my liberty?
Alas! How dare I think on that folly?
Can I not well in other folk espy
their fearful joy, their distress, their pain?
None loves, without some reason to complain.

II2.

For love is yet the most stormy life,
in its own self, that ever was begun.
Ever some mistrust or foolish strife
is there in love, some cloud is over the sun,
so that we wretched women get nothing done
when we are woeful, but weep and sit and think:
our misfortune is that we our own woes drink.

II3.

Also these wicked tongues we can trust
to do us harm, and men are so untrue,
that, as soon as ceased is their lust,
so ceaseth love, and they go to love a new:
but harm once done is done, however we rue.
For though these men, for love, at first them rend,
too sharp a beginning, often breaks at the end.

114.

How many times has it been known to me,
the treason, that to woman has been done?
To what end such love is, I cannot see,
or what becomes of it when it is gone.
There is no one that knows, I think though,
what becomes of it: lo, no one learns:
what first was nothing, into nothing turns.

115.

How careful, if I love then, I must be
to please those that chatter of love and condemn,
and stop them from saying harm of me.
For though there be no cause, it seems to them
that all is harmful if folks please their friend.
And who can stop every wicked tongue,
or the sound of bells when they are rung?

116.

And after that her thought began to clear,
and she said: 'He that nothing undertakes
nothing achieves, however he holds it dear.'
And with another thought her heart quakes:
then hope sleeps, and after it fear awakes,
now hot, now cold: but thus between the two
she rose up and went off to her play.

117.

Down the stair straight away she went
into the garden with her nieces three
and up and down there, to their heart's content,
Flexippe, she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
played so that it was a joy to see:
and other of her women, a great rout,
followed her in the garden all about.

118.

This yard was large, and all the alleys railed,
and well-shadowed with blossomy bowers green,
and new-benched, and sanded all the ways,
in which they walked, arm in arm between:
till at the last Antigone, fair to be seen,
began a Trojan song to sing out clear,
so that it was heaven her voice to hear.

119.

She sang: 'O love, to whom I have and shall
been a humble subject, true in my intent,
to you, as best I can, lord, I give all
my heart's desire, as tribute, ever meant,
for never has yet your grace to any sent
such blissful cause as me, my life to be led
in all joy and surety, free from dread.

120.

You blissful God have so disposed of me
in love, and well, that all that bears life
could not imagine how it should bettered be.
For, lord, without jealousy or strife,
I love one who is the most alive
to serve me well, unwearied and unfeigning,
that ever was, and least harm entertaining.

121.

As he is the well of loyalty,
the ground of truth, mirror of seemliness,
Apollo [p. 452] of wit, stone of security,
virtue's root, finder and head of happiness,
through whom all my sorrow is made less,
so then, I love him best, and he does me:
now good luck to him, wherever he may be.

122.

Whom should I thank but you, god of Love,
for all this bliss where to bathe I begin?
And thank you, lord, that I am in love.
This is the true life that I am in,
to banish every kind of vice or sin.
This makes me to virtue so attend,
that, day by day, by my will, I amend.



'Apollo and the Muses'
Pieter Sluyter, after Louis de Châtillon,
Charles de Lafosse, 1693
The Rijksmuseum

123.

And whoever says that loving is vice
or slavery, though he feels in it distress,
he either is envious or overnice,
or is unable, through his brutishness
to love: for such manner of folk, I guess,
defame love, who nothing of him know:
they speak, but they never bent his bow.

124.

What? Is the sun worse, in proper light,
though a man, through feebleness of eye,
cannot endure to see it full and bright?
Or is love worse, though wretches on it cried?
No goodness of worth that sorrow has not tried.
And for sure, he who has a head of glass,
should beware of any hostile stones that pass!

125.

But I with all my heart and all my might,
as I have said, will love till the last,
my dear heart, and my own knight,
to whom my heart is bound so fast,
and his to me, that it will ever last.
Though I feared at first to love him, to begin,
now I well know, there is no harm within.'

126.

And with that word her song reached its end,
and with it, 'Now, niece,' said Cressid,
'Who made this song with such good intent?'
Antigone answered at once and said:
'Madam, for sure, the loveliest maid
of high estate in all the town of Troy:
who leads her life in greatest honour and joy.'

127.

'Certain, it seems so, by her song,'
said Cressid then, and began at that to sigh,
and said: 'Lord, is there such bliss among
these lovers, as they so sweetly write?'
'Yes, truly,' said fair Antigone, the bright,
'for all the folk that have been or are alive
cannot the true bliss of love describe.

128.

But think you every wretch knows what
this perfect bliss of love is? Why no:
they think all is love, if one part be hot:
no way, no way! Nothing of it they know.
Men must ask the saints if there is
anything fair in heaven. (Why? They can tell.):
and ask the fiends, "is it foul in hell?"

129.

Cressid to that subject nothing answered,
but said: 'Yes, night is falling fast.'
But every word of hers that she had heard,
she began to imprint in her heart fast:
and love began to make her less aghast
than before, and sank into her heart,
so that she found it easier to start.

130.

The day's honour and the heaven's eye,
the night's foe (all these I call the sun)
began to set fast, and downward slide,
like one who had his day's course run:
and white things became shadowy and dun
for lack of light, and stars to gather,
so she and all her folks went in together.

131.

So when it pleased her to go to her rest,
and they had left her presence all who ought,
she said that she was ready to sleep at last.
Her women soon to her bed her brought.
When all was hushed, then lay she still and thought
of all this thing, the manner and the wise,
it need not be rehearsed, for you are wise.

132.

A nightingale upon a cedar green,
under the chamber wall in which she lay,
sang full loud against the moonlight's sheen,
perhaps, in his bird's fashion, a lay
of love, that made her heart fresh and gay.
She hearkened to it so long with sweet intent,
that into a deep sleep at last she went.

133.

And as she slept, straight away she dreamed
that an eagle, feathered white as bone,
under her breast his long claws reamed,
and rent out her heart, it was done,
and his heart into her breast was gone:
at which she felt neither fear nor smart,
and forth he flew, leaving heart for heart.

134.

Now let her sleep, and we'll the tale unfold
of Troilus, who to the palace rode,
from the skirmishes, of which I told,
and in his chamber sat, and there abode
till two or three of his messengers took the road
to Pandarus, and sought him out full fast,
till they had found him, and brought him at the last.

135.

At this Pandarus came running in at once,
and said: 'Who did the Greeks well beat
today with swords and sling-stones,
but Troilus, who has the fever's heat?'
And began to jest, and said: 'Lord, how you sweat!
But rise and let us eat then go to rest.'
And he answered him: 'We'll do as you wish.'

136.

With as proper a haste as they might
they sped them from supper to bed:
and every man out of the door took flight
and where he wished upon his way he sped:
but Troilus, who felt how his heart bled
for woe until he had heard some tiding,
said: 'Friend, shall I weep now, or sing?'

137.

Said Pandarus: 'Lie still and let me sleep,
and put on your hood, all's well with thee:
and choose if you will sing or dance or leap:
in brief words, you will have to trust in me:
Sir, my niece will do well by thee,
and love thee best, by God and by my truth,
unless from sloth you fail in the pursuit.'

138.

‘For so far forth have I your work begun,
from day to day, until this very morrow,
her love, in friendship, have I to you won,
and she’s pledged her faith: on it you can borrow,
therefore one foot is lamed of your sorrow.’
Why should I any longer a sermon hold?
What you have heard before: all that he told.

139.

But *just as flowers* [p. 452], through the cold of night
all closed, drooping on their stalks so low,
stand erect again when the sun is bright,
and spread their blooms by nature in a row,
jus so he began his gaze upwards to throw
this Troilus, and said: ‘O Venus dear,
your power, your grace, praised be it here.’

140.

And to Pandar he held up both his hands
and said: ‘Lord, all is yours that I have:
for I am free, all broken are my bands.
Whoever a thousand Troys me gave,
one after another, God me save,
could not gladden me so: Lo, my heart,
it swells so for joy, it will burst apart.

141.

But lord, what should I do, how shall I live?
When shall I next my dear heart see?
How shall this long time away be driven,
till you are gone again to her from me?
You may answer, “Abide, abide!” but he
who is hanging by the neck, truth to say,
abides in great torment filled with pain.’

142.

‘Be easy now, for the love of Mars,’
said Pandarus: ‘for all things have their time:
abide as long as it takes the night to depart.
For just as surely as you lie here by me,
by God, I will be there at morning prime,
and therefore do as I shall say,
or on some other man this charge lay.

143.

For, by heaven, God knows, I have ever yet
been ready to serve you, and to this night
have nothing feigned, but with all my wit
done all your wish, and shall with all my might.
Do now as I shall say and fare aright:
but if you will not, blame yourself for your cares,
no fault belongs to me if your luck evil shares.

144.

I well know you are wiser than I
a thousand times: but if I were you,
God help me so, I would decidedly,
in my own hand, write to her right now
a letter, in which I would tell her how
I fared amiss, and beseech her pity.
Now help yourself, and shake off lethargy.

145.

And I myself will, with it, to her go:
and when you know that I am with her there,
mount on your charger and then so
yes, boldly, dressed in your best gear,
ride right by the place, as if it were
by chance, and if I can you'll find us sitting
at a window onto the street looking.

146.

And if you wish, then you may us salute,
and upon me direct your countenance:
but, by your life, beware, be too astute
to linger there: God shield us from mischance!
Ride on your way, and hold your governance.
And we will talk of you somewhat, I know,
when you are gone, to make your ears glow.

147.

Touching your letter, you are wise enough:
I would not pretentiously try it:
by using arguments that are tough
to understand, clerkly, nor with cunning write.
Blot it with your tears a bit you might:
and if you write a goodly word all sweet,
though it be good, do not it oft repeat.

148.

For though the best harper who is alive
were, on the best sounding sweetest harp
there ever was, with all his fingers five,
to touch only one string, on one note harp,
even though all his nails were pointed sharp,
it would make everyone who heard him dull,
to hear his glee, and his strokes full.

149.

Do not mix discordant things together,
as thus, to use the terms a doctor might
in speaking of love: give to your matter
the proper form, always, and make them like:
for if a painter were to paint a pike
with asses feet, and head it like an ape,
there's no accord, and it is but a jape.

150.

This counsel was pleasing to Troilus,
but as a fearful lover, he said this:
‘Alas, my dear brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed to write, in this,
lest in my innocence I say amiss,
or lest she would not, in despite, receive it.
Then I were dead: and nothing might relieve it.

151.

To that Pandarus answered: It is best
to do as I say, and let me with it go:
for by the Lord that formed both East and West,
I hope to bring an answer to it, so,
in her own hand: and if you say no,
let be, and sad be the man alive
that against your will helps you to thrive.’

152.

Said Troilus: ‘By God then, I assent:
since you wish it, I’ll arise and write:
and God of bliss, I pray, with good intent,
the enterprise, and the letter, both aright,
to speed: and you Minerva, the Bright,
give me the wit the letter to devise’:
and he sat down, and wrote after this wise.

153.

First he began her his true lady to call,
his heart's life, his desire, his sorrow's cure,
his bliss, and then those other terms, all
that in such a case these lovers adore:
and in a humble way, as in speech before,
he began to recommend him to her grace:
to tell it all would ask too great a space.

154.

And after this quite humbly her he prayed
to be not angered, though he, in folly, ay,
was so bold as to her to write, and said
love made him do it, or else he must die,
and piteously for mercy began to cry.
And after that he said, and lied aloud
that he was of little worth, and nothing proud:

155.

and that his skill by her should be excused,
being so little, and that he feared her so,
and his unworthiness he then accused:
and after that, he began to tell his woe,
but that was endless, without end, so
he said he would to loyalty always hold:
read it over, and began the letter to fold.

156.

And with his salt tears he began to bathe
the ruby in his signet, which he set
into the wax, as quickly as one may.
With that, a thousand times before he let
it go, he kissed the letter his tears had wet,
and said: 'Letter, a blissful destiny
waits for you, my lady you will see.'

157.

Then Pandar took the letter, betimes,
and that morrow, to his niece's palace made a start:
and he swore firmly that it was past nine,
and began to jest, and said: 'Oh, my heart,
is so fresh, although it feels sore smart,
that I can never sleep in a May morrow,
I have a jolly woe, a lusty sorrow!

158.

Cressid, when she her uncle heard,
with fearful heart, desirous to hear
the cause of his coming, thus answered:
'Now by your faith, my uncle,' she said, 'dear,
what manner of wind now blows you here?
Tell us your jolly woe and your penance,
how far you are placed within love's dance.'

159.

‘By God,’ he said, ‘I always hop behind.’
And she laughed out loud, fit to burst.
Said Pandarus; ‘Yes, always look to find
a joke with me, but listen to me first:
there is right now come into town a guest,
a Greek spy, who tells us some new things,
of which I come to give you the tidings.

160.

Into the garden go, and we shall hear,
all privately, of this, a long sermon.’
With that they went arm in arm, the pair,
into the garden, from the chamber, down.
And when he was far enough that the sound
of what he said no other man might know,
he said this to her, and the letter showed:

161.

‘Lo, he that is all wholly yours and free
recommends himself humbly to your grace,
and sends this letter here to you, through me:
Consider it yourself when you have space,
and set some goodly answer in its place:
or otherwise, God help me, to speak plain,
he may not live much longer in such pain.’

162.

Full of fear she halted and stood still,
and took it not, but her look of humble cheer
began to change, and she said: 'All you will,
(for love of God) that touches on such a matter
bring it me not: and also uncle dear
have more respect for my position, I pray,
then for his desires. What more can I say?

163.

And consider now if this is reasonable,
and do not, out of favour or laxity,
speak an untruth: now is it suitable
to my position, by God and your honesty,
to take it or to show him any pity,
harming myself or earning censure?
Carry it back to him, by God, for sure.'

164.

At this, Pandarus began, at her, to stare,
and said: 'Now this is the greatest wonder
that ever I saw! This is indeed nice fare!
May I be struck dead in the storm's thunder
if, even for the city that stands yonder,
I would to you a letter bring, or one take
to harm you: why do you of it such issue make?

165.

But so you women do, some or well nigh all,
that he who most desires you to serve,
to him you care least what might befall,
and whether he live or die at your word.
But in return for all that I deserve,
refuse it not,' he said, and held her just,
and in her bosom the letter down he thrust.

166.

And he said to her: 'Now cast it away at once,
so that the folk may see and gape at us, ay.'
She said: 'I can abide till they are gone,'
and began to smile, and said: 'Uncle, I
pray you yourself will the answer provide,
for truly I will not write a letter, I say.'
'No? Then I will,' he said, 'if you dictate.'

167.

At that she laughed, and said: 'We will dine,'
And he began to mock himself at last,
and said: 'Niece, I so greatly pine
for love, that every other day I fast':
and began his best jests to broadcast,
and made her laugh so, at his folly,
that she for laughing thought she would die.

168.

And when she had come into the hall,
‘Now, uncle,’ she said, ‘we’ll go dine at once’,
And she began on some of her women to call,
and straight away into her chamber was gone.
But of her business there, this was one
among other things, indeed,
quite privately the letter to read.

169.

She studied it word by word, in every line,
and found no fault, she thought it good:
and put it away, and went in to dine.
And Pandar, who in meditation stood,
before he was aware, she caught by the hood,
and said: ‘You were caught before you knew.’
‘I grant it,’ he said, ‘what you wish to, do.’

170.

Then they washed, and sat down to eat:
and after noon quite slily Pandarus
began to draw near the window on the street,
and said: ‘Niece, who has adorned thus
yonder house that stands opposite us?’
‘Which house?’ she said, looking to behold,
and knew it well, and whose it was him told:

171.

And they fell into discussion of some detail,
and sat in the window, and there they stay.
When Pandarus saw a chance to tell his tale
and clearly saw her folk were all away,
'Now, my niece, tell on,' he said, 'I say,
how do you like the letter you read, though?
Can he write? For, in truth, I do not know.'

172.

At that all rosy-hued starting to blush, she
began to hum, and said: 'Well, I think so.'
'Repay him well, for God's love,' said he:
'For my reward, I will the letter fold,'
and held his hands up, and knelt down low,
'Now, good niece, be it never so slight,
give me the labour of sealing it up tight.'

173.

'Yes, for I could so write,' she said though,
'and yet I don't know what I to him should say.'
'No, niece, ' said Pandarus, 'say not so:
but at the least thank him, I pray,
for his good will, don't let him waste away.
Now for the love of me, my niece dear,
do not refuse to listen now to my prayer.'

174.

‘By heaven!’ she said, ‘God grant that all is well!
God help me so, this is the first letter
that ever I wrote, yes, or any part, so to tell.’
And into her closet to consider it better
she went alone, and began her heart to unfetter
from the prison of disdainfulness a mite,
and sat herself down, and began to write.

175.

To tell of it briefly is my intent,
the substance, as far as I can understand.
She thanked him for all the good he meant
towards her: but take him by the hand
she would not, nor would she be bound
in love, but like a sister, him to please,
she would be glad to set his heart at ease.

176.

She closed it up, and to Pandarus did go,
where he was sitting, gazing at the street:
and she sat down beside him on a stone
of jasper, on a cushion of gold complete,
and said: ‘May God help me in this, so be it,
I never did a thing with greater pain
than write this, to which you me constrain.’

177.

And gave it him. He thanked her and said:
‘God knows, of things reluctantly begun
often the end is good: and, my niece, Cressid,
that you have only with trouble now been won
he should be glad, by God and yonder sun!’
Because men say, impressions which are slight
are always the readiest to take flight.

178.

But you have played the tyrant far too long:
your heart indeed was hard to engrave.
Now cease, and no longer on it hang,
though you wish your aloofness to save.
But make haste that he of you may joy have:
for trust this well, too long a harshness
often indeed breeds scorn from distress.

179.

And just as they spoke of this matter,
lo, Troilus, right at the street’s far end,
came riding in a company of ten,
all quietly, and his course began to tend
to where they sat, as this was his way to wend
towards the palace: and Pandarus him spied,
and said: ‘Niece, see who comes here to ride.

180.

‘O flee not in (he sees us, I suppose),
lest he think that you his sight eschew.’
‘No, no,’ she said, and turned as red as rose.
At that he began her humbly to salute
with fearful face, and often changing hue:
and his look pleasantly up he cast,
and nodded to Pandar, and then rode past.

181.

God knows if he sat his horse aright,
or was fair to see on that day.
God knows if he was like a manly knight.
Why should I stop to tell of his array?
Cressid, who watched him all his way,
to tell in short, she liked, in any case,
his person, his array, his look, his face,

182.

his goodly manner, and his nobleness,
so well that never yet since she was born
had she such pity for his distress:
and however harsh she had seemed before,
I hope to God she now can feel the thorn.
She shall not pull it out this week or next:
God send more thorns like that, is my text.

183.

Pandar, who stood next her closely,
felt the iron was hot and began to strike,
and said: 'Niece, I pray you earnestly,
answer me what I ask you, as you like:
a woman who brought his death in sight,
without him being guilty, but lacked ruth,
would that be well? Said she, 'No, in truth.'

184.

'God help me so,' he said, 'you say no:
you feel in yourself I do not lie.
Lo! There he rides.' Said she: 'Yes, he does so.'
'Well,' said Pandar, 'as I have told you thrice,
let folly go, and shame, be not too nice,
and speak with him to ease his heart:
Let niceties not make you both to smart.'

185.

But about it there was toil still to be done:
considering everything it might not be:
and why? From shame, and it was too soon
to grant him so great a liberty.
For plainly her intent, so said she,
was to love him in secret if she might
and reward him with nothing but with sight.

186.

But Pandarus thought: 'It shall not be so
if I can help it, this nice opinion
shall not be held for a year or two.'
Why should I make of this a long sermon?
He must agree to her conclusion
for the while: and when that it was eve,
and all was well, he rose and took his leave.

187.

And on his way homeward quick he sped,
and he felt his heart with joy to dance:
and Troilus he found alone in bed,
who lay, as do these lovers, in a trance,
between hope and desperation's glance.
But Pandarus, straight at his in-coming,
sang out, as one who says, 'Look what I bring.'

188.

And said: 'Who is in his bed so soon
and buried thus?' 'It is I, friend,' said he.
'Who? Troilus? No, by help of the moon,'
said Pandarus, 'you shall rise and see
a charm that was sent just now to thee
which can heal you of your distress,
if you now complete the business.'

189.

‘Ah, through the power of God!’ said Troilus
And Pandarus made him the letter take
and said: ‘By heaven, God has helped us:
have here a light, and look on all this black.’
As often the heart joyed or began to quake
of Troilus, when he opened it and read,
as the words gave him hope or dread.

190.

But finally he took all for the best
that she had written, for something he beheld
on which, he thought, his heart might rest,
though she hid the words beneath a shield.
So to the more worthy part he held,
so that in hope and at Pandarus’s request,
his great woe he abandoned at the least.

191.

But as we may ourselves any day see,
the more the wood or coal, the more the fire,
just so increase of hope, from wherever it be,
full often with it increases the desire:
just as an oak comes from a little spire,
so through this letter, which she sent,
the desire increased, with which he burnt.

192.

Wherefore, I say, always, day and night,
out of this, Troilus began to desire more
than he did before, from hope, and with might
pressed on, helped by Pandar's lore,
and wrote to her of his sorrows sore:
from day to day he let not things grow cold,
and by Pandar wrote of something or had it told.

193.

And also did other observances
that belong to lovers in this case:
and after that as the dice chances
so was he either glad or said: 'Alas!'
and from the luck of the throw set the pace:
and according to such answers as he had,
so were his days either sorry or glad.

194.

But to Pandar always he had recourse,
and began to turn piteously to him to complain,
and sought advice of him, and help of course:
and Pandarus, who saw his bitter pain,
grew well nigh dead for pity, truth to say,
and busily with all his heart he cast
around to ease his woe, and that right fast.

195.

And said: 'Lord and friend and master dear,
God knows your dis-ease give me woe,
but if you will only cease this woeful cheer,
by my truth, before two days shall go,
and with God's help, I will shape things so
that you will come into a certain place
where you yourself may ask for her grace.

196.

And certainly, I know not if you know'st,
but those who are expert in love this say,
that it is one of the things that furthers most,
for a man to have a chance to pray
for grace, and in a proper place, if he may:
for on a good heart pity it will impress,
to hear and see the guiltless in distress.

197.

Perhaps you think: "Though it might be so
that nature would cause her to begin
to have some manner of pity on my woe,
disdain says: 'No, me you will never win.'
Her heart's spirit so rules her within
that though she bends yet she stands rooted:
how is this to my advantage suited?"

198.

Think, in answer, when the sturdy oak
that men hack at often, one by one,
has received the final felling stroke,
swaying greatly it comes down at once,
as do these rocks or these millstones.
For falling more swiftly comes a thing of weight,
when it descends, than does a thing that's light.

199.

And the reed that bows down at every blast,
so easily, when the wind ceases will arise:
but so will not an oak when it is cast:
it does not need me to give you more advice.
Men will rejoice in a great enterprise
well done, that stands firm, without a doubt,
though they have been the longer there about.

200.

But, Troilus, yet tell me with the rest,
a thing that now I will ask of thee:
which of your brothers do you love the best,
as in your very heart's privacy'
'It is my brother Deiphebus,' said he.
'Now,' said Pandarus, 'before hours twice twelve
he shall ease your woe, yet know it not himself.

201.

Now let me alone to work as I may,'
he said, and went then to Deiphebus,
who had his lord and great friend been always:
no man he loves so much but Troilus.
In short, to tell, without more to discuss,
Pandarus said: 'I pray you that you might be
friend to a cause which touches me.'

202.

'Yes, by heaven,' said Deiphebus, 'well you know,
in all that ever I may, and God before,
for no man more, except him I love most
my brother Troilus, But say what for
and how it is: for since I was born
I have not, nor never will be, against anything,
I think, that might you to good fortune bring.'

203.

Pandar began to thank him, and to him said:
'Lo, sire, I have a lady in this town,
that is my niece and is called Cressid,
whom men would cause to suffer oppression,
and would wrongfully have her possessions.
Wherefore of your lordship I beseech
to be our friend, without further speech.'

204.

Deiphebus answered: 'Oh, is not this
whom you speak of as if she were a stranger,
Cressid, my friend?' He said: 'It is.'
'Then you need, 'said Deiphebus, no more
speech: for, trust well, I will be to her
her champion with whip and with spur:
I care not if all her enemies heard.

205.

But tell me, you who know all this matter,
how I might best assist: let me now see.'
Said Pandarus: 'If you my lord so dear,
are ready now to do this honour for me,
to beg her tomorrow, lo, that she
should come to you and her complaints cite,
her adversaries would at that take fright.

206.

And if I might pray further even now,
and require you to undergo such travail
as to have your brothers here with you,
that might her cause better avail,
then I know well, she might never fail
to be helped, either at your instance,
or with her other friends' governance.'

207.

Deiphebus, who was of that kind
that to all honour generously consent,
answered: 'It shall be done, and I can find
yet more help to add to my intent,
what would you say if I for Helen sent
to speak of this? I think that for the best,
for she can lead Paris at the least.

208.

For Hector, that is my lord, my brother,
there is no need to pray him friend to be:
For I have heard him at one time or another,
speak such honour of Cressida that he
can speak no higher, such virtue to him has she.
There is no need his help to crave:
he'll be as true as we'd have him behave.

209.

You yourself also speak to Troilus
on my behalf, and ask him with us to dine.'
'Sire, all this shall be done,' said Pandarus,
and took his leave, and wasted no time,
but to his niece's house in a straight line
he came, and found her ready from the meat to rise:
and sat him down, and spoke to her in this wise.

210.

He said: 'O the true God, how I have run!
Lo, my niece, do you not see how I sweat?
I don't know if to your thanks you'll add one.
Are you aware how that false Polyphete
is now about to lodge an appeal,
and bring on you advocacies new?'
'I? No,' she said, and her face changed hue.

211.

'What is he trying now, to trouble me
and do me wrong? What shall I do, alas?
Yet, of himself, to me it would no care be
were it not for Antenor and Aeneas,
that are his friends in such a case:
but for the love of God, my uncle dear,
it matters not: let him take all, I fear:

212.

without it I still have enough for us'
'No,' said Pandar, 'it shall not be so:
for I have been just now to Deiphebus
and Hector, and my other lords, though,
and quickly made each of them his foe,
so that, through my care, he shall never win
for aught he can do, when he begin.'

213.

And as they thought what should best be done,
Deiphebus, out of his own courtesy,
came to ask her, in his own person,
to keep him, on the morrow, company
at dinner, and she must not him deny,
and readily she said she would obey.
He thanked her, and went upon his way.

214.

When this was done, Pandar rose alone,
to tell this briefly, and began to wend
his way to Troilus, who was still as stone,
and all this thing he told him, end to end,
and how he used Deiphebus as a friend:
and said to him: 'Now is the time if you can
bear yourself well tomorrow, and all is won.

215.

Now speak, now beg, now piteously complain:
waver not through shame or fear or sloth.
Sometimes a man must tell of his own pain:
believe it, and she will show towards you ruth:
you will be saved by your own faith, in truth.
But well I know you are now in fear,
and what it is, I bet you, is right clear.

216.

You think now, "How am I to do this?
For by my face folk must espy
that it is for her love I fare amiss:
yet I had rather unknown for sorrow die."
Now think not so, for you do folly, I
right now have found out a manner
of trick to cover your situation here.

217.

You shall go overnight, and that so blithe,
to Deiphebus's house, as if to play,
your malady the better away to drive,
because you seem sick, truth to say.
Soon after that, down in the bed you lay,
and say you can no more being up endure,
and lie right there, and await your adventure.

218.

Say that the fever is used in you to take
the same time, and lasts until the morrow:
and let's see how much out of it you can make,
for, by heaven, he is sick that is in sorrow,
Go now, farewell: and Venus's aid we borrow,
I hope, and if you hold this purpose firm,
your favour she shall fully there confirm.'

219.

Said Troilus: 'Alas, you needlessly
counsel me that sickness I should feign,
since I am sick in earnest, as you see,
so that I well nigh die of the pain.'
Said Pandarus: 'You will the better complain,
and have the less need to counterfeit,
for men think he is hot that they see sweat.

220.

Lo, keep you, at close station, and I
shall the deer well towards your bow drive.'
With that he took his leave all softly.
And Troilus to the palace went so blithe.
He was never so glad to be alive.
And to Pandarus's advice gave all consent.
And to Deiphebus's house at night he went.

221.

What need have I to tell you all the cheer
that Deiphebus for his brother made,
or his fever, or his sickly manner,
how men had him with sheets arrayed,
when he was abed, and how they wished him glad?
But all for nothing, he stuck as was wise
to the plan he had heard Pandarus devise.

222.

But certain it is, before Troilus was abed,
Deiphebus had begged him overnight
to be a friend, in helping of Cressid.
God knows he granted that all right
to be her full friend with all his might.
But there was as much need to have done
that, as to bid a madman run.

223.

The morning came, and it grew near the time
to eat, when the fair queen Helen
prepared to visit, an hour after prime,
with Deiphebus, to whom she did not feign:
but as his sister, familiarly, truth to tell, then,
she came to dinner, pure in intent,
Only God and Pandar knew what all this meant.

224.

Came Cressid also (all innocent of this)
Antigone, her sister Tharbe also:
but to flee from prolixity best is,
for love of God, and let us quickly go
right to the matter, without tales, so,
as to why these folks assembled in this place,
and let us pass over their greetings apace.

225.

Great honour did Deiphobus do them for certain,
and fed them well with all that might delight.
But evermore 'Alas!' was his refrain,
'My good brother Troilus, does lie
still sick'. And with that he began to sigh:
and after that he tried to make them glad
as far as he might, and with what cheer he had.

226.

Complained also Helen of his sickness
so faithfully, that it was pitiful to hear,
and everyone began for feverishness
to be a doctor, and said: 'In this manner
men cure folk: by this charm I will swear.'
But there sat one, though she did not choose to teach,
who thought: 'I could yet be his best leech.'

227.

After that complaint, they began to praise
as folk do still when someone has begun
to praise a man, and up with praise him raise
a thousand-fold yet higher than the sun:
'He is, he does, what few lords are and can.'
And Pandarus, whatever they might affirm
did not forget their praising to confirm.

228.

Cressid heard all this thing well enough,
and every word began to note, with pride,
though sober-faced her heart began to laugh:
for who is there would not be glorified
to govern if such a knight lived or died?
But I pass by this, lest you too long dwell:
for to one end is all that ever I tell.

229.

The time came then from dinner to rise,
and, as they ought, then rose everyone,
and speech on this and that they did devise,
but Pandarus broke in on this at once,
and said to Deiphebus: 'Will you go on,
if it is your will, as I you prayed,
to speak here of the needs of Criseid?

230.

Helen, who by the hand her took,
took up the tale first, and said: 'Shall I?'
and as a friend on Cressida cast her look,
and said: 'Jove let him never thrive
who does you harm, and quickly end his life.
And give me sorrow if he shall not it rue,
if it is up to me, and all folk true.

231.

‘You tell your niece’s case, ‘said Deiphebus
to Pandarus, ‘since you can best it tell.’
‘My lords and my ladies, it stands thus:
Why should I long,’ said he, ‘make you dwell?’
He rang them out a story like a bell,
against her foe who was called Polyphete,
so heinous that men might on it spit.

232.

Each one was more indignant than the other,
and they began Polyphete to curse:
‘He should he hanged, though he were my brother:
and so he shall, for he deserves the worst.’
Why should I tarry longer in this verse?
Plainly, all at once, they promised her,
to be her help in all that might occur.

233.

Then Helen spoke and said: ‘Pandarus,
does my lord, my brother, know of this matter:
I mean Hector? And is it known to Troilus?’
He said: ‘Yes, but will you now me hear?’
My thought is this, since Troilus is here,
it would be good for her, if you assent,
to tell him all this herself, before she went.

234.

For he will the more have her grief at heart,
because, lo, that she a lady is.
And, by your leave, to his room I'll depart
and let you know (and that at once, I guess)
if he is asleep or will hear aught of this.'
And in he leapt, and spoke into his ear:
'God receive your soul, I have brought the bier!'

235.

To smile at this then began Troilus,
and Pandarus, without more reckoning,
went out at once to Helen and Deiphebus,
and said to them: 'So there be no tarrying,
and no crowding, he would like you to bring
Cressida, my lady, that is here:
and as long as he can endure, he will hear.'

236.

But you well know, it is a little room,
and a few folk may quickly make it warm.
Now look you (for I will have no one
bring in a crowd that might do him harm
or trouble him, for my better arm),
whether it be best for her to wait, now you
determine, who know best what to do.

237.

I say the best is, as far as I can know,
that no one should go in unless you may,
unless it were I: for I can in a throw
rehearse her case better than she can say.
And after this she might him once pray
to be the good lord, in short, and take her leave:
this may not much his illness grieve.

238.

And then, since she's a stranger, he will forgo
his comfort, which he need not do for you.
And another thing, that no one should know,
he will tell me, I am certain right now,
that is a secret, and for the town's help too.'
And they, that knew nothing of his intent,
without more ado to Troilus in they went.

239.

Helen in all her lovely soft wise,
began to greet him, and in a womanly way
to jest, and said: 'Well, you must arise:
Now fair brother, be all well, I pray':
And her right arm over his shoulder to lay
and with all her wit to give him comfort:
and, as she best could, put him in good sort.

240.

So after this she said: 'We you beseech,
me dear brother, Deiphebus and I,
for love of God, and so does Pandarus, each,
that you be a good lord and friend, earnestly,
to Cressida, who has certainly
received a wrong, as Pandar here well knows,
who can her case better than I disclose.

241.

At this Pandar began anew his tongue to file,
and all her case rehearse, and that done
and it said, soon after, in a while,
Troilus said: 'When I may rise, soon,
I will gladly with all my might make one,
God have my truth, who will her cause sustain,'
'God's luck to you,' said Helen the queen.

242.

Said Pandarus: 'And is your will to be
that she may take her leave before she go?
'God forbid else,' then said he,
'If she would agree to do so.'
And with that word said Troilus: 'You two,
Deiphebus and you my sister dear,
to you have I to speak of a matter,

243.

so as to be advised by you the better.’
And found, it happened, at his bed’s head,
the copy of a treatise and a letter
that Hector had sent, asking him to read,
if some man deserved to be dead,
who I know not: but in a mournful wise,
he begged them to study it and advise.

244.

Deiphebus began this letter to unfold
in great earnest. So did Helen the queen,
and wandering out, began it to behold,
down the stair into an arbour green.
This thing they read and passed it between:
and deeply, for the space of an hour,
they spent their time reading it and more.

245.

Now let them read, and turn we so
to Pandarus, who quickly began to spy
that all was well: and out he began to go
into the great chamber, and quickly hied,
and said: ‘God save all this company!
Come, my niece: my lady, queen Helen
waits for you, and my two lords, then



'Helen'
The Stratford gallery (p241, 1859)
Palmer, Henrietta Lee, b. 1834
Internet Archive Book Images

246.

rise: take with you your niece Antigone
or whom you wish, it matters hardly:
the less crowd the better. Come with me,
and look that you thank humbly
all three of them, and when you duly see
your time, take of them your leave,
lest we too long him of his rest bereave.'

247.

All innocent of Pandarus's intent,
Cressid then said: 'Let us go, uncle dear':
and arm in arm in with him she went,
careful of her words and how she appeared,
and Pandarus, in earnest manner,
said: 'All you folk! For God's love I pray,
stay right here, and softly play.

248.

Remember you what folk are here within,
and in what plight one is, God him amend!'
And quietly thus: 'full softly begin:
niece I conjure you and recommend
on His behalf who to us all a soul sends,
and by the virtue of crowns twain,
do not slay this man who has for you such pain.

249.

Fie on the devil! Think what man is this,
and in what plight he lies. Come on!
Think all such time delaying lost, it is.
That you will both say, when you are one.
Secondly, this is divined by none
about you two: Come on now, if you can.
While folk are blind, lo, all the time is won.

250.

In hesitation, pursuit and in delays
folk divine things from a straw's blown frailty:
and though you wish to have after merry days,
then you dare not: and why? Because she and she
spoke a word so: and then looked he and he.
Lest I lost time, I could not with you deal
openly, come, therefore, bring him to heel.'

251.

But now I ask you, you lovers who are here,
was Troilus not with difficulties fraught?
He that lay, and them could whispering hear,
and thought: 'O lord! My fate will now be brought,
either to die or soon have her comfort':
and this was the first time he could her pray
for love. O mighty God, what should he say?

BOOK III - THE CONSUMMATION

1.

O Blissful light, of which the beams clear
adorn all *the third heaven* [p. 452] fair!
O sun's beloved, O Jove's daughter dear,
pleasure of love, O grace of air,
in gentle hearts and ready to live there!
O true cause of health and gladness,
blessed be your power and your goodness!

2.

In heaven and hell, in earth and salt sea
your power is felt, if I truly discern all,
since man, bird, beast, fish, herb and green tree
feel at times your influence eternal.
God loves, and from love will never fall:
And in this world no living creature
without love, has worth, or may endure.

3.

You Jove first to those effects so glad
(through which all things live and be)
brought him, and amorous him made
towards mortal things: and as you wish, ye
gave him in love ease or adversity:
and in a thousand forms down him sent
to love on earth, and where you wished he went.

4.

For you fierce Mars quenched his ire:
and as you wish you make hearts fine:
at least, those that you wish to set on fire,
they fear shame, and vices they resign.
You make them courteous, fresh and benign,
and high or low, whatever a man intends,
the joy he has, your power to him sends.

5.

You hold kingdom and house in unity:
you the true cause of friendship are also:
you know all the secret quality
of things, that folk wonder about so,
when they cannot see why time should show
that she loves him, or why he loves her,
or why this fish, not that one, comes to the weir.

6.

You have set a law for folk in the universe,
and this I know from those that lovers be,
that they who work against you have the worse
of it: now, lady bright, of your benignity,
in reverence to those who serve thee,
whose clerk I am, now teach me to write true
some of the joy folk feel in serving you.

7.

Do you into my naked heart sentiment
infuse, and show me of your sweetness. —
Calliope [p. 452], your voice now be present,
for now it is needed: see you not my distress,
how I must tell right now of the gladness
of Troilus, all for Venus's honouring?
To which gladness him who has need God bring.

8.

All this time meanwhile lay Troilus
rehearsing his lesson in this manner:
'My faith!' thought he, 'this I will say, and thus:
thus will I entreat my lady dear:
that word is good, and this shall be my cheer:
this I must not forget, any wise.'
God grant it all works out as he shall devise.



'Calliope, the Muse of Epic Poetry'
Anonymous, c. 1750 - c. 1780
The Rijksmuseum

9.

And lord, how fast his heart began to beat,
hearing her coming, and he heaved a sigh!
And Pandarus, that led her, by and by,
came near and began in at the curtain to spy,
and said: 'God give health to those who die!
See, who is here coming to visit you:
Lo, here is she that is your death too.

10.

At that it seemed as if he wept almost.
'Ah,' said Troilus, so ruefully,
'whether I am woeful, O mighty God you know'st.
Who is there? I can see nothing, truly.'
'Sir,' said Cressid, 'it is Pandar and I.'
'You, sweet heart? Alas I may not rise
to kneel and do you honour, in any guise.'

11.

And he raised him upward, and she right so
began her soft hands both on him to lay:
'Oh, for the love of God, do you not so
for me,' she said, 'ah! what do you say?
Sire, I come to you for two causes today:
first to thank you, and from your lordship seek
the continuing protection I beseech.'

12.

At this, Troilus, who heard his lady pray
for his support, was neither quick nor dead,
nor, for shame, might to her one word say,
even if men should strike off his head.
But lord! he blushed so suddenly red,
and sire, his lessons, that he thought he knew
in how to speak to her, his wits ran through.

13.

Cressid all this spied out well enough,
for she was wise, and loved him nonetheless
though he was not forward, nor seemed tough,
nor bold enough to sing a fool a mass.
But as his shame began somewhat to pass,
his words, as long as my rhymes hold,
I will tell you, as teach the books of old.

14.

In altered voice, truly because of dread,
which voice shook, and therefore his manner
was greatly abased, and now his colour red,
now pale, to Cressid, his lady dear,
with look downcast and humble cheer,
lo, the very first words that from him start
are twice: 'Mercy, mercy, sweet heart.'

15.

And he was silent a while, and when he could bring
himself to speak, said: God knows, that I have
as faithfully as I have had it in my enabling,
been yours (so God my soul save)
and shall, till I, poor wretch, am in my grave.
And though I dare not, and cannot, complain
to you, it's true that none the less I suffer pain.

16.

This is as much, now, O womanly one,
as I may say: and if this does you displease,
I will avenge it on my own life, right soon
I think, and set your heart at ease,
if with my death your heart I can appease.
But since you have heard me have my say,
now I care not how soon I pass away.'

17.

With that his manly sorrow to behold,
might have left a heart of stone in pain:
and Pandar wept as if he might melt, all told,
and nudged his niece again and again,
and said: 'True hearts are woebegone!
For love of God make of this thing an end,
and slay us both at once before you wend.'

18.

'I? What?' said she: 'by God and by my truth,
I do not know what you would have me say.'
'I? What?' said he: 'that on him you have ruth,
for God's love, and let him not fade away.'
'Now then, thus,' she said, 'I will him pray
to tell me the object of his intent:
I never knew yet quite what he meant.'

19.

'What I might mean, O sweet heart dear?'
said Troilus, 'O lovely, fresh and free!
That with the streams of your eyes clear
you might look some time friendly on me,
and then agree that I may be he,
without a trace of vice in any way,
who might in truth serve you every day.'

20.

As towards my own lady and chief resort,
with all my wit and all my diligence,
and I to have, at your will, comfort,
subject to your punishment, equal to my offence,
even death, if I fail in your defence:
and that you deign to show me so much honour,
as to command me aught at any hour.

21.

And I to be yours, very humble, true,
secret, and in the pains I take patient,
and ever more desire fresh anew
to serve, and ever likewise diligent,
and with good heart all wholly bent
on obeying your wishes, however they smart:
lo, I mean this, my own sweet heart.'

22.

Said Pandarus: 'Lo, here's a hard request,
and reasonable, for a lady to spurn!
Now, my niece, by Jove's natal feast,
were I a god, your death you would earn,
who hear clearly this man will only burn
for your honour, and see him almost die too,
and yet are so loth to suffer him to serve you.'

23.

With that she began her eye on him to cast
all pleasantly and all graciously,
considering, and went not too fast
with her words, but said to him softly:
'Mine honour excepted, I will truly,
and in such form as he can now devise,
accept him fully as servant, in my eyes .

24.

Beseeching him, for God's love that he
will, in honour of truth and nobleness,
as I mean well, so mean well to me,
and my honour with wit and finesse
always guard: and if I may do him gladness,
from here on, then I will not feign:
now all be whole, no longer complain.

25.

But nevertheless, I warn you,' said she,
'king's son though you be, in this
you shall no more have sovereignty
over me in love than right in such case is.
Nor will I forbear, if you do amiss,
to be angry with you: but while you me serve
cherish you truly as you deserve.

26.

And in short, dear heart and all my knight,
be glad, and regain your lustiness,
and I shall truly, with all my might,
your bitterness turn all to sweetness.
If I be she that may bring you gladness,
for every woe you shall receive a bliss':
And him in her arms took and began to kiss.

27.

Pandarus fell on his knees, and up his eyes
to heaven threw, and held his hands high.
'Immortal God,' said he, 'that never dies -
Cupid, I mean - this does you glorify:
and Venus, you may make your melody.
Without hand to them, it seems that in the town,
at this marvel, I hear each bell sound.

28.

But ho! nor more now of this matter,
because these folk will come up soon,
who have the letter read: 'lo, I them hear.
But I conjure you Cressid, for one
and two, you Troilus, when you are up and gone,
that to my house you come at my inviting,
for I will full well arrange your coming.

29.

And ease your hearts there right enough,
and let's see which of you can ring the bell
for speaking of love aright.' With that he laughed:
'For there you will have a chance to tell!'
Said Troilus: 'How long shall I dwell
before it's done?' Said he: 'When you shall rise
this thing shall be exactly as I advise.

30.

At that Helen and also Deiphebus
came upwards, right at the stair's end:
and lord! so then began to groan Troilus
to his brother and his sister, to pretend.
Said Pandarus: 'It's time our way to wend.
Take, my niece, your leave of all three,
and let them talk, and come along with me.'

31.

She took her leave of them as politely
as she could, and they did her reverence
as fully as they could and graciously,
and spoke wondrously in her absence,
of her, in praise of her excellence:
and her demeanour, wit, and her manner
commended so, it was a joy to hear.

32.

Now let her take her way to her own place,
and we will turn to Troilus again,
who began the letter lightly to trace
that Deiphebus had in the garden seen.
And of Helen and him he would fain
be free, and said that his request
was to sleep, and after talk have rest.

33.

Helen kissed him, and took her leave all blithe,
Deiphebus also, and home went all who might.
And Pandarus, as fast as he could drive,
then came to Troilus: straight as a crow's flight:
and on a pallet all that glad night
he lay by Troilus with a merry face,
to talk, and it was well they were together a space.

34.

When everyone had vanished but these two,
and all the doors were shut quite fast,
to tell in brief, without more ado,
Pandarus, at this, before time passed
rose, and on his bed's side sat,
and began to speak in sober guise
to Troilus as I shall you advise.

35.

My dearest lord, and my brother dear,
God knows, and you, that it made me sore
to see you languishing so this year,
for love, from which your woe grew always more,
so that I, with all my power and all my lore,
have ever done my utmost business
to bring you to joy out of distress:

36.

and I have brought it to the state you know'st,
so that through me you now stand in the way
of faring well – I say it without boast –
and know you why? Shame it is to say,
for you I have begun a game to play
which I would never do for any other,
although he were a thousand times my brother.

37.

That is to say, for you I have become
between joke and earnest, such a go-between
as makes women to men come:
though I say naught, you know well what I mean:
for you I have my niece (of vices clean)
made so fully trust your nobleness,
that everything shall be as you wish.

38.

But God, that knows all, I take to witness
that covetously I this never wrought,
but only to abridge your distress
from which you well nigh died, as I thought.
But, good brother, do now as you ought,
for God's love, and keep her from blame,
since you are wise, and always guard her name.

39.

For you know well, her name as yet here
among the people, as one might say, hallowed is:
for that man is unborn, I truly swear
who ever knew her do a thing amiss.
But woe is me, that I, who cause all this,
have to consider she is my niece dear,
and I her uncle, yet a traitor clear.

40.

And were it known that I, through my own cunning,
had in my niece created this fantasy,
to do your pleasure and come running,
why, all the world would upon it cry
and say that I the worst treachery,
did, in this case, that ever was begun,
and she'd be lost, and you have nothing won.

41.

Wherefore before I go another pace
one more I beseech you and now say
that privacy must go with us in this case,
that you must never reveal us, that's to say,
and be not angry though I often pray
you to hold secret such a deep matter:
for reasonable, you know it, is my prayer.

42.

And think what woe has befallen before this
through boasting, as men can read:
and what mischance in this world yet there is
from day to day, through that wicked deed.
Because of which the ancients were agreed
and told us in wise proverbs when we were young
that the first of virtues is to hold your tongue.

43.

And were it not that I desire to abridge
diffuse discussion, I could almost
a thousand stories to you allege
of women lost through false and foolish boast.
You have learnt enough yourself, and know'st,
proverbs against that vice of always blabbing,
though men might speak the truth in their gabbing.

44.

O tongue, alas! so often here before
have you made many a lady bright of hue
say: "Alas the day that I was born!"
And many a maid's sorrow to renew,
and for the most part, all of it untrue
that men claim, if tested were what they weave:
by his nature no boaster can be believed.

45.

A boaster and a liar all is one,
as thus: suppose a woman grant me
her love, and says that other will she none,
and I am sworn to keep to secrecy,
and after I go tell it two or three.
Then I am a boaster at the least,
and a liar, since my oath's deceased.

46.

Now look then if they be not to blame,
that manner of folk: what shall I call them, what,
who boast of women, and by name,
that never even promised this or that
nor knew them more than they did my old hat?
It is no wonder, so God my wounds heal,
that women dread with us men to deal.

47.

I say this not out of mistrust for you,
nor for wise men, but the foolish,
and because the harm that's in the world now
as often comes through folly as through malice.
For I know well, that in wise folk vice
no woman dreads, if she is well apprised,
for the wise by the fool's fate are advised.

48.

But now to the purpose: beloved brother dear,
keep all these things that I have said in mind,
and be close, and be now of good cheer,
for in your day of need you'll me true find.
I shall your business do in such a kind,
and with God's help, that it will satisfy.
For it shall be just as you'd hope it might.

49.

For I know well that you mean well, too:
therefore I dare this fully to undertake.
You know also, what the lady granted you,
and the day is set the contract to make.
Now good night, I cannot keep awake:
and pray for me, since you are now in bliss,
that God soon send me death or joy like this.'

50.

Who could tell of half the joy, or guess
what the soul of Troilus then felt,
hearing the assurance in Pandar's request?
His old woe, that made his heart swell
began for joy to waste away and melt.
And all the wealth of his sighs so sore
fled at once: he felt them no more.

51.

But just as these coppices and hedges,
that have in winter been dead and grey,
re-clothe themselves in green when May is,
when every lusty lad likes best to play:
just in that same wise, truth to say,
his heart was suddenly filled with joy,
till there was never gladder man in Troy.

52.

And he began his look on Pandar to cast
both soberly and friendly, to see,
and said: 'Friend, in April last
as well you know, if it remembered be,
how near death from woe it was you found me,
and how you went about this business
to know from me the cause of my distress.

53.

You know how long I refused to tell
you, who are the man that I best trust:
and yet there was no risk as it befell,
I know that truly, but tell me, just,
since I was loth to tell you though I must,
how dare I speak to others of this matter,
who tremble now, where no one can us hear?

54.

But nevertheless, to you by that God I swear all,
who as He wishes may this whole world govern,
and if I lie, may Achilles with his spear
cleave my heart, though my life were eternal,
as I am mortal, if soon or late it fall
that I would betray it, or dare, or can,
for all the good God made under the sun,

55.

then I would rather die and fate be mine
I think, now chained up in a prison,
in wretchedness, with filth and vermin,
a captive of cruel King Agamemnon:
and this in all the temples of this town,
and by all the gods, I will to you swear
tomorrow morning, if you wish to hear.

56.

And that you have done so much for me,
that I may never more it repay,
this I know well, though I might now for thee
die a thousand times in a day:
I will serve you, what more can I say,
as your true servant, wherever you may wend,
for evermore until my life's end.

57.

But here with all my heart I you beseech,
never to imagine in me such folly
as I now say: for me to think by your speech,
that this, which you do for me, so friendly,
might be taken by me as if it were bawdry.
I am not mad, though stupid I may be:
it is not so, I know that well, indeed.

58.

But he that goes for gold or for riches,
on such an errand, call him what you wish:
and this that you do call it nobleness,
compassion, and fellowship, and trust.
Distinguish it so, for far and wide we must
know that the differences must be discerned
between similar things, as I have learned.

59.

And so that you know I think not, nor dream
that this service is a shame or a joke,
I have a fair sister *Polyxene* [p. 452],
Cassandra, Helen, or any of the pack:
be she ever so fair, and nothing lack,
tell me which you will have of anyone
for yours, and leave all to me alone.

60.

But since you have done me this service,
to save my life and not out of greed,
so, for the love of God, this enterprise
carry it through, for now there is most need:
for high and low, without a doubt indeed,
I will always all your rules keep.
Now good night, and let us both sleep.

61.

Thus each held him with the other well blessed,
that all the world could not better it amend:
and on the morrow, when they were both dressed,
each to his own needs began to attend.
But Troilus, though like a fire he burned,
from fierce desire of hope and of pleasure,
did not forget self-control and measure.

62.

But in himself with manhood he restrained
each wayward deed, and unbridled glare,
so that all who lived, truth to say,
should have no sign, by word or manner,
what he might think concerning this matter.
From everyone he was as far as is the cloud,
over his thoughts so well he drew a shroud.

63.

And all the while, which I to you describe,
this was his way of life, with all his might
by day he was in Mars's high service,
that is to say, in arms, as a knight.
And for the greater part, in the long night
he lay and thought how that he might serve
his lady best, her thanks for to deserve.

64.

I will not swear, although he lay full soft,
that in his thought he was all at ease,
nor that he did not turn his pillows oft
and wish that what he lacked he might seize.
But that in such cases men are hard to please,
for aught I know, no less than was he,
I consider that a possibility.

65.

But certain it is, back to the point to go,
that all this while, as is written in the history,
he saw his lady sometimes, and also
she spoke with him, when she dared, and he
and she by agreement, as best could be,
decided carefully in their need
as they dared, how they should proceed.

66.

But it was spoken in so brief a wise,
in such watchfulness, and such fear
(lest anyone divine or realise
aught of the two, or to it have an ear),
that in all this world nothing was so dear
to them, as that Cupid would them grace send
to bring their speeches to a happy end.

67.

But in the little that they spoke or wrought,
his wise spirit always took such heed,
it seemed to her he knew what she thought
without a word: so that there was no need
to ask him to do aught or aught forbid,
so that she thought that love, though it came late
of all joy had opened to her the gate.

68.

And briefly to maintain our pace,
so well his work and words he set,
that he stood so full in his lady's grace,
that twenty thousand times without a let
she thanked God that they had met:
He could govern himself in such a wise
that all the world might not a better devise.

69.

Therefore she found him so discreet, in all
so secret, and of such obedience,
that she felt he was truly to her a wall
of steel, and shield from every nuisance:
so that to be in his good governance
(so wise he was) no longer gave her fear,
I mean as far as propriety made clear.

70.

And Pandarus, to quicken the fire,
was always alike present and diligent:
to help his friend was his only desire.
He pushed things on: he to and fro was sent:
he carried letters when Troilus was absent:
there never was man who in his friend's need
bore himself better than he did, indeed.

71.

But now perhaps some man might hold
that every word, or sound, or look, or cheer,
of Troilus I might indeed unfold
all this while said to his lady dear.
I think it is too long a thing to hear:
and of the man who is in such a state,
all his words, or every look, relate.

72.

In truth, I have not heard it done before,
in story, nor has any man here I've seen:
and though I would, I could not, for
there was a letter sent them between
that would, as my author says, well contain
half this book, of which he did not write:
how then can I a line bring to sight?

73.

But to the main point: then I say thus,
that being in concord and in quiet,
to these two, Cressida and Troilus,
as I have told, in this time so sweet,
save only that they could not often meet,
nor have a chance their speeches to fulfill,
that it befell, just as I shall you tell,

74.

that Pandarus, who always worked with might
to achieve the end I shall speak of here,
and to bring to his house some night
his fair niece and Troilus together, where
at leisure all this high matter
of their love could be fully unwound,
had, he was sure, a time for it found.

75.

For he with great deliberation
had everything that might it avail
forecast, and put in execution,
and neither spared the cost or the travail:
if they came, then nothing would them fail:
and as for being at all espied there,
that an impossibility he knew were.

76.

There was no sign in the wind
of any magpie or any spoil-sport:
now all is well, for all the world is blind
in this matter, both wild and taught.
This timber is all ready to be wrought:
we lack nothing but knowing if we could
of the certain hour when come she should.

77.

And Troilus, that all this preparation
knew in full and waited as he may,
had also for it made a great provision
and found a reason, and what he would say,
if that he were missed by night or day
while he was about this service – ay,
that he was going to make a sacrifice,

78.

and must at such and such a temple wake,
alone, answered of Apollo for to be:
and firstly see the holy laurel quake
before Apollo spoke out of the tree,
to tell him when the Greeks would next flee,
and therefore let no man stop him, God forbid,
but pray to Apollo to help in this need.

79.

Now there is little more to be done:
but Pandar was up, and briefly to explain,
right soon upon the changing of the moon,
when the world is lightless a night or twain,
and the heavens were preparing to rain,
he straight one morning to his niece went:
you all have heard the end of his intent.

80.

When he was come he began again to play,
as was his wont, and at himself to jape:
and finally he swore and began to say,
by this and that, she should him not escape,
no longer causing him after her to gape,
but certainly she must, by her leave,
come and sup with him at his house on the eve.

81.

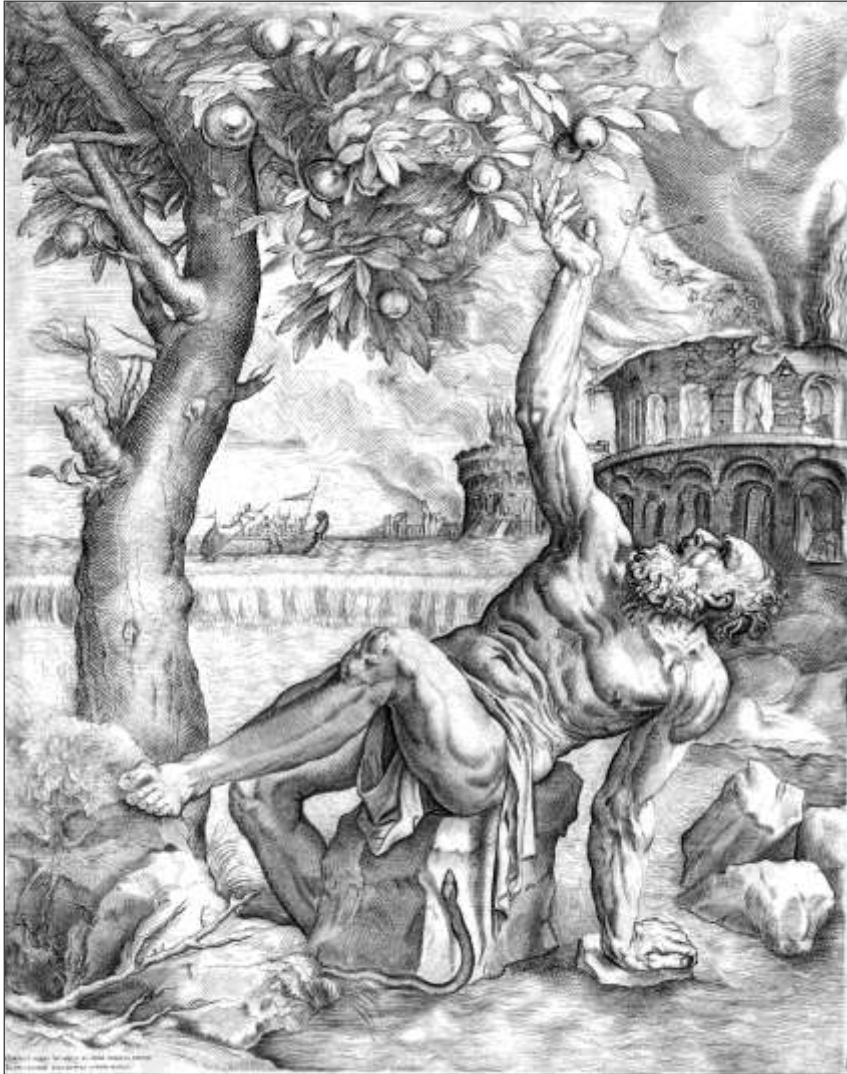
At which she laughed, and gave a brief excuse,
and said: 'It rains: lo, how could I go?'
'Let be,' he said, 'do not stand and muse:
it must be done, you shall be there, though.'
So at the last they were at one, I know,
or else (he swore it softly in her ear),
he would never come near her anywhere.

82.

Soon after this she began quietly him to sound,
asking him if Troilus would be there.
He swore not, to her, that he was out of town,
and said: 'Niece, suppose that he were,
you need not have for that the more fear:
for rather than men might him there espy,
I would rather a thousand times to die.'

83.

My author did not choose to declare
what she thought about it when he said so
(that Troilus was out of town, not there),
whether that is he told the truth or no:
but that without delay with him to go
she granted him, since that is what he sought,
and, as his niece, obeyed him as she ought.



'Tantalus'
Giulio Sanuto, after Titiaan, 1565
The Rijksmuseum

84.

But nevertheless she began him to beseech,
that though to go with him was nothing to fear,
to beware of foolish people's speech,
who dream up things that never were,
and be careful whom he brought there,
and said: 'Uncle, since I trust you so,
make sure all's well, and do as you will now.'

85.

He swore, Yes, by stocks and stones,
and by the gods that in heaven dwell,
or else he would be sunk, soul and bones,
with King Pluto, as deep down in hell
as *Tantalus* [p. 452]. What more should I tell?
When all was well he rose and took his leave,
and she to supper came when it was eve.

86.

With a number of her own men
and with her fair niece Antigone
and others of her women, nine or ten.
But who was glad now? Who should be
but Troilus that stood and might see
through a little window in a room
where since midnight he had been entombed,

87.

unknown by anyone but Pandarus?
But to the point. Now, when she was come
with all joy, and all friendly fare,
her uncle in his arms embraced her soon:
and after to the supper all came and some,
when it was time, softly down them sitting:
God knows, there was no dainty lacking.

88.

And after supper they began to rise,
well at ease, with hearts fresh and glad:
and lucky the man that could best devise
something she liked, or that to laugh her made.
He sang, she played, he told tales from *Wade* [p. 452]:
and at the last, as everything has ending,
she took her leave, and her way was wending.

89.

But, O, Fortune, executrix of destiny,
O influences of the heavens high,
truth is, under God, you our herdsmen be,
though to us beasts, you the causes deny.
This I mean now, for she began home to fly,
but all was done, without her say,
by the gods' will, so that she must stay.

90.

The bent Moon with her horns pale,
Saturn, and Jupiter *in Cancer joined* [p. 191] were,
so that such a rain from heaven began to hail,
that every manner of woman who was there
had of that smoking rain a heartfelt fear.
At which Pandar laughed, and said then:
‘What a time for a lady to go hence!’

91.

But, good niece, if I might ever please
you in anything, then I pray you,’ said he,
‘to set my heart now greatly at ease
by dwelling here all this night with me,
because this is your own house, you see:
for by my truth – I say it, it is no game –
to leave now would put me to shame.’

92.

Cressid, who knew what was fit and good
as well as half the world, heeded his prayer:
and since it rained, and all was in flood,
she thought: ‘I may as well stay here,
and grant it gladly with a friend’s cheer,
and have thanks, as begrudge it, then abide:
for to go home is certainly denied.

93.

I will,' she said, 'my uncle loved and dear,
since you think it right to do so,
I am truly glad to stay with you here:
I only said in jest that I would go.'
'Well, many thanks, niece,' he said, 'though
it were jest, or not, truth to tell
I am glad now that you wish here to dwell.'

94.

So all is well, and then began aright
new joy, and all the feast again:
but Pandarus, if only he might
would have hurried her to bed there and then,
and said: 'Lord! this is a mighty rain!
This is weather to be sleeping in:
and that I think we should soon begin.

95.

And, niece, know you where I would have you lie,
so that we shall not lie too far asunder,
and so that you shall not, I dare say,
hear the noise of rain nor of thunder?
By God, just in my little closet yonder.
And I will in the outer house alone
be warden of your women everyone.

96.

And in this middle chamber that you see
your women shall sleep well and soft:
and there, where I said, yourself shall be:
and if you sleep well tonight, come oft,
and do not bother what weather is aloft.
Take wine now, and when you wish to rest
we'll go: I think that will be best.'

97.

There was no more said: but hereafter soon
(the spiced wine drunk and curtains drawn anon)
everyone began, that had no more to be done
in that place, out of the chamber to be gone.
And ever more heavily the rain rained down,
and it blew as well, so wonderfully loud,
that no man well nigh hear another could.

98.

Then Pandarus, her uncle, as he ought,
with the women who were most her about,
gladly to her bed's side her he brought,
and took his leave, and full low he bowed.
and said: 'Here at this closet door without
just across from you your women sleep, all
so that whom you wish of them you may call.

99.

So when she was in the closet laid,
and all her women gone, in obedience,
and were abed there as I have said,
there was no more need to speak or prance,
but they were bidden to bed, and mischance
to anyone who was stirring anywhere,
and let them sleep that abed were.

100.

But Pandarus that knew each detail well
of the ancient dance, and every point therein,
when he saw that everything fell
out as he wished, he thought he would begin
and began the door to quietly unpin,
and still as a stone, and quickly at that,
by Troilus down he himself sat.

101.

And right to the point briefly to go,
of all these things he told him word and end,
and said: 'Make yourself ready, so
that into heaven's bliss you now may wend.'
'Now blissful Venus, you to me grace send,'
said Troilus, 'for never as much need
had I before now, nor half the dread indeed.'

102.

Said Pandarus: 'Dread not a detail,
for it shall be just as you would desire:
as I may thrive, this night I'll make it well
or I'll throw all the gruel in the fire.'
'Blissful Venus, yet this night me inspire,'
said Troilus, 'as truly as I serve you,
and will do better and better till life is through.

103.

And if I had, O Venus full of mirth,
bad aspects of Mars or of Saturn,
or you were combust or hindered at my birth,
beg your father of his grace the harm discerned
to avert, so that I glad again may turn,
for love of him you loved in the wood,
I mean *Adonis* [p. 453], whom the boar bathed in blood.

104.

Jove also for the love of fair *Europe* [p. 453],
the which, in a bull's form, away you took:
now help me, O Mars, you with bloody cloak,
for love of *Cypris* [p. 453], no hindrance to me brook.
O Phoebus, think when *Daphne* [p. 453] hid her look
under the bark, and laurel grew in dread,
for her love yet, O help now in my need!



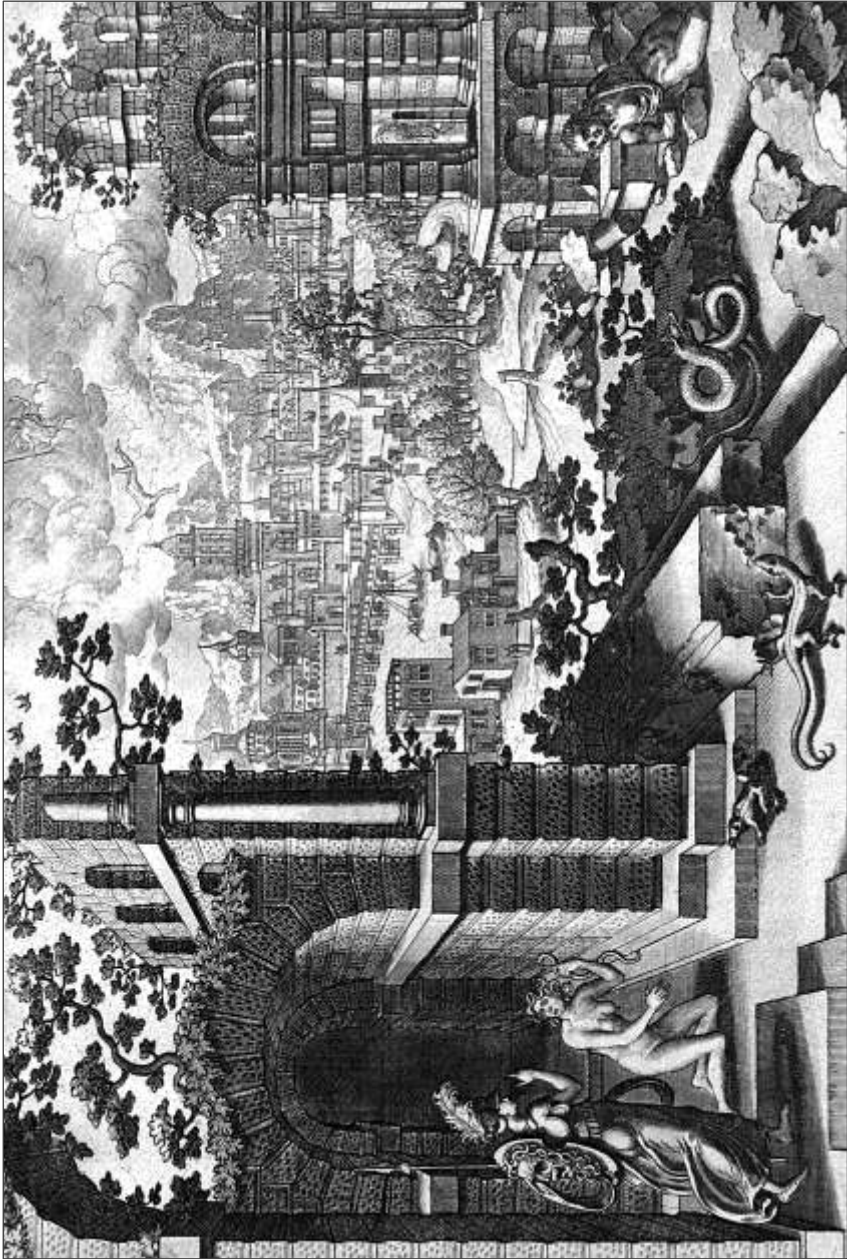
'The Death of Adonis'
Magdalena van de Passe, c. 1636 - 1670
The Rijksmuseum



'Apollo en Daphne'
Robert van Audenaerd, after Carlo Maratti,
Giovanni Paolo Melchiori, 1685 - 1728
The Rijksmuseum

105.

Mercury, for the love of *Herse* [p. 453] too,
for which Pallas showed Aglaurus her wrath,
now help, and also Diana, I you beseech,
that this enterprise be not to you loth,
O *fatal sisters* [p. 453], which before any cloth
was shaped for me, my destiny spun:
so help me in this work that is begun.'



'Minerva asks Time to Ignite Jealousy in Aglauros'
Johannes of Lucas van Doetechum
after Gerard van Groeningen, c. 1572
The Rijksmuseum

106.

Said Pandarus: 'You wretched mouse's heart,
are you so afraid that she will bite?
Why, don this furred cloak above your shirt,
and follow me: for I'll take the blame tonight –
but wait, and let me go before, a mite.'
And with that word began to undo a trap-door,
and Troilus drew in by the sleeve and more.

107.

The fierce wind so loud began to roar,
that no one any other noise could hear:
and those who lay without, at the door,
slept securely, all together there,
and Pandarus, with full sober cheer
went to the door as soon as he could,
where they lay, and softly did it shut.

108.

As he came back secretly,
his niece woke, and asked: 'Who goes there?'
'My dear niece,' he said, 'it is I:
do not wonder or let it make you fear.'
And he came near, and said in her ear:
'No word, for love of God, I you beseech:
let no one rise and hear our speech.'

109.

‘What, which way are you come in, *Benedicite*.’
she said, ‘and how unbeknown to us all?’
‘Here at this secret trap door,’ said he.
Said Cressid then: ‘Let me somebody call.’
‘I pray, God forbid, that it should not fall
to you’ said Pandar ‘to have such folly wrought:
they might imagine what they never thought.

110.

It is not good a sleeping hound to wake,
nor give any one a secret to divine.
Your women are all asleep, I undertake,
as for them, men might the house undermine:
and they will sleep until the sun shine.
And when my tale is all brought to an end,
unknown, just as I came, I’ll wend.

111.

Now, my niece, you will understand,’
said he, ‘as agree you women all,
that for her to take a man in hand,
and him her love and dear heart call,
and then make a fool of him and more, -
I mean by loving another all the while -
she shames herself and him beguiles.

112.

Now, the reason why I tell you all this,
you know yourself, as well as any might,
how your love all fully granted is
to Troilus (one of the worthiest knights
in the world), and to him your troth plight,
so that, unless he wronged you, you could
never be false to him while live you should.

113.

Now it stands thus, that since I went
from you, this Troilus, plain to say,
through a passage by a privy went,
into my chamber during all this rain,
unknown by anyone, I am certain,
save myself, as I hope to have joy,
and by that faith I owe Priam of Troy.

114.

And he is here in such pain and distress,
that if he is not quite maddened by this,
he suddenly must fall into madness,
unless God helps. And the cause is this:
He says he has been told by a friend of his
that you were in love with one Horaste:
for sorrow of which this night shall be his last.'

115.

Cresseida, who all these things had heard,
began suddenly to feel cold about her heart,
and with a sigh quite sorrowfully answered:
‘Alas! I thought, whatever tales were told,
my dear heart would not me hold
so lightly false. Alas! Imaginations wrong,
what harm they do! For now I live too long.

116.

Horaste! (Alas! and false Troilus?)
I do not know him, God help me so,’ said she.
‘Alas what wicked spirit told him thus?
Now certain, Uncle, tomorrow if I him see
I shall of this as fully excuse me
as ever did woman, if he like.’
And with that she began full sore to sigh.

117.

‘O God,’ she said, ‘that worldly happiness,
which the clerks call false felicity,
is mixed with so much bitterness!
In anguish, then, God knows,’ said she,
‘is the condition of vain prosperity:
for either joys come not together,
or else for no one are they always there.

118.

O brittle well-being of man's joy, unstable,
with whomsoever you are, or how you stay,
either he knows that you, Joy, are mutable,
or knows it not – it must be this or that way.
Now if he knows it not, how can he say
that he has true joy and happiness,
who is, through ignorance, still in darkness?

119.

Or, if he knows now that joy is transitory,
as every joy of worldly thing must flee,
then every time it rises to memory,
the dread of losing makes him so that he
may in no perfect happiness be.
And if to lose his joy he cares a mite,
then it seems that joy is worthless quite.

120.

Wherefore I will conclude in this manner
that truly, for aught I can espy,
there is no true well-being in this world here.
But, O you wicked serpent jealousy,
you suspicious and envious folly,
why have you made Troilus me mistrust,
that have never wronged him, nor must?

121.

Said Pandarus: 'Thus falls out the case.'
'Why, my uncle,' she said, 'who told you this?
Why does my dear heart do so, alas?'
'You know now, my niece,' said he, 'how it is:
I hope all will be well that is amiss,
for you may quench all this at a guess:
and do it right now, I think that is the best.'

122.

'I shall do so tomorrow, yes,' said she,
'and before God, so that it will suffice.'
'To-morrow? Ah! that *would* be good,' said he,
'No, No, it may not wait in this wise:
for, my niece, so write the clerks who are wise,
that danger is made greater by delay:
No, such waiting's useless anyway.'

123.

Niece, all things have their time, I dare avow,
for when a chamber is on fire, or a hall,
it is in more need of sudden rescue
than to dispute and argue among us all
how could the candle into the straw fall.
Ah! *Benedicite!* For among all that hot air
the harm is done, and farewell the fieldfare!

124.

And, my niece, and do not disapprove:
if you leave him all night in such woe,
God help me, you have him never loved,
that dare I say between us two though.
But I know well you will not do so:
you are too wise to do so great a folly,
to put his life all night in jeopardy.'

125.

'I have never loved him! By God, I know
you have never loved so,' said she.
'Now by my health,' said he, 'is that so?
Well, since you make an example out of me,
if I all night were him in sorrow to see
for all the treasure in the town of Troy,
I pray God I never may have joy.

126.

Now look you then, if you who are his love
put his life all night in jeopardy
for nothing, now by that God above
not only does this delay come of folly,
but malice also, if I do not lie.
Why, plainly, if you leave him in distress,
you neither with kindness act nor nobleness.'

127.

Cressid then said: 'Will you but do one thing,
and you will stifle with it all his unease:
take here, and carry to him, this blue ring,
for there is nothing might him better please
but I myself, nor better his heart appease:
and say my dear heart that his sorrow
is groundless, that will be seen tomorrow.'

128.

'A ring?' said he, 'yes, hazel-woods go shake!
Yes, my niece, that ring must have a stone
that might a dead man alive make:
and such a ring I know you have none.
Discretion from your head is gone:
that I feel now, 'he said,' sorrow to you both.
O time lost! Truly you may curse sloth.

129.

Do you not know a noble and high heart
does not sorrow or fail for something slight?
For if a fool's jealous anger were to start
I would not set his sorrow at a mite,
but fob him off with a few white
lies, to another day, when I might him find,
but this thing is of another kind.

130.

This man is so gentle and tender of heart
that with his death he will his sorrow avenge,
for trust in this, however sore he smarts,
he will no jealous words to you send.
And therefore, niece, before his life end.
speak to him yourself of this matter:
for with a word you may his heart steer.

131.

Now have I told what danger he is in,
and his coming unknown, and out of sight,
no, by heaven, there is no harm or sin:
I myself will be with you all this night.
You know also that he is your own knight,
and that by right you must in him trust,
and I am ready to fetch him to you just.'

132.

This event was so pitiful to hear,
and also so like a truth, *prima facie*,
and Troilus, her knight to her so dear,
his private coming and the safe place,
that though she showed to him her grace,
considering all things as they stood,
it is no wonder, since she did all for good.

133.

Cressid answered: 'As I hope God to eternal rest
will bring my soul, so I feel for his woe.
And, uncle, I would also try to do the best
for him, if I have the grace to do so:
but whether you stay or, for him, go,
I am till God a clearer mind does send
on a dilemma's horns, at my wit's end.'

134.

Said Pandarus: 'Now, niece, will you listen?
Dilemma [p. 453] is called "the rout of boys":
it seems hard, for boys will not learn
because of their sloth and willful ploys:
it's said by him who isn't worth their toys.
But you are wise, and what we have on hand
is neither hard nor reasonable to withstand.'

135.

'Then, uncle,' said she, 'do as you must:
but before he comes I will arise,
and, for the love of God, since all my trust
is in you two, and you are both wise,
work now in so discreet a wise
that I may honour have, and he pleasure:
for I am here all under your measure.'

136.

‘That is well said,’ he answered, ‘my niece dear,
good fortune fall on that wise gentle heart!
But lie still, and accept him right here:
you and he can still be quite apart:
and you can ease each other’s smart,
for Love of God: and Venus, bless, why very
soon I hope, that we shall all be merry.’

137.

Then Troilus very soon was kneeling there,
full soberly, right by her bed’s head,
and in his best manner greeted her:
but lord! how suddenly she grew red.
No, though men should strike off her head,
she could not one word aright out sing
suddenly, all because of his coming.

138.

But Pandarus, who could so subtly feel
his way in everything, to jest began,
and said: ‘Niece, see how this lord can kneel:
now, by your truth, see this noble man.’
And with that word he for a cushion ran,
and said: ‘Now while you wish stay on your knees,
and may God soon bring your hearts to peace.’

139.

I cannot say (since she did not bid him rise)
if sorrow put it out of her remembrance,
or else if she took it in this wise
as a duty, for his observance.
But I find indeed she did this favour grant,
that she kissed him, although she sighed sore,
and asked him to sit, and kneel no more.

140.

Said Pandarus: 'Now you can begin:
Now make him sit, good niece dear,
on your bedside there within,
so that each can the other better hear.'
And with that to the fire he drew near,
and took a light, and set his countenance
as if to look upon an old romance.

141.

Cressid, who was Troilus's lady as by right,
and clearly stood her ground with faithfulness,
although she thought her servant and her knight
should not by rights untruth in her suggest,
yet nevertheless considered his distress,
and that love is the reason for such folly,
so she spoke to him thus of his jealousy:

142.

To, my heart, as needs the excellence
of love, against which no one may,
nor truly ought to, make resistance:
and also because I felt and saw you display
your great truth and service every day,
and that your heart all mine was, in truth again,
this made me first have pity on your pain.

143.

And your goodness, as I always found it,
of which, my dear heart, and all my knight,
I thank you for it as far as I have the wit,
although I cannot do it as were right.
And I, with all my knowledge and my might,
have and ever shall, however I smart,
be true to you, and whole, with all my heart:

144.

And, for certain, will be proven, you may believe.
But, my heart, what all this is saying
should be told, so long as you do not grieve
that I to you truly of yourself complain.
For with it I mean finally the pain
that holds your heart and mine in heaviness,
fully to slay, and every wrong redress.

145.

My good love, I know not why or how
jealousy, alas, that wicked snake could start
to creep, so without reason, into you:
the harm of which I would make depart.
Alas that he, completely or in part,
should find his refuge in so noble a place:
may Jove soon from your heart him chase.

146.

But, O you Jupiter, O author of nature,
is this an honour to your deity
that folk innocently injuries suffer,
and he who's guilty goes free?
Oh were it lawful to complain of thee,
who undeservedly suffers jealousy,
then I would at you complain and cry.

147.

And all my woe is this, that folk are used
to saying thus: "Well, jealousy is love":
and have a heap of poisonous things excused
because on it one grain of love they shove!
But the high God who sits above
knows if it's nearer love's, or hatred's game,
and from that it ought to take its name.

148.

But certainly some kinds of jealousy
are excusable more than others in this.
As when there is cause, or some fantasy
with piety so well suppressed is,
that it scarcely does or says amiss,
but truly drinks in all its distress:
and that I excuse for its nobleness.

149.

Yet some so full of fury is, and spite,
that it overcomes its repression:
but, my heart, you are not in that plight,
and I thank God, for your passion
I will not call it but an illusion,
from the abundance of your love and busy care,
that causes your heart's unease here.

150.

For which I am sorry, but not cross:
but for my duty and your heart's rest,
however you wish, by ordeal or by oath,
by lot, or in what way you suggest,
for love of God let us prove it for the best.
And if am guilty, let you me slay:
Alas! What more can I do or say?

151.

At that a few bright tears new
out of her eyes fell, and thus she said:
'Now God, you know in thought or deed untrue
to Troilus was never yet Cressid.'
With that her head down on the bed she laid,
and with the sheet covered it, and sighed sore,
and held her peace: not one word spoke she more.

152.

But now may God help to quench this sorrow:
and so I hope He will, for He best may:
for I have seen after a misty morrow
follow full often a merry summer's day,
and after winter follows green May.
Men see every day, and read in stories
that after fierce attacks come victories.

153.

This Troilus, when he her words had heard,
have no doubt, did not care to sleep:
for it seemed not only like strokes of a rod,
to hear, and see, Cressid, his lady, weep:
but sure he felt about his heart creep,
for every tear with which Cressid did part,
the cramp of death, taking him at the heart.

154.

And in his mind he began that time to curse
that he came there, and that he was born.
For bad is now turned into worse,
and all the labour he had done before
he thought it lost, he felt himself forlorn.
'O Pandarus, 'thought he, 'all your wiles
have served for nothing, so alas the while!

155.

And at that he hung down his head,
and fell on his knees, and sorrowfully sighed.
What could he say? He felt that he was dead,
for she was angered who might make sorrow light.
But nevertheless, when he could speak aright
then he said thus: 'God knows that in this game,
when all is known, then I am not to blame.'

156.

Therewith the sorrow so gripped his heart,
that from his eyes there fell not a tear,
and all his spirits fastened in a knot
so stunned and oppressed they were.
The feelings of sorrow, and of fear,
or any feeling else, fled out of town,
and suddenly swooning he fell down.

157.

This was no little sorrow to see:
but all was hushed, and Pandarus acted fast:
'O niece, peace, or we are lost,' said he,
'be not aghast.' But certain, at the last,
with this and that, he into bed him cast,
and said: 'O wretch, is this a manly heart?'
and off he rent all to his bare shirt.

158.

And said: "Niece, unless you help us now,
alas, your own Troilus is forlorn,'
'Oh yes, I would so, if only I knew how,
gladly,' she said, 'alas that I was born.'
'Then, niece, will you pull out the thorn
that sticks in his heart?' said Pandar.
'Say all is forgiven, sorrow is over.'

159.

'Yes, that to me,' she said, 'better were
that all the good the sun about goeth.'
And at that she whispered in his ear:
'Well, my dear heart, I am not wroth,
here take my truth, and many another oath.
Now speak to me, for it is I, Cressid.'
But all for nothing, he opened not a lid.

160.

At that his wrist and the palms of his hands
they began to chafe, and wet his temples twain:
and to deliver him from bitter bonds,
she kissed him often, and in brief, again,
to recall him she took every pain.
And at the last he began his breath to draw
and after that recovered, as before.

161.

And his mind and reason began to take:
but he was wondrously amazed I guess,
and with a sigh when he began to wake,
he said: 'O mercy, God, what is this?'
Why do you look as though things were amiss?'
Cressid said then: 'Is this a manly game:
what, Troilus! Will you do so? For shame!'

162.

And at that her arm over him she laid,
and all forgave, and many times him kissed.
He thanked her, and to her spoke and said
what was most like to set his heart at rest.
And she to that answered him her best,
and with her kindly words she sought
to encourage him, and his sorrows to comfort.

163.

Said Pandarus: 'For ought I can espy,
I and this light here are doing naught:
light is not good for a sick person's eye.
But, for the love of God, since you are brought
to this good place, let no heavy thought
in the hearts of you two left hanging be.'
And carried the candle off to the chimney.

164.

Soon after this, though no need was there,
when she such oaths as she could devise
had made him take, she thought there was no fear
nor reason none, to bid him from thence rise.
Even lesser things than oaths might suffice
in many a case: for everyone I guess,
who loves well, means only gentleness.

165.

But still she wished to know, and soon,
of what man, and also where, and why
he was jealous (since there was no cause, none),
and also what signs he thought he knew it by.
She bade him tell her that quite promptly,
or else for certain she would him accuse
of testing her out of malice, with no excuse.

166.

Without more ado, briefly I say, again,
he had to obey his lady's request:
and, to do less harm, he had to feign.
He told her, at such and such a feast
she might have looked at him at least.
I know not what else, none of it worth a fig:
as he that needs must for a reason dig.

167.

And she answered: 'Sweet, though it was so,
what harm was that, since I no evil mean?
For by that God that brought together us two,
in everything my intention's clean:
such arguments are not worth a bean.
Will you childish jealousy counterfeit then?
Well it is fitting that you should be beaten.

168.

Then Troilus began sorrowfully to sigh:
if she were angry he thought his heart was dead,
and said: 'Alas! upon my bitter sorrow, ay,
have mercy, sweet heart, my Cressid:
and if in the words that I have said
was any wrong, I will no more trespass.
Do what you wish: I am all in your grace.

169.

And she answered: 'for guilt there's *misericorde*:
that is to say that I forgive all this.

And evermore of this night keep record,
and take great care you do no more amiss.'

'No, my dear heart,' said he, 'my bliss.'

'And now,' she said, 'that I made you smart,
forgive it me, my own sweet heart.'

170.

At this, Troilus, with the bliss of it, surprised,
put his trust in God's hand, as one who meant
nothing but good: and suddenly apprised,
he took her in his arms, fast to him bent,
and Pandarus, with wholly good intent,
lead him to sleep, and said: 'If you are wise
don't swoon now, lest other folk rise.'

171.

What might, or may, the hapless lark do, say,
when the sparrow-hawk has it in its feet?
no more can I: but of these two,
to those to whom this tale is bitter, or sweet,
though I take a year, some time I must complete,
following my author, to tell of their gladness,
just as I have told of their sadness.

172.

Cressid, when she felt herself thus taken,
as the clerks write in their books of old,
just like an aspen leaf was shaken,
when she felt him in his arms her fold.
But Troilus, all free of cares cold,
began to thank the blissful gods, all seven:
thus sundry pains bring folk to heaven.

173.

This Troilus clasped her in his arms true,
and said: 'O sweet, so may I always go on,
now you are caught, now is there but we two:
now yield you, for the other boot's now on.'
To that Cressid answered thus at once:
'Had I not before now, my sweet heart dear,
have yielded, I would not now be here.'

174.

Oh, it is truly said that healed to be
of a fever or other great sickness,
men must drink (as men may often see)
the bitterest drink: and to have gladness
men often drink pain and great distress:
I mean as here (as in this adventure),
that through his pain was found all his cure.

175.

And now sweetness seemed more sweet
because bitterness had gone before:
for out of woe into bliss they fleet,
such as they had not felt since they were born.
Now is this better than both to be forlorn.
For love of God let every woman take heed,
and do like this, if it happens there is need.

176.

Cressid, all free from dread and misery,
as one who had just cause in him to trust,
made him so happy, it was a joy to see,
when she his truth and clean intent knew just,
and as about a tree, with many a twist,
twists and twines the sweet woodbine,
each began the other in their arms to wind.

177.

And as the new disturbed nightingale,
that ceases (when she first begins to sing)
if she hears a herdsman's hail,
or in the hedges anyone stirring,
and after clearer does her voice ring,
so Cressid, truly, when her fears went,
opened her heart and told him her intent.

178.

And just as he who sees his death take shape,
and must die, for aught he can guess,
and suddenly through rescue can escape,
and is brought safely out of death:
for all this world, in such present gladness,
was Troilus, and has his lady sweet:
with worse fate let God us never meet!

179.

Her slender arms, her back straight and soft,
her long flanks, fleshly smooth and white,
he began to stroke, and blessed full oft
her snowy throat, her breasts round and slight.
Thus in his heaven he started to take delight,
and with that a thousand times he kissed her too:
so that for joy he scarce knew what to do.

180.

Then he said thus: 'O Love, O Charity!
Your mother also, *Cytherea* ^[p. 453] the sweet,
after yourself the next blessed be she:
Venus I mean, the sweet-willed planet.
And next, you, *Hymenaeus* ^[p. 453], I you greet:
for never did man more to you gods owe
than I, whom you have brought from cares cold.



'Hymen and Cupid'
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, 1740
The New York Public Library

181.

Benign love, you holy bond of things,
he who wishes for grace, and does you no honour,
lo, his desire will flee without wings.
For if of your bounty you did not them succour
who serve best and must ever labour,
all were yet lost (that I dare say for certain)
unless your grace outweighed our deserving.

182.

And because you helped me (who least deserve
of those that are numbered in your grace)
when I was like to die, where I serve,
and set me in so high a place
that beyond its bounds no bliss has space,
I can say no more, but praise and reverence
be to your bounty and your excellence.'

183.

And with that, at once, Cressid he kissed
at which, for certain, she felt no unease.
And thus he said: 'Now by God I wish
I knew how, my sweet heart, I might you please.
What man,' he said, 'was ever so at ease,
as I, on which the fairest and the best
that ever I saw deigns her heart to rest?'

184.

Here men may see that Mercy is above Right:
the experience of that is felt in me,
that am unworthy of such sweet delight:
but, my heart, of your generosity
think, that though I unworthy be,
yet I must need improve in some wise
simply through the virtue of your high service.

185.

And, for the love of God, my lady dear
since God ordained that I shall you serve,
in that I mean, you will rule me here,
to cause me to live, if you wish, or swerve
to death, teach me how I may deserve
your thanks, so that I, through my ignorance,
do nothing that displeases you by chance.

186.

But, for certain, fresh womanly love,
this I dare say, that truth and diligence
these you shall find in me, life above,
nor will I fail, for sure, in obedience:
and if I do, in presence or in absence,
for love of God, kill me for that deed,
if that would please your womanhood, at need.

187.

‘Oh,’ she said, ‘my own heart just,
my ground of ease, and all my heart dear,
grant mercy: for in that is all my trust.
But let us fall away from this matter:
since it suffices, this that is said here.
And, at one word, without repentance –
welcome, my knight, my peace sufficient.’

188.

Of their delights and joys even the least
were impossible for my wit to say:
but judge, you who have been at the feast
of such gladness, if they enjoyed their play.
I can say no more, except that they
that night, between dread and security,
felt so great the worth of love to be.

189.

O blissful night by them so long sought,
how kind to both of them you were!
Why have I never such a one with my soul bought,
no, nor the least joy that was there?
Away, you, foul disdain, and you, fear,
and let them in this heavenly bliss dwell,
that is so high I cannot all it tell.

190.

But truth is, though I cannot tell it all
as my author can, with his excellence,
yet I have said (and with God's help, I shall)
in every thing his whole essence.
And if that I, in love's reverence,
have any word added for the best,
do with it whatever yourselves suggest.

191.

For my words, here and in every part,
I speak them and invite correction
by you that have experience of love's art,
and allow it all to your discretion
to increase or make a diminution
of my language: and that I you beseech.
But now to the purpose of my former speech.

192.

These two who in each other's arms we left,
so loth to be split asunder, as it were
because each thought of the other they'd be bereft:
or else, lo, this was their greatest fear,
that all these things but foolish dreams were.
Because of which each often said: 'O sweet.
Do I hold you, or is it in dream we meet?'

193.

Ah, lord! he began to gaze on her so gladly,
that his look was never turned from her face:
and said: 'O, dear heart, may it be
that you are truly in this place?'
'Yes, my heart, I thank God for his grace,'
said Cressid then, and with that him kissed,
so that where his spirit was, he could not guess.

194.

At this Troilus full often her eyes two
began to kiss, and said: 'O eyes so clear,
it was you that brought me such woe,
you humble nets of my lady dear:
though there be mercy written in you here,
God knows the text is difficult to know,
how could you without bonds bind me so?'

195.

With that he began her fast in his arms to take,
and more than a hundred times began to sigh,
not such sorrowful sighs as men make
from woe, or else when folk may die:
but easy sighs such as she might like
that showed his affection within:
of such sighs he could not make an end.

196.

Soon after this they spoke of sundry things
as suited the purpose of this adventure:
and playing, interchanged their rings,
of which I cannot tell the inscription:
but I know well a brooch, gold and azure,
in which was set a ruby like a heart,
Cressid gave him, and pinned it on his shirt.

197.

Lord! Do you think a covetous wretch
who scorns love and holds it in despite,
through the pence that he can hoard and clutch,
was ever yet given such delight
as there is in love, at every point of sight?
No, for sure, for also, God me save,
such perfect joy no miser can have.

198.

They will say, 'Yes.' But lord! They lie,
those busy wretches full of woe and dread:
they call love a madness or a folly,
but it shall befall them as I have said:
they shall forgo the silver and the red,
and live in woe, so God give them mischance,
and every lover in his truth advance.

199.

Would to God that wretches who despise
love's service all had ears as long
as had *Midas* [p. 454], full of avarice,
and thereby had a drink as hot and strong
as *Crassus* [p. 454] drank for his desires wrong,
to teach them that they are vice's tools,
and lovers not, though they think them fools.



'Parthen Pouring Molten Gold into
the Severed Head of Crassus'
Reinier Vinkeles, after Jacobus Buys, 1781
The Rijksmuseum

200.

These same two, whose tale I relay,
when their hearts deeply assured were,
then they began to speak and to play,
and rehearse how and when and where
they knew each other first, each woe and fear
that was past: but all such heaviness
(I thank God) was turned to gladness.

201.

And evermore when they fell to speaking
of anything from that time now gone,
with kissing all their story forsaking,
and falling into new joy anon,
they did all their best since they were one,
to recover bliss and be at ease,
and counteract with joy past miseries.

202.

Reason will not let me speak of sleep,
since it is not in accord with my matter:
God knows of that no notice did they keep.
But lest this night, that was to them so dear,
should escape them vainly in some manner,
it was occupied in joy's business
and all that appertains to gentleness.

203.

But when the cock – public astrologer –
began to beat his breast, and then to crow,
and *Lucifer*^[p. 454], the day's messenger,
began to rise, and his beams to throw,
and eastward rose (to him who might it know)
Fortuna Major^[p. 454], then at once Cressid
with sore heart to Troilus said:

204.

'My heart's life, my trust, my delectation,
that I was born alas! For me what woe
that day must make of us a separation!
For it is time to rise and from here go,
or else I am lost for ever, so.
O night, alas, why will you not hover above
as long as when *Alcmena*^[p. 454] lay with Jove?

205.

O black Night, as books tell learned folk,
you who are shaped by God this world to hide
at certain times with your dark cloak,
that under it men might in rest abide,
beasts should indeed complain and folk chide
that as day with labour would us test,
you flee like this and will not let us rest.



'Jupiter and Alcmena'
Cornelis Bos, after Michiel Coxie (I), c. 1537 - c. 1555
The Rijksmuseum

206.

You end too quickly, alas, your business,
swift Night, may God maker of Nature's round,
for your haste and your harsh unkindness,
have you, to our hemisphere tightly bound,
that you may never more go underground!
For now (since you hurry so from Troy),
have I thus suddenly lost my joy.'

207.

At this Troilus, who with these words felt
(as it seemed then, in his piteous distress)
the bloody tears from his heart melt,
as one who never yet such heaviness
had known come out of such great gladness,
began then Cressid his lady dear
to clasp in his arms, and said in this manner:

208.

'O cruel day, denouncer of the joy
that night and love have stolen and hide,
accursed be your coming into Troy,
since every hole has one of your bright eyes.
Envious day, why choose so to spy?
What have you lost? Why do you seek this place?
May God your light quench, in his grace!



'Sol'
Heinrich Aldegrever, 1533
The Rijksmuseum

209.

‘Alas, how have these lovers incurred guilt?
Pitiless day, yours be the pain of hell,
since many a lover have you harmed, and will:
your pouring down will nowhere let them dwell.
Why do you offer your light here to sell?
Go sell it to those who small seals engrave:
we do not want you, we need no daylight have.’

210.

And also the *Titan* [p. 454] Sun he began to chide,
and said: ‘O fool, well men may you despise,
who have the Dawn all night by your side,
and suffer her so soon from you to rise
so as to trouble lovers in this wise.
What! Hold your bed there, you, and also your To-morrow:
I bid God so to give you both sorrow.’

211.

At that he sighed full sore, and thus he said:
‘My true lady, and of my joy and woe
the well and root, O my good Cressid,
and must I rise, alas, and must I go?
Now I feel my heart must break in two:
for how should I my life one hour save
if with you is all the life I have?’

212.

What shall I do, for certain I know not how
or when, alas, I shall the time see
that I in this way may be again with you:
as for my life – God knows how that will be,
since desire right now so burns in me,
that I am dead unless I can return:
how should I long, alas, from you sojourn?

213.

But nevertheless, my own lady bright,
if it were so that I might know fully
that I, your humble *servant* and your *knight*,
were in your heart set as firmly
as you in mine (which thing truly
were dearer to me than those two words name)
I could better then endure my pain.'

214.

To that Cressid answered right at once,
and with a sigh she said: 'O heart dear,
the game, truly, has so far now gone,
that Phoebus shall first fall from his sphere,
and every eagle with a dove pair,
and every rock out of its place start,
before Troilus out of Cressid's heart.

215.

You are so deep within my heart engraved,
that if I wished to turn you from my thought,
as sure as I hope God will my soul save,
were I to die in torture, I could not.
And, for the love of God that has us wrought,
let in your brain no other fantasy
creep so that it brings death to me.

216.

And that you should have me as fast in mind
as I have you, that I would you beseech:
and if I knew in truth that's what I'd find,
God could not Himself me new joy teach.
But, my heart, without more speech,
be true to me, or else it were a woe:
for I am yours, by God and my truth, so.

217.

Be glad therefore, and live in confidence:
thus have I never said, and shall to no other do.
And if it were to you a great gladness
to return again, soon after you must go,
as much would I, as you, wish it so,
as surely as I hope God will bring my heart to rest.'
And him she took in her arms and often kissed.

218.

Against his will, since it needs must be,
at this Troilus rose, donned the clothes he had shed,
and in his arms took his lady free
a hundred times, and on his way he sped,
and with such words at which his heart bled
he said: 'Farewell, my heart and dear sweet:
God grant that we in health soon meet.'

219.

To which no word, for sorrow, she answered,
so deep her distress that he was now away:
and Troilus to his palace fared
as woe-begone as she was, truth to say,
so hard him wrung with sharp desire the pain
to be again where he was in ecstasy,
that it would never leave his memory.

220.

Returning to his royal palace, soon
he soft into his bed began to slink,
to sleep long, as he was wont to do,
but all for nothing: he may well lie and wink,
but sleep will not into his heart sink:
thinking how she, for whom desire him burned,
was worth a thousand-fold more than he had earned.

221.

And in his thoughts began up and down to wind
all her words and every look to see,
and firmly impressed on his mind
the least thing that brought him ecstasy:
and truly, from that memory,
desire burned him anew, and yearning to breed
more than before, and yet he did not heed.

222.

Cressid also, just in the same wise,
began of Troilus in her heart to set
his worthiness, his yearning, his deeds wise,
his nobleness, and how she with him met,
thanking Love for having her so well beset
desiring again to have her heart dear
in such a place, and to give him good cheer.

223.

Pandar, who again in the morrow was
come to his niece, and began her to greet,
said: 'All this night it rained so, alas,
that my fear is that you, sweet niece,
have little leisure had to dream and sleep:
'All night,' he said, 'the rain kept me awake,
so that some of us, I think, our heads do ache.'

224.

And near he came and said: 'How stands it now,
this merry morrow, niece, how do you fare?'
Cressid answered: 'None the better for you,
fox that you are: God give your heart care.
God help me so, you brought about all this fare,
I think,' she said, 'for all your words so white.
Oh, who sees you has knowledge of you but slight.'

225.

With that her face she began to hide
under the sheet, and for shame blushed red:
and Pandarus began under it to pry,
and said: 'Niece, if I deserve to be dead,
here, have a sword, and strike off my head.
With that, his arm all suddenly he thrust
under her neck, and lastly kissed her just.

226.

I pass over all that I need not say,
What! God pardoned his death, and she also
forgave, and with her uncle began to play,
for there was no cause not to do so.
But right to the heart of this matter to go:
when it was time, home to her house she went,
and Pandar had achieved all his intent.

227.

Now turn we again to Troilus
that restless full long abed lay,
and secretly sent to Pandarus
to come to him with all the haste he may.
He came at once, without any delay:
and Troilus soberly he greeted,
and on his bed side was seated.

228.

At this Troilus, with all the affection
of a friend's love that heart may devise,
to Pandarus on his knees fell down:
and before he would from that place arise,
he began to thank him in his best wise
a hundred times, and began the time to bless
that he was born to bring him from distress.

229.

He said: 'O friend, of all friends the best
there ever was, the truth for to tell,
you have to heaven brought my soul to rest
from *Phlegethon* [p. 454], the fiery flood of hell:
so that, though I might a thousand times sell
upon a day, my life in your service,
it would not a jot of it suffice.

230.

The sun, which all the world may see,
never yet saw (my life, if I lie)
so inwardly fair and good a one as she
whose all I am and shall be till I die:
and that I am thus hers, dare I say,
for that be thanked the high worthiness
of love, and also your kind business.

231.

Thus have you no small thing to me given,
for which I am obliged to you I say
all my life. And why? Because through your help I live
or else I had been dead many a day.'
And with that word down in his bed he lay,
and Pandarus full soberly him heard
till all was said, and then to him answered:

232.

'My dear friend, if I have done for thee
a service somehow, God knows it is joy indeed
I am as glad of it as any man can be,
God help me so: but do not make a grief
of what I shall say now. Beware of this mischief,
that just as you are brought now into bliss,
you yourself do not let it go amiss.

233.

For of Fortune's harsh adversity
the worst kind of misfortune is this,
a man to have been in prosperity
and it remembered when it past is.
You are wise enough: therefore do naught amiss:
be not too rash, though you are warm:
for if you are, certain it will you harm.

234.

You are at ease, and hold fast therein:
for just as sure as red is every fire,
it is as great a skill to keep as win.
Bridle your speech always, and your desire
for worldly joy hangs only by thin wire:
that is well proved, it breaks each day, oft:
therefore you need to handle it full soft.'

235.

Said Troilus: 'I hope, before God,
my dear friend, that I will so me bear,
that through my guilt there shall be nothing lost,
nor will I be so rash as to offend her.
There is no need to speak of this matter,
for if you knew my heart well, Pandar,
God knows of this you would have little care.

236.

Then he began to tell of his glad night,
and why his heart had feared it, and how,
and said: 'Friend, as I am a true knight,
and by that faith I owe to God and you,
I felt love never half so hot as now:
and always the more that desire incites me
to love her best, the more it delights me.

237.

I know not myself exactly what it is:
but now I feel a new quality,
yes, quite other, than I did before this.'
Pandar answered, and said thus, that 'he
that once may in heaven's bliss be,
he feels in other ways, I dare say,
than he did when he first of heard on a day.'

238.

To sum it all in a few words: this Troilus
was never finished talking of this matter,
and of praising to Pandarus
the virtues of his true lady dear,
and thanking Pandarus with glad cheer.
This tale was ever new to begin
till the night separated them again.

239.

Soon after this, since Fortune was good,
come was the blissful time sweet
when Troilus was warned that he could,
where they first met, Cressid, his lady, meet:
at which he felt his heart with joy replete,
and faithfully began the gods to bless
and let them see now if he knew happiness.

240.

And all arranged the manner and the wise
of her coming, and of his also,
as at first, which I need not describe.
But plainly to the gist of it to go,
in joy and safety Pandarus the two
brought to bed when they both thought best:
and thus they were in quiet and at rest.

241.

Nor do you need, since they have met there,
to ask of me if they joyful were:
for if it was well at first, then it was better
a thousand-fold, there is no need to enquire.
Every sorrow was gone and every fear:
and both, I think, had there, and so they knew,
as much joy as heart could comprehend as true.

242.

This is no little thing of which to say,
this goes beyond every wit to devise,
since each began the other's wish to obey.
Felicity, which these clerks so wise
commend so, may not here suffice:
the joy may not be written of in ink,
that passes all that heart may ever think.

243.

But cruel day, alas the dawn again
began to approach, as they by signs knew,
at which they thought they felt death's pain:
so sad were they, they began to change their hue,
and began day to despise anew,
calling it traitor, envious and worse,
and bitterly the day's light they curse.

244.

Said Troilus: 'Alas! I am now aware,
that *Pyrus* [p. 454] and those swift horses three,
which draw the sun's chariot through the air,
have made some short-cut, to spite me:
that is why the day comes so soon to be:
and since the sun hastens so to rise,
I shall no longer do him sacrifice.'



'The Sun and its Influence on the World'
Johann Sadeler (I), after Maerten de Vos, 1585
The Rijksmuseum

245.

But day must needs part them soon,
and when their speech was done and their cheer,
they separated as they had to do,
and set a time to meet again together:
and many a night they made after this manner,
and thus for a time Fortune led in joy
Cressida and this king's son of Troy.

246.

In contentment, bliss and in singing
Troilus began his life to lead:
he spent and jousted, and made feasting:
he gave freely often, and indeed
changed attire, and round him, free of dread
kept a world of folk, as befitted his kind,
the freshest and the best that he could find.

247.

So he had such a name and reputation
throughout the world, for honour and largesse,
that it rang up to the gates of heaven:
and as in love he was in such gladness
that in his heart he thought (I guess)
that there was no lover in this world at ease
as much as him, and love began him to please.

248.

The goodness or beauty that Nature too
in any other lady had set
could not a single knot undo,
about his heart, of all Cressid's net:
it was so narrow meshed and close knit,
that it could not be undone on any side,
no matter what might betide.

249.

And by the hand full often he would take
Pandarus and him to the garden lead,
and such a feast and a long discourse make
to him of Cressid and her womanhood
and of her beauty, that, indeed,
it was a heaven his words to hear:
and then he would sing in this way here:

250.

'Love, that of earth and sea has governance [p. 454]:
Love, that his will displays in heaven high:
Love that with a wholesome alliance
holds people joined, whom he chooses to tie:
Love, that knits the laws of friendship, ay,
and couples makes in virtue for to dwell,
bind this accord that I have told and tell.

251.

So that the world with faith permanent,
varies his seasons in harmony agreeing,
that the elements that are discordant
make a bond perpetually lasting,
so Phoebus must his rosy day new bring,
and the Moon have lordship over Night:
all this Love does, ay blessed be his might!

252.

So that the sea, that is greedy in its flow,
constrains within certain limits so
his floods, that they do not fiercely grow
to drown the earth, and all for ever, though:
and if that Love should let the bridle go,
all that now loves should asunder leap,
and lost were all that Love now holds complete.

253.

So willed God, author of Nature's kind,
that with his bond, Love's virtue might choose so
to encircle all hearts and fast them bind,
that from his bond no one knows how to go.
And cold hearts, I wish he would them goad
to make them love, and feel pity too
for sad hearts, and help those that are true.'

254.

In all the needs to promote the town's war,
he was ever the first arrayed to fight:
and certainly (unless the books err),
save Hector, the most dreaded of any knight.
And this increase of hardiness and might
came of his love, his lady's thanks to win,
that altered his spirit so within.

255.

In time of truce out hawking he would ride,
or else hunt boar, or bear or lion.
He let go the smaller beasts beside.
And when he came riding into town,
often his lady, from her window down,
as fresh as falcon comes out of mew,
was full ready to make him her salute.

256.

And mostly of love and virtue was his speech,
and held in contempt all wretchedness:
and there was no need to him beseech
to honour those that possessed worthiness
or ease those that were in distress.
And glad he was if any one well fared,
who was a lover, when he knew or heard.

257.

For truth to tell, he held as lost to light
every one not in Love's high service –
I mean folk who ought to have been by right.
And over all this he could speak of ties
of sentiment so well, and in such fresh wise
of all his array, that every lover thought
that all was well whatever he said or wrought.

258.

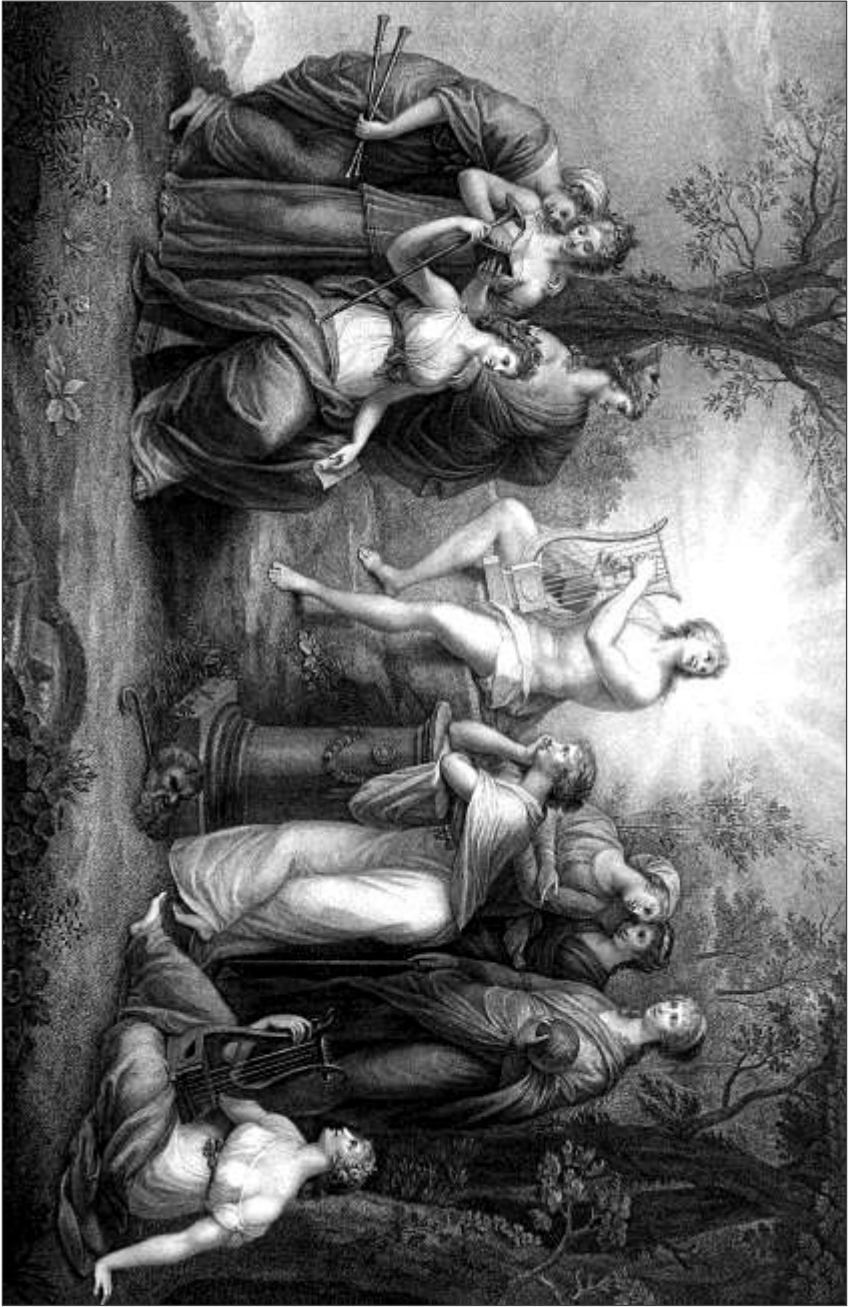
And though he came of the blood royal,
he never wished from pride a man to chase:
he was benign to all in general,
for which he got thanks in every place.
Thus Love willed (blessed be his grace!)
that Pride and Envy, Anger, Avarice
he began to flee, and every other vice.

259.

You lady bright, the daughter to *Dione* [p. 454]:
your blind and winged son, that is, Dan Cupid:
you *sisters nine* [p. 454], by streams of *Helicon* [p. 454],
who on hill *Parnassus* [p. 454] love to abide:
you that have thus far deigned me to guide –
I can do no more, but since you wish to wend,
blessed be you for ever without end.

260.

Through you I have told fully in my song
the effect and joy of Troilus's service,
although there was some sorrow it among,
as my author is pleased to describe it.
My third book I end now in this wise:
and Troilus in happiness and peace
is with Cressid, his own heart sweet.



'Apollo and the Muses on Parnassus'
Francesco Bartolozzi, after Ludwig Guttenbrunn, 1800
The Rijksmuseum

BOOK IV - THE SEPARATION

1.

But all too short a time (alas the while!)
lasts such joy, thanks to Fortune
who seems truest when she beguiles,
and can to fools so her song attune
that she catches and blinds them, traitress soon:
and when a man is from her wheel thrown
then her laughs and grimaces are shown.

2.

From Troilus she began her bright face
to turn away, and took of him no heed,
but cast him clean out of his lady's grace,
and on her wheel she set up Diomed:
at which my heart right now begins to bleed,
and now my pen, alas, with which I write
quakes for dread of what I bring to light.

3.

For how Cressid Troilus forsook,
or, at the least, how she was unkind,
must henceforth be the matter of my book,
as the folk write through which it comes to mind.
Alas that they should ever cause find
to speak harm of her: and if they lie,
they themselves are the guilty ones, say I.

4.

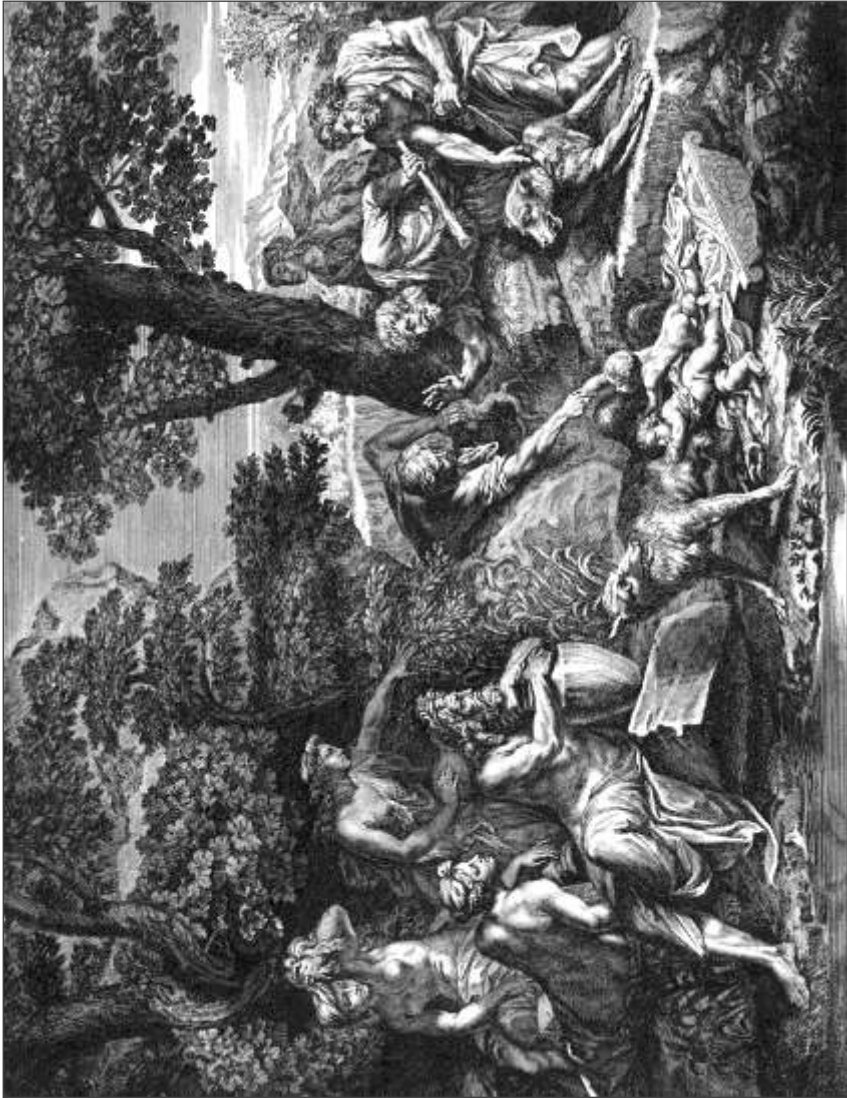
Oh you *Holy Ones* [p. 455], Night's daughters three,
who endlessly complain ever in painfulness,
Megaera [p. 455], *Alecto* [p. 455], and *Tisiphone* [p. 455]:
you cruel Mars too, father of *Quirinus* [p. 455],
this fourth book help me finish, just,
so that the loss of life and love together
of Troilus may be fully showed here.

5.

Lying, as a host, as I have said before this,
the Greeks, in strength, around Troy town,
it befell that when Phoebus shining is
upon the breast of *Hercules's Lion* [p. 455],
that Hector, with many a bold baron,
set on a day with the Greeks to fight,
as he tried to grieve them when he might.



'The Furies Encourage Althaea to Burn Meleager's Branch'
Bernard Picart, after Charles Le Brun, 1683 - 1710
The Rijksmuseum



'The Discovery of Romulus and Remus, with the She-Wolf'
Bouzonnet Stella, Antoinette, 1641 - 1676
The New York Public Library



'Hercules Fighting the Nemean Lion'
Giovanni Antonio da Brescia,
after Andrea Mantegna, after 1507
The Rijksmuseum

6.

I do not know how long it was between
this purpose, and the day of their intent:
but on a day well armed, bright to be seen,
Hector and many a worthy man forth went
with spears in hand and great bows bent:
and face to face, without delay or let,
their foemen in the field at once they met.

7.

All day long, with spears well ground,
with arrows, darts, swords, and maces fell,
they fight and bring horse and man to ground,
and with their axes out the brains spill.
But in the last assault, truth to tell,
the folk of Troy themselves so badly did
that being worsted, home by night they fled.

8.

On which day was taken Antenor,
not to mention Polydamas and Monesto,
Xanthippus, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polites, and the Trojan Lord Ripheo,
and other lesser folk like Phebuso.
So that for harm that day the folk of Troy
feared they had lost the greater part of joy.

9.

By Priam was given, at the Greeks request,
a time of truce, and then they began to treat
concerning exchange of prisoners, least and best,
and for the surplus to give ransoms great.
This thing was soon known in every street,
in the beseigers' camp, town, everywhere,
and among the first it came to Calchas's ear.

10.

When Calchas knew the treaty would hold,
in council, among the Greeks, he soon
began to crowd forth with lords old,
and sat down where he was wont to do:
and with a changed face begged of them a boon,
for love of God, to show him reverence,
to quiet their noise, and give him audience.

11.

Then he spoke thus: 'Lo, my lords, I was
Trojan, as is known to you indeed:
and if you remember, I am that Calchas,
who, first of all, brought comfort in your need,
and told that you would certainly succeed.
For, without doubt, by you, it will be found,
Troy will be burnt and beaten to the ground.

12.

And in what form and in what manner of wise
to take the town, and all your ends achieve,
you have before now heard me advise:
this you know my lords, as I believe.
And as the Greeks were so beloved of me,
I came myself in my own person
to teach you how this thing could best be done.

13.

Giving no consideration to my rents,
or my treasure, but only to your ease,
thus I lost all my goods as I went,
thinking in this you lords to please.
But all that loss gives me no unease.
I undertake, as I hope for joy,
to lose for you all that I have in Troy.

14.

Save for a daughter that I left, alas,
sleeping at home when I from Troy parted.
O stern and cruel father that I was!
How could I have been so hard-hearted?
Alas! In her shift she should have departed.
For sorrow of which I will not live tomorrow
unless you lords take pity on my sorrow.

15.

Because I saw no chance before now
to free her, I have held my peace:
but now or never, if you choose so,
I may have her here right soon, with ease.
O help and grace! Among all Greece
take pity on this old wretch in distress,
since I bear for you all this heaviness!

16.

You now have captive and fettered in prison
Trojans enough: and if your will it be,
my child for one of them can have redemption.
Now for the love of God and generosity,
one of so many, alas, give him to me.
What point would it be this prayer to refuse,
since you'll have folk and town soon, as you choose.

17.

On peril of my life I would not lie,
Apollo has told it to me faithfully:
I have also found it out by astronomy,
by lot, and also indeed by augury,
I dare well say the time is nigh
when fire and flame through all the town will spread,
and so shall Troy turn to ashes dead.

18.

For sure, Phoebus and Neptune both,
that built the walls of the town,
have always been with the folk of Troy so wrath,
that they will bring it to confusion
out of spite for King *Laomedon* [p. 455]:
because he would not pay their hire
the town of Troy shall be set on fire.'

19.

Telling his tale through, his beard so grey
humble in manner and in speech,
the salt tears from his two eyes play
in quick running streams down either cheek.
So long he did for succour them beseech
that to heal him of his sorrows true
they gave him Antenor without more ado.

20.

But who was glad then as Calchas though?
And to this end soon his requests laid
on those who would to make the treaty go,
and, exchanged for Antenor, them demanded
to bring home King Thoas and Cressid:
And when Priam his safe-guard sent
the ambassadors to Troy directly went.

21.

Told the cause of their coming, old
Priam, the king at once issued a call
so that a parliament he could hold:
to tell you the effects of which I shall.
The ambassadors were answered that all
the exchange of prisoners and their need
was acceptable, and could proceed.

22.

This Troilus was present in his place
when for Antenor was asked Cressid,
at which there was a swift change in his face
as if at those words he were well nigh dead:
but nonetheless against it he no word said
lest men should his affection spy:
with manly heart he endured his sorrow dry,

23.

And full of anguish and bitter dread
waited to hear what the lords would say:
and if they would grant (God forbid!)
the exchange of her, then his thoughts stray
to how to save her honour first, and what way
he might the exchange of her best prevent
and cast about for a means to his intent.

24.

Love made him eager for it to be denied
and he would rather die than that she go:
but Reason told him, on the other side,
‘Without her assent do not do so,
lest for your efforts she become your foe,
and say that through your meddling was revealed
the love between you which had been concealed.’

25.

Because of which he decided for the best
that though the lords wished that she be sent
he would let them grant what they wished,
and tell his lady first what was meant:
and when she had told him her intent,
thereafter he could work to prevent it
though all the world might strive against it.

26.

Hector, who had clearly the Greeks heard
and how for Antenor they would have Cressid,
began to oppose it and soberly answered:
‘Sirs, she is no prisoner,’ he said,
‘I know not who on you this charge has laid,
but for my part you may at once him tell,
it is not our custom women for to sell.’

27.

The people's noise started up at once
as quick as the blaze of straw set on fire:
though misfortune willed in this instance
that they their own ruin did desire.
'Hector,' they said, 'what spirit you inspires
to shield this woman thus and have us lose
Lord Antenor – a wrong path now you choose –

28.

who is so wise and so bold a baron?
And we have need of folk, as men may see:
he is one of the greatest in this town.
O Hector, let those fantasies be!
O King Priam, 'they said, 'thus say we,
that with once voice we part with Cressid':
and to deliver Antenor they prayed.

29.

O *Juvenal*^[p. 455], lord! true is your sentence,
that folk so little know what they should yearn
for, that in their desire they see not the offence:
since clouds of error let them not discern
what's for the best: and lo, here's an example, learn.
This folk desire now deliverance
of Antenor, that will bring them to mischance:

30.

for he was afterwards a traitor to the town
of Troy. Alas, they ransomed him too fast.
O foolish world, behold your discretion:
Cressid, that never brought harm to pass,
shall have her bliss no longer last:
but Antenor, he shall come home to town,
and she shall go: so one and all set down.

31.

And so it was decreed by parliament
for Antenor to yield up Cressid,
and it was pronounced by the president,
though Hector's 'no' was often repeated:
and finally, whoever it gainsaid,
it was for naught, it must be and it would,
for the majority in parliament said it should.

32.

Departing out of parliament everyone,
this Troilus, without more ado,
to his chamber sped him fast, alone
(unless there were a man of his or two,
whom he ordered out quickly to go,
because he would sleep, or so he said),
and hastily down on his bed he laid.

33.

And as in winter leaves are reft
one after another till the tree is bare,
so there is only bark and branches left,
so Troilus lies bereft of comfort there,
bound into the black bark of care,
likely to breed madness in his head,
so sorely he felt this exchange of Cressid.

34.

He rose up, and every door he shut,
and window also, and then this sorrowful man
on his bed's side down him sat,
just like a lifeless image, pale and wan:
and in his breast the heaped woe began
to burst, and he to behave in this wise
in his madness as I shall describe.

35.

Just as a wild bull leaps without restraint,
now here, now there, pierced to the heart,
and roars of his death in complaint,
so he began about the chamber to dart,
striking his breast with his fists hard,
his head against the wall, his body on the ground
often he flung it, himself to confound.

36.

His two eyes, for pity of his heart,
stream down as swift streams play:
the high sobs of his sorrows start
to rob him of speech, he can only say:
'O death, alas, why not let me pass away?
Accursed be the day on which nature
shaped me to be a living creature!'

37.

But after, when the fury and the rage
which his heart twisted and oppressed,
in time began somewhat to be assuaged,
upon his bed he laid him down to rest.
But then his tears began in his breast,
that it is a wonder that the body may suffice
to bear half this woe that I describe.

38.

Then he said thus: 'Fortune, alas the while,
what have I done, what is then my guilt:
how can you, for pity, me so beguile:
is there no grace, and shall my life be spilt?
Shall Cressid be sent away because you will it?
Alas! How can you it in your heart find
to be so cruel to me and unkind?

39.

Have I not honoured you all my life,
as you well know, above the gods all?
Why will you me of joy thus deprive?
O Troilus, what may men now you call
but wretch of wretches, who out of honour fall
into misery, in which I will bewail
Cressid, alas, till my breath does fail?

40.

Alas, Fortune, if my life in joy
displeased you, and roused this foul envy,
why did you not from my father, king of Troy,
reft the life, or let my brothers die,
or slain myself who complain thus and cry?
I, world's encumbrance, that may for nothing serve,
but be dying ever, and never death deserve.

41.

If Cressid alone to me were left,
I would not care where you might me steer:
and yet of her, alas, you have me bereft.
But evermore, lo, this is your manner,
to deprive a man of what to him is most dear,
to prove by that your sudden violence.
So am I lost, and there is no defence.

42.

O very lord of love, O God, alas,
who best knows my heart and all my thought,
what will my sorrowful life be in this case
if I forgo what I have so dearly bought?
Since you, Cressid and I, have fully brought
into your grace, and both our hearts sealed,
how can you suffer it to be repealed?

43.

Whatever I may do, I, while I may endure
to live on in torment, and cruel pain,
will of this misfortune and this misadventure,
alas, that I was born, indeed complain:
nor will I ever see it shine or rain,
but I will end, like Oedipus, in darkness,
my sorrowful life, and die in distress.

44.

O weary ghost, that flits to and fro,
why will you not fly from the woefullest
body that ever on the ground might go?
O soul lurking in this woe, leave your nest,
flee out of my heart, and let it rest,
and follow always Cressid your lady dear.
Your rightful place is no longer here.

45.

O twin woeful eyes, since your sport
was only to see Cressid's eyes so bright,
what will you do but, to my discomfort,
avail me naught, and weep out your sight?
Since she is quenched who used to give you light,
in vain have I from this time two eyes, I say,
formed for me, since your virtue goes away.

46.

O my Cressida, O lady sovereign,
of this woeful soul that so cries,
who shall now give comfort to its pain?
Alas, no one: but when my heart dies,
my spirit, which towards you flies,
receive with favour, for it will ever you serve:
no matter that this body death deserve.

47.

O you lovers, who high upon the wheel
of Fortune are set, at good venture,
God grant that you find love as strong as steel,
and long may your life in joy endure.
But when you come by my sepulchre
remember that your fellow lies here,
for I loved also, though I unworthy were.

48.

O old, unwholesome, and treacherous man
(I mean Calchas), alas, what ails thee
to become a Greek though born a Trojan?
O Calchas, who my bane will be,
in a cursed time you were born, for me!
Would that blissful Jove might grant in his joy
that I had you where I wish you, in Troy!

49.

A thousand sighs hotter than coals indeed
out of his breast one after another went,
mixed with new complaints, his woe to feed,
so that his woeful tears were never absent.
And shortly, his pains so him rent,
and he grew so exhausted, joy nor penance
could he feel, but lay there in a trance.

50.

Pandar, who in the parliament
had heard what every burgess and lord said,
and how it was all granted in one assent,
for Antenor, to yield up Cressid,
began well nigh to go out of his head,
so that, for woe, he knew not what he meant,
but in haste to Troilus he went.

51.

A certain knight, that at the time kept
the chamber door, undid it for him at once:
and Pandar, who full tenderly wept,
into the dark chamber, still as stone,
towards the bed began to softly go,
so confused he knew not what to say,
for very woe his wits were all astray.

52.

And with his face and look all distraught,
for sorrow of this, and with his arms folded,
he stood this woeful Troilus before,
and his piteous face began to behold.
But lord! So often did his heart turn cold,
seeing his friend in woe, whose heaviness
slew his heart, as he thought, from distress.

53.

This woeful man, Troilus, when he felt
his friend Pandar come in, him to see,
began, as the snow in the sun, to melt.
At which this sorrowful Pandar, from pity,
began to weep as tenderly as he.
And speechless thus the two were they,
that neither could one word for sorrow say.

54.

But at the last this woeful Troilus,
near dead of grief, began an outpour,
and with a sorrowful noise he said thus,
among his sobs and his sighs sore:
'Lo, Pandar, I am dead and more:
have you not heard in parliament,' he said,
for Antenor, how lost is my Cressid?'

55.

This Pandarus, full dead and pale of hue,
full piteously answered and said: 'Yes,
I wish it were as false as it is true,
what I have heard, and know how it all is.
O mercy, God, who would have thought this?
Who would have thought that in a throw
Fortune would our joy overthrow?'

56.

For in this world there is no creature
I think, who ever saw ruin hit
stranger than this through accident or venture.
But who may escape everything or divine it?
Such is this world: for so I define it:
no man should trust to find in Fortune
sole property, her gifts are communal.

57.

But tell me this, why you are so mad
with sorrow so? Why do you lie there in this wise,
since your desire completely you have had,
so that by rights it ought to suffice?
But I, that never felt in my service
a friendly face, or the gaze of an eye,
let me so weep and wail till I die.

58.

And beside all this, as you well know yourself,
this town is full of ladies all around,
and, to my mind, fairer than twelve
such as she ever was I'll find in some crowd,
yes, one or two, without any doubt.
So be glad, my own dear brother:
If she be lost, we shall discover another.

59.

What, God forbid, always that pleasure chance
to be in one thing, and in no other might!
If one can sing, another well can dance:
if this one's lovely, she is glad and light:
and this one's fair, and that one reasons right.
Each for his own virtue is held dear,
both heron-hawk and falcon of the air.

60.

And then, as *Zeuxis* [p. 455] wrote who was full wise,
the new love often chases out the old
and a new case requires new advice.
Think then, save yourself, as you are told.
Such fire will by due process turn to cold:
for since it is but pleasure come by chance,
something will put it from remembrance.

61.

For as sure as day comes after night,
the new love, labour, or another woe,
or else seldom having her in sight
will an old affection overthrow.
And, for your part, you shall have one of those
comforts to abridge your bitter pain's smart:
absence of her will drive her from your heart.'

62.

These words he said for the moment all
to help his friend, lest he for sorrow died:
doubtless to cause his woe to fall,
he cared not what nonsense he replied.
But Troilus, who nigh for sorrow died,
took little heed of anything he meant:
one ear heard it, at the other out it went:

63.

But at the last he answered, and said: 'Ah, friend,
this medicine, or healed this way to be,
were well fitting if I were a fiend,
to betray her who is true to me.
I pray to God, this counsel never see
the light of day, rather let me die here
before I do as you would have me, sir.

64.

She that I serve, yes, whatever you say,
to whom my heart is devoted by right,
shall have me wholly hers till I die.
For, Pandarus, since I swore truth in her sight,
I will not be untrue though I might:
but as her man I'll live and die, nor swerve
nor any other living creature serve.

65.

And where you say you will as fair find
as she, let be, make no comparison
to creature formed here of Nature's kind.
O my dear Pandarus, in conclusion,
I will never be of your opinion
touching all this: so you I beseech
hold your peace, you slay me with your speech.

66.

You tell me that I should love another
all freshly new, and let Cressid go.
It lies not in my power, dear brother:
and though I might, I would not do so.
And can you play racquets to an fro
with love, nettle, dock, now this, now that Pandar?
Ill luck for her, who for your woe has care.

67.

Also, you do for me, you Pandarus,
as he that, when a man is woebegone,
comes to him readily and says thus:
“Think not of pain, and you will feel none.”
You must first transmute me to a stone,
and deprive me of my passions all
before you easily make my woe so fall.

68.

Death may well from my breast part
life, so long may last this sorrow of mine:
but from my soul shall Cressid's dart
never be out, but down with Proserpine,
when I am dead, I will go dwell and pine:
and there I will eternally complain
of my woe and how we part again.

69.

You have made an argument, that's fine,
how it should a lesser pain be
to forgo Cressid because she has been mine,
and live in ease and felicity.
Why do you gab so, who said this to me,
that "it is worse for him who from joy's thrown
than if he had none of that joy ever known"?

70.

But tell me now, since you think it right
to change so in love, to and fro,
why have you not tried with all your might
to change from her who brings you all your woe?
Why will you not let her from your heart go?
Why will you not love another lady sweet
who might yet bring your heart to peace?

71.

If you in love have always had mischance
and cannot it out of your heart drive,
I, that have lived in joy and pleasant chance,
with her, as much as any creature alive,
how should I forget, and be so blithe?
Oh, where have you been hid so long in mew,
that you so well and formally argue?

72.

No, No, God knows, worth naught is all you said,
despite of which, regardless what may fall,
without more words, I will be dead.
O Death, who are the ender of sorrows all,
come now, since I so often on you call:
for happy is that death, truth to say,
that, oft invoked, comes and ends our pain.

73.

I know it well, while my life was at peace,
to stop you slaying me, I would have given hire:
but now your coming is to me so sweet,
that in this world I nothing so desire.
O Death, since with this sorrow I am on fire,
either at once let me in tears die drenched,
or with your cold stroke, my heat quenched.

74.

Since you slay so many in ways so various,
against their will, unasked-for, day and night,
do me, at my request, this service,
take now the world (and you do right)
from me, who am the woefullest knight
that ever was: for it is time I passed away,
since in this world I have no part to play.'

75.

At this Troilus's tears began to distill,
like liquor from a retort full fast:
and Pandarus held his tongue still,
and down to the ground his eyes cast.
But nonetheless, thus thought he at the last:
'What, by heaven! Rather than my friend die
yet I will somewhat more to this reply.'

76.

And said: 'Friend, since you are in such distress,
and since you think my arguments to blame,
why not yourself help provide redress,
and with your manliness prevent this game?
Go take her: you cannot not do so: for shame!
and either let her from the town go
or keep her, and let foolishness alone.

77.

Are you in Troy and have no courage then
to take a woman who loves thee,
and would herself give her assent?
Now is this not foolish vanity?
Rise up now, and let this weeping be
and show you are a man, for in this hour
I will be dead or she will remain ours.'

78.

To this Troilus answered him full soft,
and said: 'By heaven, beloved brother dear,
all this I have thought of myself, and oft,
and more things than you speak of here.
But why it cannot be, you shall well hear,
and when you have give me an audience
afterwards you can pronounce sentence.

79.

First, since (you know) this town is at war
through the taking of a woman by might,
it would not be suffered for me so to err,
as things stand now, or do what was not right.
I should have blame also from every knight
if I against my father's ruling stood,
since she's exchanged for the town's good.

80.

I have thought also, if she were to assent,
to ask my father for her, of his grace:
yet this would accuse her to all intent,
since I know well I may not her purchase.
For since my father, in so high a place
as parliament, has her exchange sealed,
he will not for me see his decree repealed.

81.

Yet most I dread her heart to perturb
with violence, if I play such a game:
for if I were this to openly disturb
it must seem a slander on her name.
And I would rather die than her defame.
God forbid that I should not have
her honour dearer than my life to save.

82.

So am I lost, for aught that I can see,
for certain it is, since I am her knight,
I must hold her honour dearer than I to me
in any case, as a lover ought, of right.
So in my mind desire and reason fight:
desire to trouble her advises me clear,
and reason forbids it, as my heart fears.'

83.

Thus weeping, as if he could never cease,
he said: 'Alas, how will I, wretch, fare?
For I feel my love always to increase,
and hope is always less and less, Pandar.
Increasing also the causes of my care,
so why does my heart not burst in my breast?
For in love like this there is but little rest.'

84.

Pandar answered: 'Friend, you may, you see
do as you wish for my part: but if I were hot
and had your power, she should go with me
though all this town cried out on one note:
for all that noise I would not give a groat,
for when men have cried a while there is no sound.
A wonder never lasts more than nine nights in town.

85.

Probe not in reasoning so deep
or courtesy, but help yourself soon.
It is better that others weep,
and especially since you two be one.
Rise up, for, by my head, she will be gone:
and rather be in blame, a little, found
than die here like a gnat, without a wound.

86.

It is no shame to you, nor a vice,
to take her who you love most.
Perhaps she might think you were too nice
to let her go thus to the Greek host.
Think also, Fortune, as you know'st,
helps hardy men in their enterprise,
and scorns wretches for their cowardice.

87.

And though your lady might a little grieve,
you can your peace full well hereafter make.
But as for me, for certain, I can't believe
that she would now it for an evil take:
why then for fear should your heart quake?
Think also how Paris has (who is your brother)
a love, and why should you not have another?

88.

And Troilus, one thing I dare swear,
is that Cressid, who is your love in chief,
now loves you as well as you do her,
God help me so, she will not think it grief,
if you do something to avoid mischief,
and if she wishes from you to pass,
then she is false: so love her less, alas.

89.

Therefore take heart, and think as a true knight.
Through love is broken everyday each law.
Now show your courage somewhat and your might,
have mercy on yourself for sure:
let not this wretched woe your heart gnaw.
But manfully risk all on a six or seven,
and if you die a martyr, go to heaven!

90.

I will myself be with you in your need,
though I and all my kin on the ground
may in a street, like dogs, lie dead, indeed.
Pierced through with many a wide and bloody wound,
in every case, I will a friend be found.
And if you choose to die here like a wretch,
adieu, the devil take him who cares so much!

91.

At these words Troilus began to quicken,
and said: 'Friend, have mercy: I assent:
but certainly you cannot prick me then,
nor can any pain so me torment,
that in any way it would be my intent,
in a word, though die I should,
to take her, unless she herself would.

92.

Why, so I mean too,' said Pandar, 'any day.
But tell me then, have you question of her made,
that you sorrow thus?' And he answered: 'Nay.'
'Why then are you,' said Pandar, 'so afraid
(who do not know she'll be at all dismayed)
to take her, since you have not been there,
unless Jove whispered it in your ear?

93.

So, rise, as if naught were amiss, right soon,
and wash your face, and to the king wend,
or he may wonder where you are gone.
You must deceive him and others wisely then,
or, maybe, he will after you send
before you are aware: and in short brother dear,
be glad: and let me work at this matter.

94.

For I shall shape it that assuredly
you shall this night, sometime, in some manner,
come to speak with the lady privately:
and by her words and also by her cheer
you will soon perceive and hear
all her intent, and in this case the best:
and farewell now, for at this point I rest.'

95.

The swift rumour that false things
reports equally with the true,
was throughout Troy spread on ready wings,
from man to man, and made ever new,
how Calchas's daughter, with her bright hue,
in parliament, without words more,
was given in exchange for Antenor.

96.

The which tale as soon as Cressid
heard, she who of her father never thought,
in this case, nor when he might die,
constantly of Jupiter besought
to send ill luck to whom the treaty brought.
But in short, lest that these tales true were,
she dare not ask anyone for fear.

97.

As one who had her heart and all her mind
set on Troilus, tied so wonderfully fast,
that all the world could not her love unbind
nor Troilus out of her heart cast,
she wished to be his, while her life should last,
and thus she burned both in love and dread
so knew not by what counsel to be led.

98.

But as men see in town and all about,
that of their friends women like to have sight,
so to Cressid of women came a crowd
in joyful sympathy, thinking it her delight,
and with their tales, hardly worth a mite,
these women, who in the city dwell
sit themselves down, and speak as I shall tell.

99.

Said one at first: 'I am glad, truly,
because of it you will your father see.'
Another answered: 'Well, I am not, I,
for all too little has she been in our company.'
Then said a third: 'I hope, then, that she
will bring for us a peace on either side,
so, when she goes, Almighty God be her guide.'

100.

Those words and those womanish things,
she heard them just as though she absent were,
for, God knows, her heart on another thing is:
although her body sits among them there,
her attention is always elsewhere.
For Troilus completely her heart sought,
without a word, always of him she thought.

101.

These women, that thus think her to please,
on nothing began all their tales to spend:
such foolishness can afford her no ease,
as one who all this while burned
with other passion than they understand,
so that she almost felt her heart die
for woe and weariness of that company.

102.

Because of which she could no more restrain
her tears (they began so to well)
that were the signs of the bitter pain
in which her spirit was, and must dwell:
remembering from heaven into what hell
she was fallen, since she must forgo the sight
of Troilus, and sorrowfully she sighed.

103.

And those fools, sitting her about,
thought that she wept and sighed sore
because she should depart from that crowd
and never play with them any more,
and those who had known her before
saw her weep, and thought it naturalness,
and each of them wept also for her distress.

104.

And so they busily gave her comfort
for something, God knows, of which she little thought,
and with their tales to amuse her thought,
and to be glad they often her besought
but such an ease with this they her wrought
as much as a man is eased when he feels
that for a headache you scratch him on the heel.

105.

But after all this foolish vanity
they took their leave and home they went all.
Cressid, full of sorrowful pity,
went up into her chamber from the hall:
and on her bed she began as if dead to fall,
with the purpose from there never to rise:
and thus she wrought as I shall you describe.

106.

Her waving hair, that sunlit was of hue,
she rent, and then her fingers long and small
she wrung often and prayed God to show her rue,
and with death to heal her misfortunes all.
Her colour once bright, that now began to pall,
gave witness of her woe and her constraint:
and thus she spoke, sobbing with complaint.

107.

‘Alas!’ she said, ‘out of this region
I, woeful wretch and unfortunate sight,
born under a cursed constellation,
must go, and part from my knight.
Woe, alas, on that day’s light
on which I first saw him with eyes twain,
that causes me (and I him) all this pain!’

108.

At that the tears from her eyes two
fell down, as showers in April's season:
her white breast she beat, and for woe,
cried on death with a thousand sighs then,
since he that used her woes to lighten
she must forgo, for which misadventure
she held herself as a lost creature.

109.

She said: 'How will he do, and I also?
How should I live if from him I un-twin?
O dear heart, you that I love so,
who will that sorrow quench that you are in?
O Calchas, father, yours be all this sin!
O my mother, who was called Argive,
woe on the day that you bore me alive!

110.

To what end should I love and sorrow thus?
How should I, fish out of water, endure?
What is Cressid worth without Troilus?
How should a plant or living creature
live without its kind's nurture?
To which a frequent proverb here I say,
that "rootless: green things must fall away."

111.

I shall do thus: since neither sword nor dart
dare I handle, for their painful cruelty,
that day on which I from him depart,
if sorrow at that is not my death to be,
then shall no meat or drink come in me
till I my soul out of my breast un-sheath,
and so myself I would do to death.

112.

And Troilus, my clothes every one
shall be black in token, heart sweet,
that I am as if out of this world gone,
I, who used to bring you peace:
and in my Order, yes, till death me meet,
the observance ever, in your absence,
shall sorrow be, complaint, and abstinence.

113.

My heart, also the woeful ghost within,
I bequeath, with your spirit, to complain
eternally, for they shall not part again:
for though on earth we are parted, we twain,
yet in the fields of pity, beyond pain,
they call Elysium, we shall be together
as Orpheus and *Eurydice* [p. 455] his lover.



'Orpheus and Eurydice'
Girodet-Trioson, Anne-Louis, 1767-1824,
Gérard, François-Pascal-Simon, 1770-1837
The Getty Open Content Program

114.

Thus, my heart, for Antenor, alas,
as I think, I soon shall be exchanged.
But what will you do in this sorrowful case:
how will your tender heart this sustain?
Yet, my heart, forget this sorrow and pain,
and me also, for in truth say I,
if you fare well, I care not if I die.'

115.

How it could ever be read, or sung,
the complaint she made in her distress,
I know not: but as for me my poor tongue
if I tried to describe her heaviness,
would only make her sorrow seem less
than it was, and childishly deface
her high complaint, and therefore I beg grace.

116.

Pandar, who was sent by Troilus
to Cressid, as you have heard me say,
agreed that it was better thus,
and he glad to perform the task that day,
to Cressid, in a quite secret way,
where her torment and grief did rage,
came to tell all wholly his message.

117.

And found she had begun herself to treat
quite piteously, for with her salt tears
her breast, her face, bathed was full wet:
the long tresses of her sunlit hair,
unpinned, hung all about her ears:
which gave him notice that she desired
death's martyrdom, that her heart required.

118.

When she saw him she began for sorrow at once
her tearful face between her arms to hide,
at which this Pandar was so woebegone,
that he could scarcely in that house abide,
as he felt pity for her on every side,
for if Cressid had complained deeply before
she began to complain a thousand times more.

119.

And in her bitter plaint then she said:
'Pandarus first, of joys more than two,
was prime cause to me Cressid,
that have now been transmuted to cruel woe.
Should I then say to you "welcome" or no,
who first of all brought me to the ties
of love, alas, that ends in such wise?

120.

Does love end, then, in woe? Yes, or man lies,
and all worldly bliss, it seems to me,
the end of bliss, ever sorrow, occupies:
and who believes that not to be,
let him me, a woeful wretch, see,
who hate myself and my own birth curse,
feeling always from woe I go to worse.

121.

Who sees me, he sees all sorrow in one,
pain, torment, plaint, woe and distress.
Out of my woeful body harm is none
but anguish, languor, cruel bitterness,
trouble, pain, dread, fury, and sickness.
I think, indeed, from heaven tears rain
in pity for my bitter and cruel pain.'

122.

'And you, my niece, full of discomfort,'
said Pandarus, 'what do you think to do?
Surely some true regard to yourself you ought
to have? Why will you destroy yourself too?
Leave all this work, and take now heed to
what I say, listen with full intent
to this which, by me, your Troilus has sent.'

123.

Cressid turned then, a woeful face making
so that it was deathly her to see.
‘Alas!’ she said, ‘what words do you bring?
What will my dear heart say to me,
whom I dread never more to see?
Will he have plaints or tears before I wend?
I have enough, if for those he send.’

124.

She was such to see in her visage,
as is the one that men on a bier mind:
her face, like Paradise in its image,
was all changed to another kind.
The play, the laughter, men used to find
in her, and also her joys every one
were fled, and thus Cressid lies alone.

125.

Around her two eyes a purple ring
encircled in true token of her pain,
that to behold it was a deadly thing,
at which Pandar might not restrain
the tears from his eyes to rain.
But nonetheless, as best he might he said
from Troilus these words to Cressid.

126.

'Lo, niece, I know you have heard how
the king with other lords, all for the best,
has set an exchange of Antenor for you,
which is the cause of this sorrow and unrest.
But how this thing does Troilus molest,
is what no earthly man's tongue can say:
for very woe his wits are all astray.

127.

For all this we have so sorrowed, he and I,
it nearly wore us down until we were no more:
but through my counsel this day finally
he has from weeping learnt a little to withdraw:
It seems to me he desires, being unsure,
to be with you a night to devise
a remedy for this, if there is one anywise.

128.

This, short and plain's the content of my message,
as far as my wits can comprehend:
for you, who are in such torment of grief's rage,
won't wish to hear the prologue extend:
and now you may an answer send.
And for the love of God, my niece dear,
leave off this woe before Troilus is here.'

129.

‘Great is my woe,’ she said, and sighed sore
as one that felt a deadly sharp distress,
‘but yet to me his sorrow is much more,
that love him better than he himself, I guess,
alas, through me he has such heaviness:
can he for me as piteously complain?
Truly, his sorrow doubles all my pain.

130.

Grievous to me, God knows, it is to part,’
she said, ‘but yet it is harder for me
to see the sorrow that afflicts his heart,
for well I know it will my bane be:
and I will die, for certain,’ then said she.
‘But bid him come, before death who me mistreats
drives out my spirit, that he in my heart beats.’

131.

These words said, she, on her arms two
fell prone and began to weep piteously.
Said Pandarus: ‘Alas, why do you so,
since you well know the time is close by
when he shall come? Rise, hastily,
that he you free of weeping thus shall find,
or you will make him lose his mind.

132.

For, if he knew you fared in this manner,
he would slay himself: and if I had known
this would be the fare, he'd not come here
for all the wealth that Priam may own.
For on what end he would determine soon,
that I know well, and therefore I still say,
leave off this sorrow or he will die today.

133.

And set yourself his sorrow to abridge
and not increase, dear niece, my sweet:
be rather to him the flat than the edge,
and with some wisdom, his sorrows greet.
What help's it if your weeping fills the street,
or you both in salt waves are drowned?
Better a time of cure than sorrow's sound.

134.

I mean this: when I him here bring,
since you are wise and both of one assent,
shape how you might prevent this going
or return again soon after you are sent:
women are wise in quick agreement.
And let's see now how your wits avail,
and if I can help I shall not fail.'

135.

‘Go,’ said Cressid, ‘and, uncle, truly
I will do all I can myself to restrain
from weeping in his sight, and busily
to make him glad I will take great pain,
and of my heart search in every vein:
if to this hurt there may be found a salve
it shall not lack, for certain, on my behalf.

136.

Pandarus goes, and Troilus he sought,
till in a temple he found him alone,
like one who of his life no longer thought
but to the merciful gods every one
he prayed most tenderly and made his moan,
to send him soon out of this earthly place,
for he truly thought there could be no other grace.

137.

And in brief, the truth to say,
he was so fallen into despair that day
that for certain he prepared the way:
for this was his argument always:
he said he was truly lost, welaway –
‘For all that comes, comes of necessity:
therefore to be lost, it is my destiny.

138.

For certainly I know this well,' he said
that the foresight of divine providence
has known always I would forgo Cressid,
since God sees all things, in all assurance,
and disposes of them, through his ordinance,
each according to their merits, to be,
as they shall come to pass, by destiny.

139.

But, nonetheless, whom shall I believe?
since there are *great clerks* [p. 456], many a one,
that destiny through arguments conceive
and prove, and some say there is none,
but that free choice is given us everyone.
Oh welaway, so clever were clerks of old,
that I know not whose opinion to hold.

140.

For, so men say, if God sees all before,
and God may not be deceived, as we see,
then things must happen, whatever men have sworn,
as foreknowledge has seen them before to be.
Therefore I say that if from eternity He
has known our thoughts before and our deeds,
we have no free choice, as these clerks teach indeed.

141.

For no other thought, nor other deed also,
could ever be, but such as providence
(which cannot be deceived for evermore)
has known before, free of ignorance:
for if there might be a variance
that could escape God's surveying,
He would not have prescience of what was coming:

142.

but that would make His then an opinion
uncertain, and not a steadfast foreseeing.
And certainly that would be a delusion,
that God should have imperfect knowing
just as we men, who have doubtful seeing.
But such an error upon God to guess
were false and foul and cursed wickedness.

143.

Also this is an opinion held by some
that have their heads full and smoothly shorn:
they say thus: that a thing is not to come
because God's prescience has seen before
that it shall come: but they say because therefore
it must come therefore providence
knows it before, free of ignorance.

144.

And in this manner then necessity
reverses the matter once again:
for it is not necessary for it to be
that those things happen for certain
that are foreseen: but, as they maintain,
necessary that all things that befall
have for certain been foreseen, in all.

145.

I intend, although I labour in this,
to enquire which thing the cause of the other be:
as whether that the prescience of God is
the certain cause of the necessity
of things that come to be, as God may see:
or if necessity of things coming hence
is the certain cause of providence.

146.

But for now I do not intend showing
how the order of causes stands: but well know I
that it must be that the befalling
of things known beforehand, and certainly,
is necessary, even though it follows not thereby
that prescience makes the befalling necessary there
of the thing to come, be it foul or fair.

147.

For if a man sits there on a fallen tree,
then by necessity it behoves it
that your opinion truthful be
that knows or conjectures that he sits.
And furthermore now against it,
lo, so is the truth of the contrary,
as thus – now listen close for I will not tarry.

148.

I say that if the opinion of thee
is true because he sit, then I say this,
that he must be sitting, of necessity:
and so necessity in either surmise is,
for in him the necessity of sitting is, yes,
and in you necessity of truth: and thus forsooth
there must be necessity in you both.

149.

But, you may say, the man therefore
does not sit because your opinion is:
but rather because the man sat there before,
therefore your opinion is true, yes.
And I say, though the cause of truth of this
comes from his sitting, yet necessity
is interchangeable in him and thee.

150.

So, in the same way, with all sense,
I may well make, as it seems to me,
my reasoning of God's providence
and of the things that come to be:
by which reasoning men may see
that those things that on earth befall,
by necessity come they all.

151.

For that a thing must come, yes,
means therefore it is foreseen in certainty,
and not that it comes because it foreseen is,
yet nevertheless it must be, necessarily,
that the thing to come be foreseen truly.
That is to say, things that foreseen be
happen indeed through necessity.

152.

And this suffices right enough, for certain,
to destroy our free choice, and our will:
and also now it is blasphemy, to say
that the falling out of things temporal
is the cause of God's prescience eternal:
now truly that is a false sentence,
that things to come should cause his prescience.

153.

What could I be saying, in such a thought,
but that God foreknows the things to come
because they are to come, and else knows naught?
So I might think, that all things and some,
that have happened before and now are gone,
are the cause of that sovereign prescience
that foreknows all, free of ignorance.

154.

And, beside all this, I say this there-to,
that just as when I know there is a thing,
then that thing must necessarily be so,
so also, when I know a thing is coming,
so it must come: and thus the befalling
of things that are known before they arrive,
can not be evaded on any side.'

155.

Then he said thus: 'Almighty Jove enthroned,
who know of all things the truthfulness,
take pity on my sorrow, and let me die soon,
or lead Cressid and I from this distress.'
And while he was in all this heaviness,
disputing with himself in this matter,
Pandarus came, and spoke as you may hear.

156.

‘O mighty God,’ said Pandarus, ‘enthroned,
whoever yet saw a wise man fare so?
Why, Troilus, what do you think to have done,
have you such desire to be your own foe?
What, by heaven, Cressid is not yet to go?
Why then desire to doom yourself in dread,
that in your head you even seem dead?

157.

Have you not lived many a year before
without her, and fared full well at ease?
Are you for her, and for no other born:
Has nature made you only her to please?
Let be, and think aright in your unease,
that in the dice as there fall chances,
just so in love come and go joy’s dances.

158.

And yet this is a wonder, most of all,
why you sorrow so, since you know not yet
touching her going, how that it will fall,
nor if she can herself prevent it.
You have not yet tested all her wit:
it’s time enough for a man his neck to bend
when it shall be cut off: sorrow as needs then.

159.

Therefore take heed of what I shall say:
I have spoken with her at length you see,
as was agreed between her and me,
and ever more I think thus, that she
has something in her heart's privacy
with which she can, if I shall rightly read,
prevent all this of which you are in dread.

160.

For such my counsel is, when it is night
go you to her, and make of this an end:
and blessed Juno, in her great might,
shall, as I hope, her grace to us send.
My heart says for certain she shall not wend,
and therefore let your heart awhile rest
and hold your purpose, that is the best.'

161.

This Troilus answered and sighed sore:
'You speak right well, and I will do so':
and he added what he wished to say more.
And when it was time for him to go
full privately himself, without more ado,
he came to her as he used to do:
and how they wrought I shall tell you too.

162.

True it is, that when they first meet
so the pain in their hearts begins to twist,
so that neither might the other greet:
but they embraced each other, and after kissed.
Which was the most woeful or the least
they knew not, nor could they one word bring
forth as I said before, for woe and sobbing.

163.

The woeful tears that they let fall
were as bitter and out of nature's kind,
through pain, as is aloe wood or gall.
Such bitter tears wept not, as I find,
the woeful *Myrrha* [p. 456] through the bark and rind:
so in this world there is not so hard a heart
that it would not have pitied their pain's smart.

164.

But when their woeful weary ghosts again
had returned to where they ought to dwell,
and somewhat to weaken began the pain,
through long complaint, and to ebb began the well
of their tears, and the heart un-swell,
with broken voice, all hoarse with crying, Cressid
to Troilus these words she said:



'Cinyras Discovers that he has Slept
with his Daughter Myrrha'
Crispijn van de Passe (II), after Pieter Lastman,
Jan Tegnagel, c. 1636 - 1670
The Getty Open Content Program

165.

‘O Jove, I die, and mercy I beseech!
Help, Troilus!’ And, at that, her face
on his breast she laid and lost her speech,
her woeful spirit from its proper placing
at every word, on the point of passing.
And so she lies there with hue pale and green,
who was once fresh and fairest to be seen.

166.

This Troilus, who began her to behold,
calling her name (and she lay as if dead,
without answering), and felt her limbs cold,
(her eyes thrown upward in her head),
this sorrowful man knew not what instead
he might do, but oft her cold mouth kissed.
Whether he was woeful, God and he know this.

167.

He rose, and straight her out he laid:
for sign of life (for aught he can or may)
he can nowhere find in Cressid,
so that his song is often ‘welaway.’
But when he saw that speechless she lay,
with sorrowful voice and heart of bliss all bare
he said that she was gone from the world there.

168.

So after he had long for her complained,
wrung his hands, and said what was to say,
and with his salt tears her breast had stained,
he began to wipe those tears away,
and piteously for her soul began to pray,
and said: 'O Lord, who are set on your throne,
have pity on me also, for I shall follow her soon.

169.

She was cold, and without sensation,
for aught he knew, for breath he felt none:
and this was to him a pregnant confirmation
that she was forth out of this world gone:
and when he saw there was no more to be done,
he began to dress her limbs in such manner
as men do those who are laid on bier.

170.

And after this, with stern and cruel heart,
his sword at once out of his sheath aright
he drew to slay himself, however it smart,
so that his soul her soul to follow might,
wherever the doom of *Minos* [p. 456] might indite:
since Love and cruel Fortune did not will
that in this world he should live still.



'Scylla en Minos'
Crispijn van de Passe (I), 1602 - 1607
The Rijksmuseum

171.

Then said he thus, full of high disdain:
‘O cruel Jove, and you, Fortune adverse,
this is the whole, that falsely have you slain
Cressid, and since you can do me no worse,
fie on your power and works so diverse.
Thus cowardly you shall me never win:
no death shall part me from my lady then:

172.

For I this world (since you have slain her thus)
will leave, and follow her spirit low or high:
never shall lover say that Troilus
dared not, for fear, with his lady to die:
for certain I will bear her company.
But since you will not suffer us to live here,
yet allow our souls to be together there.

173.

And you, city that I leave in woe,
and you, Priam, and brothers here,
and you, my mother, farewell, for I go:
and *Atropos* [p. 456] make ready my bier!
And you, Cressid, O sweet heart dear,
receive now my spirit,’ with a sigh,
with sword at heart ready to die.



'Three Fates'
Jan Harmensz. Muller, after
Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, 1587 - 1591
The Rijksmuseum

174.

But, as God wished, from her swoon she did
recover, and began to sigh, and, 'Troilus!' cried:
and he answered: 'Lady mine, Cressid,
live you yet?' and let his sword down glide.
'Yes, my heart, thanks be to Cupid!' she sighed.
And at that she began more deeply to sigh,
and he began to comfort her as best he might:

175.

took her in his two arms, and kissed her oft,
and to comfort her set his best intent:
at which her ghost, that flickered aloft,
into her woeful heart again it went.
But at the last, as her glance bent
aside, at once his sword she spied,
as it lay bare, and began with fear to cry.

176.

And asked him why he had it taken:
and Troilus at once the cause her told,
and how himself with it he would have slain.
At which Cressid began him to behold,
and began him in her arms to quickly fold,
and said: 'O mercy, God, lo, such a deed!
Alas, how near death we both were, indeed.

177.

What if I had not spoken, by God's grace it was,
you would have slain yourself,' said she.
'Yes, certainly': and she answered: 'Alas!
for by the same God that made me
I would not a furlong longer seek to be,
after your death, not to be crowned queen
of all the lands where the sun casts its sheen.

178.

But with this same sword that is here
I would have slain myself,' she said, 'Oh
stop! for we have made enough of this,
and let us rise and straight to bed go,
and there let us speak of our woe.
For by the lamp that I see burn intense,
I know right well that day is not far hence.

179.

When they were in their bed, in arms embraced,
it was not like the nights they had before:
for piteously each the other faced
as they that had all their bliss lost and more,
bewailing ever the day that they were born,
till at the last this sorrowful one, Cressid,
to Troilus these very words said:

180.

'Lo, my heart, you know this well,' said she,
'that if anyone at their woe always complains,
and seeks not how they might helped be,
it is but folly and increase of pain.
And since that we are here assembled again,
to find a remedy for the woe we're in
it were time enough to begin.

181.

I am a woman, so you know full well
that I have intuitions suddenly,
so while this one is hot, I will tell.
I think thus, that neither you nor I
ought to show half this woe, sensibly,
since there is art enough to redress
what is amiss, and lift this heaviness.

182.

Truth is, the very woe that we are in,
for aught I know, for no reason is
but because we have to part again.
Considering all, there is no more amiss.
But what is then a remedy for this,
why that we set ourselves soon to meet.
That is all, my dear heart sweet.

183.

Now that I shall easily bring it about
that I come again soon after I go,
I do not have a shadow of a doubt,
for certainly within a week or two
I shall be here: and that it shall be so
in all justice, and in words few,
I can you easily a heap of ways show.

184.

Because of which I'll not make a long sermon,
for time once lost will not recovered be,
but I will go straight to my conclusion
(and the best one, for aught that I can see).
And, for the love of God, forgive me
if I speak anything that gives your heart unrest,
for truly I speak it for the best.

185.

Making always a protestation
that now these words that I shall say
are only to explain my proposition
to find for our help the best way.
And do not take it otherwise, I pray:
For, in effect, whatsoever you command,
I will do, without questioning the demand.

186.

Now, listen to this, you well understand
that my going is decreed by parliament
so firmly, that we cannot it withstand
for all the world, in my judgment.
And since there is no arrangement
to help stop it, let it pass from mind,
and let us try a better way to find.

187.

The truth is that to part us two again
will torment us and cruelly annoy:
but he must sometimes feel the pain
who serves Love, if he would have the joy.
And since I'll be no further from Troy
that I can ride again in half a morrow,
it ought to be less cause to us of sorrow.

188.

So, as I shall not be hid as in mew,
day by day, my own heart dear
(since you know well there is a truce)
you will all the news of my state hear.
And before the truce is done I will be here,
and then you will have Antenor won
and me also: be glad now, if you can.

189.

And think like this: "Cressid is now gone,
but what! she will return quickly again":
and when alas? by God, lo, right soon,
before ten days, this dare I maintain.
And then as before we'll be right as rain,
so that we shall together ever dwell,
that all the world might not our bliss tell.

190.

I see that often, where we are now,
for the best, our counsel to hide,
you speak not with me nor I with you
a fortnight: nor see you walk or ride.
May you not ten days then abide,
for my honour, in such a venture?
If not there's little that you can endure.

191.

You know also that all my kin are here,
unless it be my father, and too
all my other wealth, all together,
and namely, my dear heart, you,
of whom I would not lose the view
for all this world, as wide as it has space,
or else let me never see Jove's face.

192.

Why think you that my father, in this wise,
so desires to see me, but for dread
lest in this town folk me despise
because of him, for his unhappy deed?
What does he know of the life I lead?
If he knew how well in Troy I fare,
for my going we'd have no need to care.

193.

You see that every day, and more and more,
men treat of peace, and it supposed is
that we the queen Helen will restore,
and the Greeks restore what we miss.
So even if there were no comfort but this,
that men propose peace on every side,
you should with an easier heart abide.

194.

For if there is a peace, my heart dear,
the nature of the peace must needs drive
men to communication together,
and to and fro also to ride and go as blithe
all day, and thick as bees flown from a hive,
and every one have liberty to live
where he best wishes, without needing leave.

195.

And even if of peace there is none,
yet here (though the peace never were)
I must return: for where would I be gone,
or by what mischance should I dwell there
among those men of arms ever in fear,
so that, as God my soul may lead,
I cannot see why you should be afraid.

196.

Have here another thought, if so it be
that all these things do not you suffice:
my father, as you know well, indeed,
is old, and covetousness is old age's vice.
And I right now have found the device,
without a net, where I shall have him pent:
and listen now, if you will assent.

197.

Lo, Troilus, men say full hard it is
the wolf filled and the sheep whole to have:
that is to say that men often, in this,
must spend a part, the remnant to save:
for always with gold men may the heart engrave
of him in whom covetousness is a vice,
and what I plan I shall to you describe.

198.

The goods that I have in this town
I will take to my father and say
that out of trust and for their salvation
they are sent from a friend of his today.
The which friends fervently him pray
to send for more, and that hastily
while the town stands thus in jeopardy.

199.

And that will be a huge quantity,
so I will say, but lest folk it espy,
it may be sent by no one but me:
I shall also tell him, if peace arrived,
the friends that I have on every side
near the Court, to cause the wrath to abate
of Priamus, and let him return to grace.

200.

So, what with one thing and another, sweet
I shall enchant him so with my discourse,
that he will think his soul in heaven complete.
For all Apollo, or his servants' laws,
or calculation, are not worth two straws:
desire for gold shall his soul so blind,
I will achieve the end I have in mind.

201.

And if by divination he tried to weave
a tale that I lie, I certainly have planned
to trouble him, and pluck him by the sleeve
while divining, and take a stand
that he does not the gods well understand,
for gods speak in amphibologies,
and for one truth they tell twenty lies.

202.

Also fear first found the gods, I suppose,
so I will say, and that his coward heart
made him mistake the god's text, who knows,
when he, for fear, did our *Delphic shrine* ^[p. 456] depart.
And, if I don't make him soon, by my art,
convert to my advice in a day or two,
to have me put to death I'll invite you.'

203.

And truly, and well written down I find,
that all this thing was said with good intent,
and that her heart was true and kind
towards him, and she spoke as she meant,
and nearly died of woe when she went,
and was of purpose ever to be true:
so they wrote who of her actions knew.

204.

This Troilus, with heart and ears heard
all this thing discussed to and fro:
and truly it seemed to him he had
the same opinion, but yet to let her go
his heart misgave him ever so.
But finally he compelled his heart to rest,
and trusted her, and took it for the best.

205.

At which the great fury of his penance
was quelled with hope, and them between
began, for joy, the amorous dance,
and, as the birds when the sun gleams
delight in their song in the leaves green,
just so the words that they spoke together
delighted them and gave their hearts clear weather.

206.

But nonetheless the going of Cressid,
for all the world, would not leave his mind,
so that often he piteously prayed
that in her promise he might her true find,
and said to her: 'Certainly, if you are unkind,
and do not come on the day set to Troy,
I will have nor honour, health or joy.

207.

For as truly as the sun will rise tomorrow,
(and, God, so may Thou me, woeful wretch,
bring to peace out of this cruel sorrow),
I will slay myself if you linger much.
And though my death's not worth a lot as such,
yet before you cause me so to smart,
rather dwell here, my own sweetheart.

208.

For truly, my own lady dear,
those clevernesses I hear you declare,
are likely to all fail together.
For thus men say: “one thing thinks the bear,
another thing completely thinks his master.”
Your father’s wise, and it is said, from dread,
“The wise may be outrun, but not outwitted.”

209.

It is hard to feign a limp, and not be spied
by a cripple, since he knows the craft.
Your father is, in cunning, *Argus* [p. 456]-eyed,
for all that of his treasures he’s bereft:
he has plenty of his old cunning left,
you will not blind him, for all that’s in your head,
nor feign with skill enough, that is my dread.

210.

I know not if peace shall come to pass beside:
but peace or not, in earnest or in game,
I know, since Calchas on the Greek’s side
has been once, and foully lost his name,
he dare come here no more out of shame:
because of which, that way, for aught I see,
to trust in that, is but a fantasy.



'Mercury and Argus'
Schelte Adamsz. Bolswert,
after Jacob Jordaens (I), 1596 - 1659
The Rijksmuseum

211.

You will also find your father raise the matter
of your marrying: and as he can preach,
he will praise so some Greek and well flatter,
that he will ravish you with his speech,
or compel you by force, as he shall teach.
And Troilus, on whom you have no ruth
will innocently die so, in his truth.

212.

And besides all this, your father will despise
us all, and say this city is but lost,
and that the siege will never, in his eyes,
be raised, because the Greeks have all so sworn,
till we are slain, and down our walls are torn.
All this he'll make you with his words fear,
so that I dread now you will remain there.

213.

You will see too many a lusty knight,
among the Greeks, full of worthiness:
and each of them with heart, wit and might
to please you will go about love's business,
that you will grow tired of the roughness
of us simple Trojans, unless ruth
makes you relent, or your power of truth.

214.

And this is so grievous to me to think,
that from my breast it will my soul rend:
nor indeed into my mind could ever sink
any good opinion of it, if you went:
because your father's cunning will us end.
And if you go, as I have said before,
then think me dead, I will soon be no more.

215.

So that with humble, true and piteous heart
a thousand times for mercy to you I pray:
take pity on my bitter pain's smart,
and do somewhat as I to you now say,
and between us two let's steal away:
and think that it is folly when men choose,
to chance the substance they may forever lose.

216.

I mean this, that since before the day
we can steal away and be together so,
what sense is there in making an assay
(in case you do to your father go)
of whether you can return or no?
Thus I mean, that it would be great folly
to put that security in jeopardy.

217.

And vulgarly to speak of wealth and substance,
of treasure we may carry in its stead
enough to live in honour and indulgence
until the time that both of us are dead.
And thus we may free ourselves of this dread:
for every other way you can afford,
my heart, indeed, may not with it accord.

218.

And certainly not dread poverty,
for I have kin and friends elsewhere,
so though we come in our bare shirts, we
would lack neither gold nor gear,
but be honoured while we dwell there.
And let us go soon, for, as is my intent,
this is the best for us, if you will assent.'

219.

Cressid, with a sigh, right in this wise
answered: 'Well, my dear heart true,
we well may steal away as you advise,
and find such unprofitable ways new:
but afterwards sorely we will it rue.
And as God may help in my greatest need,
causelessly you suffer this dread, indeed.



'Juno Descends into Hades to ask the Furies
to drive Athamas Mad'
Giulio Bonasone, 1501 - 1580
The Rijksmuseum

220.

For the very day that I (through cherishing
or fear of father, or for any other thing, delight
in pleasure, or rank, or wedding)
am false to you, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturn's daughter, Juno, through her might,
maddened as *Athamas* [p. 456], send me to dwell
eternally in Styx, the pit of hell!

221.

And this, by every god celestial,
I swear to you, and also each goddess,
by every nymph and deity infernal,
by satyrs and fauns, greater ones and less
(that are the demi-gods of wilderness):
and Atropos my thread of life shall break
if I be false: now trust me, for your sake.

222.

And you *Simois* [p. 457], that straight as an arrow, clear
through Troy run ever downward to the sea,
bear witness to this word that is said here,
that on that day that I untrue be
to Troilus, my own heart free,
you shall return backward to your well,
and I with body and soul sink to hell!

223.

But when you say that we away should go
and leave all your friends, God forbid
that for any woman you should do so,
and especially since Troy has now such need
of help: and also of another thing take heed,
if this were known, my life were in the balance,
and your honour: God shield us from mischance!

224.

And if peace is afterwards displayed,
as mirth comes after anger every day,
why lord! sorrow and woe you would have made,
so that you'd not dare return for shame.
And before you so risk your name
be not too hasty with your heated airs,
for a hasty man never wants for cares.

225.

What do you think the people all about
would say of it? That's an easy one to read!
They would say, and swear it, without doubt,
that it was not love that drove you to this deed,
but voluptuous lust and coward fear, indeed.
So would be lost, truly, my heart dear,
all your honour that shines now so clear.

226.

And also think of my pure honesty
that flowers yet, how I would it rend,
and with what filth it would spotted be
if I were with you in this way to wend,
not, though I lived to the world's end,
should I my good name ever again win:
so I were lost, and that were pity and sin.

227.

And therefore cool with reason all this heat:
men say: "the patient man conquers," and "he,"
"who will have joy, must let joy go," also.
So make a virtue of necessity
by patience, and think that lord is he
of Fortune ever that naught from her expects:
and she defeats no man but a wretch.

228.

And trust in this, for certain, heart sweet,
before Phoebus's sister, *Diana* ^[p. 457], her gleam
passes from Aries now, the Lion to greet,
I will be here without a doubt. I mean
(so help me Juno that is heaven's queen)
on the tenth day, unless death me assail,
I will see you again without fail.'



'Diana'
Crispijn van de Passe (I), 1611 - 1637
The Rijksmuseum

229.

‘And now, so this be true,’ said Troilus,
‘I will suffer it till the tenth day,
since I see we needs must have it thus:
but, for the love of God, if still we may,
let us steal secretly away,
for ever one, so as to live at rest:
my heart says it will be for the best.’

230.

‘O merciful God! What life is this?’ said she,
‘alas, you slay me thus with very woe.
I see well now, that you mistrust me,
for by your words I see it to be so.
Now for the love of *Cynthia* [p. 457]’s bright glow,
do not mistrust me causelessly, for ruth,
since I have sworn myself to you in truth.

231.

And think, that truly it is sometimes wise
to spend some time, in order time to win:
nor, by heaven, am I lost yet to your eyes.
Though we’ll be parted a day or two again,
drive out the fantasy you have within,
and trust me, and leave off your sorrow,
or (in truth) I will not live until tomorrow.

232.

For if you knew how sorely it smarts
you would end this: by God, you know'st
the pure spirit weeping in my heart
to see you weep whom I love the most,
and because I must go to the Greek host.
Yes, were it not that I know a remedy
to return again, right here I would die.

233.

But truly, I am not so foolish quite
as not to imagine a way
to return again on the day I might,
for who may hold a thing that will away?
My father will not, for all his cunning play.
And, with care, my going out of Troy
another day will turn us all to joy.

234.

Therefore with all my heart I do beseech,
if you will do aught at my prayer:
and for the love with which I love you, seek
before I part from you here
to be of such good comfort and cheer
to my sight, that you may bring to rest
my heart that is ready to burst.

235.

And besides this I pray' said she, 'oh,
my own heart's true contentment,
since I am wholly yours, as you know,
that, while I am absent, no dalliance
with others takes me from your remembrance.
For I am always aghast why men have said
that "Love is a thing ever full of active dread."

236.

For in this world there lives lady none,
who (God forbid) if you were untrue,
would be so betrayed or woebegone
as I, who place all trust in you.
And without doubt if I were not to do
it would be death: and before any cause you find,
for love of God, be not to me unkind.

237.

Troilus answered this, and said:
'Now God, from whom is hidden no how or why,
give me joy, indeed I never to Cressid
(since the very day I first saw her with my eye)
was false, nor ever will be till I die.
In short, you may believe me in truth,
I say no more: put me to the proof.'

238.

‘Grant me mercy, my good, indeed,’ said she,
‘and blissful Venus let me never swerve
to death, till I command joy to that degree
to requite him well that so well does deserve:
and while God my wits shall preserve
I shall so do (so true I have you found)
that honour ever to me will resound.

239.

For trust well in this, not your state so royal,
nor vain delight, nor merely your worthiness
in war, nor tourneys martial,
nor pomp, display, nobility, or riches
made me pity you in your distress:
but moral virtue grounded upon truth,
was the cause I first on you had ruth.

240.

And the gentle heart and manliness you had,
and that you held, as I know, far from right
everything that tended to the bad,
such as rudeness and vulgar appetite,
and that your reason curbed your delight,
this meant, that above every other creature
I was yours, and will be while I endure.

241.

And this may length of years not undo,
nor fickleness of Fortune deface:
but Jupiter, who in his might can do
what makes the woeful glad, so give us grace
before ten nights to meet here in this place,
so that it may your heart and mine suffice.
And now farewell, for it is time to rise.'

242.

And after they long lamented had,
and often kissed, while clasped arms enfold,
the day began to break, and Troilus clad
himself, and sadly his lady did behold,
as one who felt death's bitter cold:
and gave himself to her grace to command.
Whether he was woeful, I shall not demand.

243.

For no man in imagination can
see it, nor mind know, nor tongue tell
the cruel pain of this sorrowful man,
who passed through every torment found in hell,
for when he saw she could no longer dwell
with him (which his soul from his heart rent)
without more ado, out of the room he went.



'The Three Fates'
Crispijn van de Passe (I), 1611 - 1637
The Rijksmuseum

BOOK V - THE BETRAYAL

1.

Began to near the fatal destiny
that Jove has in his disposition
and to you, angry *Parvae* [p. 457], sisters three
is committed for its execution:
by which Cressida must leave the town,
and Troilus shall live on in pain
till *Lachesis* [p. 457] cease to spin again.

2.

The golden-haired Phoebus high aloft
had three times, with all his sunny beams,
melted the snow, and Zephyrus as oft
had brought again the tender leaves green,
since the son of Hecuba the queen,
began to first love her for whom his sorrow
was all because she would depart the morrow.

3.

At prime of day full ready was Diomedes
Cressid to the Greek host to lead,
for sorrow of which she felt her heart bleed
as she who knew not what was best, indeed.
And truly, as men in books read,
no man ever knew a woman with her cares,
or who was so loth out of the town to fare.

4.

This Troilus, without plan or lore,
like a man joyless and forlorn,
was waiting on his lady evermore
she that was every part and more,
of all his pleasure and joy before.
But Troilus, farewell now all your joy,
for you will never see her again in Troy.

5.

Truth is that while he waited in this manner
he was able manfully his woe to hide,
that it was scarcely seen in his cheer:
but at the gate where she was due to ride
out with certain folk, he hovered beside,
so woebegone, though he did not complain,
that he could scarcely sit his horse for pain.

6.

He shook with anger, his heart began to gnaw,
when Diomed his horse prepared to dress,
and said to himself this very saw:
'Alas,' he said, 'this state of wretchedness,
why do I suffer it, why no redress?
Would it not be better at once to die
than evermore in languor lie?

7.

Why don't I give at once rich and poor
something to do before I see her go?
Why do I not set all Troy in uproar?
Why do I not slay Diomed also?
Why do I not with a man or two
steal her away? Why should I thus endure?
Why do I not aid my own cure?

8.

But why he would not do so fell a deed
that will I say, and why he left it there.
He had in his heart always a kind of dread
lest Cressid in the tumult of the affair
might be slain: lo, this was all his care.
Otherwise, for certain, as I said before,
he would have done it without a word more.

9.

Cressid, when she was ready to ride,
sighed full sorrowfully and said: 'Alas!'
but forth she must, whatever might betide,
and forth she rode full sorrowfully apace.
There was no other remedy in this case.
What wonder is it though, she felt the smart
when she must forgo her own sweetheart?

10.

This Troilus, in the way of courtesy,
with hawk on hand and with a large crowd
of knights, rode and kept her company,
passing all the valley far without.
And would have ridden further, without doubt,
most gladly, and woe it was so soon to go:
but turn he must, as he was forced to do.

11.

And, at that moment, Antenor had come
out of the Greek host, and every knight
was glad of it, and said that he was welcome.
And Troilus, though his heart was not light,
took pains indeed as best he might
to keep from weeping, at the least,
and kissed Antenor, and was pleased.

12.

And after that he must his leave take,
and cast his eye on her piteously:
and he rode near, his cause to make,
to take her by the hand all soberly.
And lord! she began to weep so tenderly!
And he full soft and quietly began to say:
'Now do not kill me, hold to your day.'

13.

With that he turned his courser all about
with pale face, and to Diomed
spoke no word, nor none with all the crowd:
of which the son of Tydeus took heed,
like one who knew more than the creed
in such a case, and to her rein he leant:
and Troilus, to Troy he homeward went.

14.

This Diomed, that led her by the bridle,
when he saw the folk of Troy were away,
thought: 'All my labour shall not be idle,
if I may I'll somewhat to her say.
For at the least 'twill shorten the way.
I have heard it said, times twice twelve,
"He's a fool who forgets to aid himself."

15.

But nonetheless he thought this, well enough,
that 'certainly I do this for naught
if I speak of love, or make it tough:
for doubtless, if she has in her thought
him whom I guess, 'twill not be a short
time ere she forget: but I shall find the means
that she'll not know all's not what it seems.

16.

This Diomed, like one who knew his good,
when this was done, fell to speech
of this and that, and asked why she stood
in such unease, and began her to beseech
that if he might increase, or reach
to anything that might be her ease, she should
command it of him, and he would.

17.

For truly he swore to her, as a knight,
that there was nothing which might her please
that he'd not be at pains with all his might
to do, so as to set her heart at ease.
And prayed her sorrows she might appease,
and said: 'You see, we Greeks can take joy
in honouring you, as well as folks of Troy.'

18.

He also said this: 'I know, you think it strange:
and that's no wonder, for it is new to you,
the company of Trojans to exchange
for folk of Greece, whom you never knew.
But God forbid that you do not as true
a Greek among all of us find
as any Trojan is, and just as kind.

19.

And because I swore you truly, right now
to be your friend and help you as I might,
and because I more acquaintance of you
have had than any other stranger knight,
so from this time forth I pray, day and night,
command me, however much it smart,
to do whatever pleases your heart:

20.

and that you would me as your brother treat,
and not to disdain my friendship out of spite:
and though your sorrows be for things great,
I know not why, but without more respite,
my heart to mend that would take great delight.
And if I may not your hurts redress,
I am still sorry for your heaviness.

21.

And though you Trojans with us Greeks are wrath
and will be many a day yet, you see,
one god of love in truth we serve him both.
And, for the love of God, my lady free,
whoever you hate, be not wrath with me.
For truly there can no knight you serve
who'd be half so loth your wrath to deserve.

22.

And were it not that we are near the tent
of Calchas, who may have seen us both, I say,
I would tell you, of this, all my intent:
but it must stay sealed till another day.
Give me your hand, I am, and shall be always,
God help me, while my life may endure,
your own above any other creature.

23.

This I have never said before to woman born:
for as I wish that God would glad me so,
I never loved a woman here before
as a paramour, nor never shall more.
And, for the love of God, be not my foe:
although I cannot to you, my lady dear,
speak winningly, for I have to learn that here.

24.

And wonder not, my own lady bright,
though I speak to you of love so blithe:
for I have heard of this in many a knight,
who loved one he'd never seen in his life.
Also I have not the power for strife
with the god of love, but him I will obey
always: and mercy from you I pray.

25.

There are so many worthy knights in this place,
and you so fair, that every one of them all
will take pains to stand well in your grace.
But if to me so fair a grace might fall,
that you on me as your servant would call,
so humbly but so truly would I serve
more than any, till death me unnerve.

26.

Cressid to his proposal little answered,
like one that with sorrow was oppressed so,
that in effect she naught of his tale heard
but here and there perhaps a word or two though,
She thought her sorrowful heart would break in two.
For when she began her father to espy,
she began to fall from her horse, well nigh.

27.

But nonetheless she thanked Diomedes
for all his trouble and his good cheer
and that he offered her friendship in need,
and she accepted it with a good manner,
and wished to do what pleased him and was dear:
and she would trust him, and well she might,
as she said, and from her horse did alight.

28.

Her father has her in his arms at once,
and twenty times he kissed his daughter sweet,
and said: 'O my dear daughter, welcome.'
She said she was glad with him to meet,
and stood, mute, mild and meek him to greet.
But here I leave her with her father to dwell,
and straight I will to you of Troilus tell.

29.

To Troy has come the woeful Troilus
in sorrow beyond all sorrows' smart,
with angry look and face most hideous.
Then suddenly down from his horse he starts
and through his palace, with a swollen heart,
to his room he goes: of nothing he took heed,
and no one dared to speak to him indeed.

30.

And there his sorrows that he contained had,
he gave free issue to and 'Death,' he cried:
and in his throes, frenzied and mad,
he cursed Jove, Apollo and Cupid, ay,
cursed Ceres, Bacchus and Venus beside,
his birth, himself, his fate, and even nature,
and, save his lady, every other creature.

31.

To bed he goes, and tosses there and turns
in fury, as does *Ixion* [p. 457] in hell:
and in this way nearly to dawn sojourns.
But then he his heart a little began to quell
through his tears which had begun to well:
and piteously he cried out for Cressid,
and to himself thus he spoke and said:

32.

Where is my own lady beloved and dear?
Where is her white breast, where is it, where?
Where are her arms and her eyes clear
that last night at this time with me were?
Now may I weep alone with many a tear,
and grasp about I may, but in this place,
save a pillow, I find naught to embrace.



'Ixion on the Wheel'
Cornelis Bloemaert (II), 1655 - 1700
The Rijksmuseum

33.

What shall I do? When will she come again?
I do not know why, alas, I let her go.
Would to God, I had then been slain!
O my heart, Cressid, O sweet foe.
O my lady I love, and love no other so,
evermore my heart I give to you,
see how I die, you cannot me rescue.

34.

Who sees you now my true lodestar?
Who sits right now or stands in your presence?
Who now can comfort your heart's war?
Now I'm gone, to whom do you grant audience?
Who speaks for me right now in my absence?
Alas, no one (and that is all my care):
for well I know, in evil, as I, you fare.

35.

How can I thus ten days endure.
when I the first night have all this pain?
How shall she do likewise, sorrowful creature?
Through tenderness, how can she sustain
such woe for me? O piteous, pale, and green
will be your fresh womanly face
for languor, before you return to this place.'

36.

And when he fell into slumberings
at once he would begin to groan
and dream of the dreadfulest things
that might be: for instance he was alone
in a horrid place, making his moan,
or dreamed that he were amongst all
his enemies, into their hands to fall.

37.

And at that his body would start
and with the start suddenly awake:
and such a tremor feel in his heart
that from the fear his body would quake:
and with that he would a noise make
that seemed as though he were falling deep
from high aloft, and then he would weep.

38.

And sorrow for himself so piteously,
that it was a wonder to hear his fantasy.
Another time he would mightily
comfort himself and say it was folly
to endure dread so causelessly,
and then begin his bitter sorrows anew,
so that all men might his sorrows rue.

39.

Who could rightly tell, or fully describe
his woe, his cries, his languor, and his pain?
Not all the men that were or are alive.
You, reader, may yourself full well divine
that such a woe my wit cannot define.
Idle to try and forge it link by link,
when it wearies my wits even as I think.

40.

In heaven yet the stars could be seen,
though waxing pale and full was the moon:
and the horizon white began to gleam
all eastward, as it is wont to do.
And Phoebus with his rosy chariot too
soon after that began to start,
when this Troilus sent for Pandar.

41.

This Pandar, that the whole day before
might not come there Troilus to see
(even if he had on his life have sworn)
for with King Priam all day was he,
so that he was not at liberty
to go anywhere. But on the morrow went
to Troilus, when he for him sent.

42.

For in his heart he could well divine
that Troilus all night from sorrow woke:
and that he would tell him how he pined
this he knew well enough without a book.
So that to his chamber his way he took,
and Troilus then soberly did greet
and on the bed quickly took a seat.

43.

‘My Pandarus,’ said Troilus, ‘the sorrow
that I suffer I cannot long endure.
I know I shall not live till tomorrow:
because of which I venture
to tell you of my sepulchre
the form: and my property do you dispose
just where you think it rightly goes.

44.

But of the fire and flame for my funeral,
in which my body shall be burnt indeed,
and of the feast and games and all
at my vigil I pray you take heed
that all be fitting, and offer Mars my steed,
my sword, my helmet: and loved brother dear,
my shield give to Pallas, who shines clear.

45.

The dust to which my burnt heart shall turn,
that I pray you take and conserve
in a vessel, that men call an urn,
of gold, and to my lady that I serve
for love of whom death I reserve,
so give it her, and do me this courtesy
to pray her to keep it in my memory.

46.

For I feel truly by my malady
and by the dreams now and times ago
that of a certainty I must die.
Also the owl they call *Escalipho* [p. 457],
has shrieked after me two nights so,
and divine Mercury, of this woeful wretch
guide the soul, and when you wish, it fetch.

47.

Pandar answered and said: "Troilus,
my dear friend, as I have said before
it is folly to sorrow thus,
and needless: I can say no more.
But whosoever will not trust to my lore,
I can see for him no remedy
but to let him keep his fantasy.



'Proserpina Turning Ascalaphus into an Owl'
Wilhelm Janson (Holland, Amsterdam), Antonio Tempesta
(Italy, Florence, 1555-1630)
The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

48.

But, Troilus, I pray you tell me now
if you think that before this any man might
have loved his paramour as much as thou?
Why, God knows, from many a worthy knight
his lady has gone for a fortnight
and he not made half such an affair.
What need is there to cause yourself such care?

49.

Since day by day you yourself can see
that from his lover or else from his wife
a man must part of necessity.
Yes, though he love her as his own life,
yet he will not with himself create such strife:
for well you know, my loved brother dear
friends may not always be together here.

50.

What do folks do who see their lovers wedded
by powerful friends, as it befalls full oft.
And in their spouses' bed see them bedded?
God knows they take it wisely, fair and soft.
Because good hopes hold up their heart aloft
and, since they can a time of sorrow endure,
as time has hurt them, so time does them cure.

51.

So should you endure, and let slide
the time, and try to be glad and light.
Ten days is not so long to abide.
And since she has promised you aright
to return, she'll break it for no other knight.
For do not fear but she will find a way
to return: my life on that I lay.

52.

Your dreams and all such fantasy
drive out, and let them take their chance:
for they proceed from your melancholy
that makes you feel in sleep all this penance.
A straw for all such dreams' significance!
God help me so, they are not worth a bean:
No man knows truly what dreams mean.

53.

For priests of the temple tell you this,
that dreams are the revelations
of gods: and also what they tell is
that they are all infernal illusions.
And doctors say that from complexions
they proceed, or fasts, or gluttony.
Who knows in truth then what they signify?

54.

Also others say that through impressions
(as when a man has something fixed in mind),
that from those come such visions:
and others say, as they in books find,
that according to the time of year by kind
men dream, and that the effect goes by the moon.
But believe no dream, for then wrong is done.

55.

Worthy of these dreams are old wives,
and truly to take augury from fowls:
for fear of which men think to lose their lives,
at raven's forebodings or the shrieks of owls.
To trust in that is both false and foul.
Alas! Alas! So noble a creature
as is a man, to fear such ordure!

56.

Therefore with all my heart I beseech
that you all this to yourself forgive:
and rise up now without more speech,
and let us think how we may give
ourselves to this time, and happily live
when she returns, which will be quite soon.
God help me so, that is what's best to do.

57.

Rise! Let us speak of the lusty life in Troy
that we have led, and contrive
to while away the time, and rejoice
at times to come, of bliss so blithe.
And with the languor of these days twice five
we shall so forget our depression,
that it will scarcely cause any oppression.

58.

This town is full of lords, all about,
and the truce lasts all this while.
Let us go play in some lusty crowd
at Sarpedon's, from here not a mile.
And thus you shall the time well beguile,
and pass it by until that blissful morrow
when you see her, the cause of all your sorrow.

59.

Now rise, my dear brother, Troilus,
for it is no honour to you, certainly
to weep, and linger in your bed thus.
For, truly, in this one thing you can trust me,
if you lie thus a day, or two, or three,
the folk will think that you from cowardice
feign to be sick, and that you dare not rise.

60.

This Troilus answered: 'O brother dear,
this thing folk know who have suffered pain,
that, if he weeps and makes sorrowful cheer,
who feels the harm and smart in every vein,
it is no wonder: and though forever I complain
or weep always, I am not to blame,
since I have lost the reason for the game.

61.

But since I am forced to rise,
I shall rise as soon as ever I may:
and God, to whom my heart I sacrifice,
so send us quickly the tenth day.
For there was never fowl so fond of May
as I shall be when she comes to Troy,
who is the cause of my torment and joy.

62.

But where do you advise,' said Troilus,
'that we may best play in all this town?'
'By God, my counsel is,' said Pandarus,
'to ride and play at King Sarpedon's.'
So they talked long of this up and down
till Troilus began at last to give assent
and rise, and forth to Sarpedon they went.

63.

This Sarpedon was as honourable a man
as any in this life, full of high prowess,
and with all that might be served at table
that was dainty, though it cost great riches,
he fed them day by day, such nobleness,
as was said by the highest and the least,
was never seen before at any feast.

64.

Nor was there in this world an instrument
delicious, through wind or touch or cord,
from whatever distant place you went,
that tongue can tell of or heart record,
that was not played at that feast's concord:
nor of ladies also was so fair a company
in dance, before then, ever seen with eye.

65.

But what use was this to Troilus
that, in his sorrow, cared for it naught?
For ever the same way his heart piteous
full eagerly Cressid, his lady, sought:
on her was ever all that his heart thought,
now this, now that so imagining,
that indeed no feasting can gladden him.

66.

These ladies also, that at the feast be,
since he knew his lady was away,
it was his sorrow them to see,
or to hear them instruments play:
for she that of his heart bore the key
was absent. Lo, this was his fantasy,
that no knight should be making melody.

67.

Nor was there an hour of day or night
when he was there, and no knight could hear,
that he did not say: 'O lovesome lady bright,
how have you fared since you were here?
Come safe again, my own lady dear.'
But welaway, all this is but a maze:
Fortune defends him in vain ways.

68.

The letters also that she in past time
had sent him, alone he would read
a hundred times between noon and prime,
imagining her shape of woman, indeed,
within his heart, and every word and deed
that was past: and so he reached the end
of the fourth day, and said he would wend.

69.

And said: 'Beloved brother, Pandarus,
do you intend that we shall here breathe
till Sarpedon say farewell to us?
It would be better if we took our leave.
For God's love, let us now soon at eve,
take our leave, and homeward let us turn,
for truly I will not thus sojourn.

70.

Pandar answered: 'Have we come here
to fetch fire and then run home again?
God help me so, I cannot tell where
we might go, if that I truly say
where anyone is more in the way
of welcoming us than Sarpedon, and I
hold it villainy suddenly to say goodbye.

71.

Since we said that we would be
with him a week: now, thus suddenly
on the fourth day to take of him our leave
would make him wonder at it, truly.
Let us hold to our purpose firmly:
and since you promised him to abide,
hold to it now, and after let us ride.'

72.

Thus, Pandarus, with much pain and woe,
made him remain, and at the week's end
they took their leave of Sarpedon so,
and sped on their way to again.
Troilus said: 'Now God grace me send
that I may find, at my homecoming,
Cressida is come! and at that began to sing.

73.

‘Yes, hazel-wood!’ thought this Pandarus,
and to himself soberly he said:
‘God knows, cooled will be all this hot fare
before Calchas send Troilus Cressid!’
But nevertheless he acted otherwise, and said,
and swore, indeed, his heart knew aright
she would come as soon as ever she might.

74.

When they are to the palace come
of Troilus, from their horses they alight,
and to the chamber then their way is taken
and till the time when it began to be night
they spoke of Cressida the bright.
And after this, when they thought it best,
they sped them both from supper to rest.

75.

On the morrow as day began to clear,
this Troilus rose from his bed,
and to Pandar, his own brother dear,
‘For love of God,’ full piteously he said,
‘Let us go see the palace of Cressid.
For since there is no other feast,
let us see her palace at the least.

76.

And with that, his household to deceive,
he found a reason into town to go,
and to Cressid's house their way they weave.
But lord! this foolish Troilus full of woe!
He thought his sorrowful heart would break in two:
for when he saw her doors barred and all,
well nigh, for sorrow, down he began to fall.

77.

When he began to be aware and to behold
how shut was ever window of the place,
his heart began, he thought, to grow ice cold:
so that, with changed and deadly pale face,
without a word he forth began to pace,
and, as God wills, he began so fast to ride
that no man his countenance espied.

78.

Then he said this: 'O palace desolate.
O house of houses once the best, so bright,
O palace empty and disconsolate,
O lantern of which quenched is the light,
O palace, once the day, that now is night,
you truly ought to fall and I to die
since she is gone who used to be our guide.

79.

O palace, once the crown of houses all,
illumined by the sun of all our bliss,
O ring from which the ruby is let fall,
O cause of woe that has been cause of bliss!
Since I may do no better, I would kiss
your cold doors, if I dared amongst this crowd:
and farewell shrine, of which the saint is out.'

80.

At that he cast on Pandarus his eye
with changed face, and piteous to behold:
and when he could the right time espy,
as he rode, to Pandarus he told
his new sorrow and also his joys old
so piteously and with such deathly hue,
that anyone might pity his woe too.

81.

For thenceforth he rode up and down,
and everything came to his memory
as he rode by the places of the town,
which he had once delighted to see.
'Lo, yonder I saw my own lady dance:
and in that temple with her eye clear
I first caught sight of my right lady dear.

82.

And yonder I have heard right lustily
my dear heart laugh: and yonder play
I once saw her also full blissfully:
and yonder once to me she did say,
“Now, good sweet, love me well I pray.”
And yonder she began me so to behold
that to the death my heart is hers to hold.

83.

And at that corner, in yonder house,
I heard my most beloved lady dear
so womanly, with voice melodious
sing so well, so sweetly, and so clear,
that in my soul I think I still can hear
the blissful sound. And in yonder place
my lady first took me to her grace.’

84.

The he thought this: ‘O blissful lord, Cupid,
when I recall the past in memory
how you have worried me on every side,
men might make a book of it, a story.
What need have you to seek a victory
when I am yours and suffer all your will?
What joy have you when your own folk you kill?

85.

Truly on me, lord, you have worked your ire,
you mighty god, a dreadful god to grieve.
Now mercy, lord, you well know I desire
your grace most, of all delights that be.
And I will live and die as I believe:
for which in return I ask a boon,
that you send me Cressid again soon.

86.

Constrain her heart as fast to return
as you do mine with longing her to see:
then I know well that she will not sojourn.
Now, blissful lord, so cruel you cannot be
to the blood of Troy, I pray thee,
as *Juno* [p. 457] was to the Theban blood,
which brought the folk of Thebes no good.'

87.

And after this he to the gate went
from which Cressid rode out at goodly pace:
and up and down there he his time spent,
and to himself often he said: 'Alas!
from hence rode my bliss and my solace!
Would blissful God allow now, for his joy,
that I might see her come again to Troy!



'Juno'
Willem Isaacs. van Swanenburg,
after Michiel Jansz van Mierevelt, 1595 - 1612
The Rijksmuseum

88.

And to yonder hill I was her guide,
Alas, and there I took of her my leave.
And yonder I saw her to her father ride,
for sorrow of which my heart in two will cleave.
And hither home I came when it was eve,
and here I dwell an outcast from all joy,
and shall, till I see her again in 'Troy.'

89.

And of himself he imagined often
that he was disfigured, pale, grew less
than before, and that men often said then:
'What can it be? Who can in truth guess
why Troilus shows all this heaviness?'
and all this was only his melancholy,
that he had of himself such a fantasy.

90.

Another time it seemed that he would
imagine everyone who went by the way
as pitying him, as if they should
say: 'I am sorry Troilus will pass away.'
And so he spent one and another day.
As you have heard, such a life he led
as one who stood between hope and dread.

91.

So that he liked in his songs to show
the cause of his woe as best he might.
And make a song of words only a few
his woeful heart somewhat to make light.
And when he was away from all men's sight,
he, with soft voice, of his lady dear,
who was absent, sang as you may hear:

92.

'O star of which I have lost the light,
with sore heart I truly should bewail,
that, ever dark, in torment, night by night,
towards my death with following wind I sail:
so that if on the tenth night should fail
your bright beams' guidance for even an hour,
my ship and me *Charybdis* [p. 457] will devour.'

93.

When he had sung this song, at once
he fell again into his sighs of old:
and every night, as before he'd done,
he stood the bright moon to behold,
and all his sorrow to the moon he told,
and said: 'Yet, when you are horned anew
I shall be glad, if all the world be true.'

94.

I saw your old horns also on the morrow,
when hence rode my true lady dear,
who is the cause of my torment and sorrow:
and so, O bright *Lucina* [p. 458], the clear,
for love of God run quickly round your sphere!
For when your new horns begin to spring,
then she will come who will my bliss bring.'

95.

The days seemed more, and longer every night,
than they had used to be, he thought so,
and that the sun went his course awry,
by a longer way than he used to go:
and said: 'Indeed, I think that lo!
the Sun's son *Phaethon* [p. 458] is alive,
and amiss his father's chariot does drive.'

96.

Also fast along the walls he'd walk,
and the Greek host he would see,
and to himself like this he would talk:
'Lo, yonder is my own lady free,
or else yonder where those tents be,
and thence comes this air that is so sweet,
that in my soul I feel it's good complete.



'The Fall of Phaeton'
Hendrick Goltzius, 1590
The Rijksmuseum

97.

And certain this wind, that more and more
from time to time increases in my face,
is from my lady's deep sighs sore.
I prove it thus, for in no other place
in all this town, save only in this space,
feel I a wind that sounds so like pain:
it says: "Alas, why parted are we twain?"

98.

This long time he spent right thus,
till fully passed was the ninth night:
and ever beside him was this Pandarus
who busied himself with all his might
to comfort him and make his heart light,
always giving him hope of the tenth morrow
when she would come, and end all his sorrow.

99.

On the other side there was Cressid
with her few women among the Greek throng,
at which often each day: 'Alas,' she said,
'that I was born! Well may my heart long
for my death, for now I have lived too long.
Alas, and I may not the thing amend,
for now 'tis worse than I could comprehend.

100.

My father will in no way give me grace
to go again: for nothing that I can dream:
and if so be that I pass the term's space,
my Troilus will in his heart deem
that I am false, and so it may well seem.
So shall I be complained of on every side,
for being born, so welaway what betide!

101.

And if I put myself in jeopardy
to steal away by night, and it befall
that I am caught, I shall be called a spy:
or else, lo, and I dread this most of all,
if into some wretch's hands I fall,
I will be lost, though my heart be true.
Now, mighty God, you on my sorrow rue!

102.

Full pale and waxen was her bright face,
her limbs delicate, as one who all the day
stood when she dared, and looked at the place
where she was born and where she lived her day.
And all the night weeping, alas, she lay,
and thus despairing, beyond all cure,
she led her life, this woeful creature.

103.

Many times a day she sighed in her distress,
and in her mind was always portraying
Troilus in his great worthiness,
and all his good words remembering
since that first day their love began to spring.
And so she set her woeful heart on fire
through remembrance of what was her desire.

104.

In all this world there's not so cruel a heart,
that had he heard her complaining in her sorrow,
would not have wept for her pain's smart,
so tenderly she wept both eve and morrow.
She had no need of tears to borrow.
And this was yet the worst of all her pain,
there was no one to whom she dare complain.

105.

Ruefully she looked out to Troy,
beheld the high towers and the halls.
'Alas,' she said, 'the pleasure and the joy,
which is now turned into gall,
I have often had within those walls!
O 'Troilus, what are you doing now?' she said:
'Lord! Do you still think of Cressid?

106.

‘Alas, if I’d only trusted to you before,
and gone with you, as you told me ere this!
Then I would not be sighing half so sore.
Who could have said that I had done amiss
to steal away with such a one as he is?
But all too late comes the remedy
when men to the grave the corpse carry.

107.

It is too late to speak of this matter.
Prudence, alas! one of your eyes three
I always lacked before ever I came here:
time past was well remembered by me:
and present time I could always see:
but future time, before I was in this snare,
I could not see: that causes now my care.

108.

But nonetheless, let betide what betides,
I shall tomorrow at night, by east or west,
steal out of this host at one of those sides:
and go with Troilus wherever he thinks best.
This purpose will I hold to at the least,
not swayed by wicked tongues’ janglery,
for always of love wretches have had envy.

109.

For who would of every word take heed,
or be ruled by every other's wit,
he or she will never thrive, indeed.
For the thing that some men blame, yet,
lo, other kinds of folk commend it.
And in all such variance, as for me,
what suffices is my felicity.

110.

With which, without any more ado,
to Troy I will go, in conclusion.'
But, God knows, before months two
she will still be far from that intention.
For both Troilus and Troy town
shall without hindrance from her heart slide,
for she will purpose to abide.

111.

This Diomedes, of whom to tell I began,
goes now within himself ever arguing
with all the wit, and all that ever he can,
as to how best, with shortest tarrying,
Cressid's heart into his net he might bring.
There was no end to this in his mind:
to catch her he laid out both hook and line.

112.

But nonetheless in his heart he thought
that she was not without her love in Troy:
for never, since he had her thence brought,
had he seen her laughing or in joy.
He did not know what was his best ploy.
'But to attempt it,' he said, 'should not grieve:
for he that attempts nothing will nothing achieve.

113.

Yet he said to himself one night:
'Now am I not a fool, who well know how
her woe is for love of another knight,
and yet I go to attempt her now?
I ought to know it's vain, and that allow.
For as wise folk in books express,
'Men cannot woo someone who is in sadness.'

114.

But whoever might win such a flower
from him whom she mourns for night and day,
he might say he was a conqueror.'
And so at once, as is the bold man's way,
thought in his heart: 'Come what, come may,
although I die, I will her heart seek:
I can lose nothing but the words I speak.'

115.

This Diomedes, as the books declare,
was in time of need ready and courageous:
with stern voice and mighty limbs square,
hardy, headstrong, tough, and chivalrous,
in deeds like his father, Tydeus.
And some men say boastful of tongue.
And heir he was to Argos and Calydon.

116.

Cressid was of a modest stature:
and as to shape, to face, and cheer
there might have been no fairer creature,
and often times it was her manner,
to go braided, with her hair clear
down by her collar at her back behind,
which with a thread of gold she would bind.

117.

And save that her eyebrows met together,
there was no fault in aught I can espy:
but to speak of her eyes clear:
lo, truly, those who saw her write,
that Paradise stood formed in her eye.
And with her rich beauty evermore
Love strove, in her, as to which was more.

118.

She was sober, simple and wise with all,
the best nurtured also that might be,
and lovely in her speech in general,
charitable, stately, joyous, free:
and never lacking in sympathy:
tender-hearted, variable in courage:
but truly I cannot tell her age.

119.

And Troilus was well grown in height,
and completely formed so in proportion
that Nature might not improve the knight:
young, fresh, strong, and hardy as a lion:
true as steel in every condition,
one of the most virtuous creatures
that was, or will be while the world endures.

120.

And certainly in story it is found
that Troilus was never by right
in his time, in any aspect second
in daring deeds proper to a knight:
though a giant might exceed his might,
his heart with the first and with the best
stood equal, to dare whatever test.

121.

But to tell more of Diomed,
it fell out that after on the tenth day
since Cressid from the city was led,
this Diomed, fresh as a branch in May,
came to the tent where Calchas lay,
and feigned business to be done:
but what he meant I will tell you anon.

122.

Cressid, in a few short words to tell,
welcomed him, and sat him by her side:
and to stay there suited him right well.
And after this, without delay they tried
the spices and the wine that men supplied.
And they spoke of this and that together
as friends do, some of which you shall hear.

123.

He first touched on the war, in his speech,
between them and the folk of Troy town,
and of the siege he began to beseech
her to tell him what was her opinion,
from that request he descended down
to asking her if they were strange to her thought
the Greek customs and actions that they wrought:

124.

and why her father waited so long
to wed her to some worthy knight.
Cressid, who felt the pains strong
of her love for Troilus, her true light,
as far as she had cunning or might
answered him then: but as to his intent
she seemed not to realise what he meant.

125.

But nonetheless this same Diomedes
began to feel assured, and thus he said:
‘If I of what you tell rightly heed,
I think this, O my lady, Cressid,
that since I first my hand on your bridle laid
when you came out of Troy on that morrow,
I have never seen you except you sorrow.

126.

I cannot see what the cause might be,
unless for love of some Trojan it were:
which would be a sore thought to me
that you for any knight that lives there
would spill a quarter of a tear,
or piteously yourself so beguile,
for certain, it is not worth the while.

127.

The folk of Troy, so to say, all and some
are in prison, as you yourself see.

From thence shall not one alive come
for all the gold between the sun and sea.

Trust this well, and understand me,
there shall not one in mercy go alive,
though he were lord of worlds twice five.

128.

Such vengeance on them for Helen again
will we take before from here we wend,
that the *Manes* ^[p. 458], who are the gods of pain
will be fearful lest the Greeks put them to shame.

And men shall dread, to the world's end
from henceforth, the ravishing of a queen,
so cruel shall what we wreak on them be seen.

129.

And unless Calchas speaks ambiguous phrases
(that is to say, with double words and sly,
such as men call “words with two faces”),
you will know well that I did not lie,
and see all this thing with your own eye,
and that anon: you do not know how soon.
Now take heed because it will be done.

130.

Why else do you think you father would
have given Antenor for you anon,
unless he knew the city should
be destroyed? Why, if I lie strike me down!
He knew full well that there will not be one
Trojan who escapes: and from that great fear
he did not dare leave you living longer there.

131.

What more will you have, lovesome lady dear?
Let Troy and Trojan from your heart fade.
Drive out that bitter hope, and make good cheer,
and recall once more the beauty of your face
that you with salt tears so deface.
For Troy is brought to such jeopardy
that to save it now there is no remedy.

132.

And think well, you will in a Greek find
a more perfect love, before tonight,
than any Trojan is, and more kind,
and who will serve you better with all his might.
And if you allow it, my lady bright,
I will be he who serves you, myself,
yes, rather than be lord of Greeces twelve.

133.

And with that word he began to blush red,
and in his speech, his voice a little shook,
and he turned aside a little way his head,
and ceased a while: and afterwards awoke,
and soberly on her he threw his look,
and said: 'I am, though to you it be no joy,
as noble a man as any knight in Troy.

134.

For if my father, 'Tydeus,' he said,
'had lived, I would have been before this,
a king of Argos and Calydon, Cressid:
and I hope that I shall yet be so, yes
for he was slain, alas! the more harm is,
unhappily, at Thebes, you understand
to *Polynices*^[p. 458]'s harm and many a man.

135.

But, my heart (since I am your man,
and you the first from whom I seek grace
to serve you as devotedly as I can,
and ever will while I to live have space),
so, I pray, before I leave this place,
that you will grant that I may to-morrow
at better leisure tell you all my sorrow.



'Eteocles and Polynices, Admonished by their Mother Jocasta'
Pieter Franciscus Martenasie, after Andries Lens, 1774
The Rijksmuseum

136.

How should I tell all the words he said?
he spoke enough for one day at least:
it served him well, he spoke so that Cressid
granted, on the morrow, at his request,
to speak with him again, though it were best
if he did not speak of such a matter.
And thus she said to him, as you may hear,

137.

like one whose heart was set on Troilus
so firmly that none might that erase:
and distantly, she spoke and said thus:
‘O Diomedes, I love that very place
where I was born, and Jove, of his grace
deliver it soon from all its care.
God, of your might, leave it fair.

138.

That the Greeks would vengeance on Troy wreak
if they could, I know that truly, yes:
but it will not fall out as you speak.
And God willing, and besides all this,
I know my father wise and ready is,
and because he has bought me, as you told,
so dear, I am the more his to hold.

139.

That the Greeks are of high condition
I know well: but certainly men shall find
as worthy folk within Troy town,
as able, and as perfect, and as kind,
as are between the Orcades and Ind.
And that you could well your lady serve,
I know well also, her thanks to deserve.

140.

But as to speech of love, indeed,' she sighed,
'I had a lord to whom I wedded was,
who was all my heart until he died:
and no other love (so help me Pallas)
is in my heart, nor ever was,
and that you are of noble and high kin,
I have well heard it said, for certain.

141.

And so that makes me more greatly wonder
that you would scorn any woman so.
God knows, love and I are far asunder:
I am more disposed, I swear it though,
until my death, to weep and make woe.
What I shall do hereafter I cannot say:
but truly as yet I do not wish to play.

142.

My heart is now in tribulation,
and you in arms busy day by day.
Hereafter, when you have won the town,
perhaps then so it happen may,
that when I see what I have never seen, yea,
then will I do what I have never wrought!
This should be enough for you, it ought.

143.

Tomorrow gladly I will speak you plain,
so long as you do not touch on this matter.
And when you wish you may come here again:
and, before you go, this I say here:
so help me Pallas with her tresses clear,
if for any Greek I would have ruth,
it would be for yourself, by my truth.

144.

I do not say therefore that I will you love,
nor say no: but in conclusion
I mean well, by God that sits above.'
And therewithal she cast her eyes down,
and began to sigh, and said : 'O Troy town,
I still ask God that in quiet and in rest
I may see you, or let my heart burst.'

145.

But in effect, and in short to say,
this Diomede afresh and new again
began to press her, and her mercy pray.
And after this, the truth to relay,
he took her glove, gladdening his day:
and finally, when it was nearing eve
and all was well, he rose and took his leave.

146.

Bright Venus followed and ever lead
the way, where great Phoebus began to alight:
and Cynthia her chariot horses sped
to whirl out of the Lion, if she might:
and Zodiac showed his candles bright,
when Cressida to her bed went
within her father's fair bright tent.

147.

Turning over in her soul up and down
the words of this forceful Diomede,
his great rank, and the peril of the town,
and that she was alone, and in need
of friends' help: so began to breed
the reason why (truth to tell)
she fully decided there to dwell.

148.

The morrow came, and devotedly, to speak,
this Diomedes is come to Cressid,
and shortly, lest you your reading break,
he for himself spoke so well and said,
that all her bitter sighs to rest he laid.
And finally, the truth to say again,
he reft her of the great part of her pain.

149.

And after this the story tells us
that she gave him the fair bay steed,
that he had once won from Troilus:
and also a brooch (of that there was no need)
that was Troilus's, she gave this Diomedes.
And also, the better from sorrow him to relieve,
she made him wear a pennon of her sleeve.

150.

I find also in the stories elsewhere,
when, through the body, hurt was Diomedes
by Troilus, then she wept many a tear,
when she saw his wide wounds bleed:
and that to care for him she took good heed,
and to heal him of his sorrow's smart.
Men say, not I, that she gave him her heart.

151.

But truly, so the story tells us,
there was never woman more full of woe
than she, when she betrayed Troilus.
She said: 'Alas, for now I see clearly go
my name for truth in love, for ever though!
For I have betrayed one, the noblest
that ever was, and one the worthiest.

152.

Alas! of me, to the world's end,
shall neither be written nor be sung
one good word, for these books will end
in reproach: O, rolled on many a tongue,
throughout the world my bell will be rung
and women will hate me most of all.
Alas that such a fate on me should fall!

153.

They will say, as much as in me strength is,
I have done them dishonour, welaway!
Though I am not the first that did amiss,
what help is that in taking blame away?
But since I see there is no better way,
and that it is too late for me to rue,
To Diomedes at least I will be true.

154.

But Troilus, since no better to do I may,
and since we thus are parted you and I,
yet I pray God to give you each good day,
as to the noblest man, truly,
that ever I saw, who served faithfully,
and who best can his lady's honour keep
(and with those words she began to weep).

155.

And for certain, I will hate you never:
and friend's love, that you shall have from me,
and my good word, though I live for ever.
And, truly, I would sorry be
to see you in adversity.
And guiltless you I well know I leave:
but all will pass, and so I take my leave.'

156.

But truly, how long it was before
she forsook him for this Diomedes,
no author tells of that, I am sure.
Let everyone now, of their books, take heed:
they shall no statement of it find, indeed,
for though he began to woo her at once,
before he won her more was to be done.

157.

Nor do I wish this foolish woman to chide
more than the story will describe.

Her name, alas, is published so wide,
that for her guilt it ought to suffice.

And if I might excuse her in any wise
since she was so sorry for her untruth,
well I would excuse her still from ruth.

158.

This Troilus, as before I have told,
passed the time so, as best he might:
but often his heart was hot and cold,
and especially on that very ninth night,
when on the morrow she had promised aright
to come to him again. God knows little rest
had he that night: he wished not to be sleep's guest.

159.

The laurel-crowned Phoebus with his heat
began, on his upward course as he went,
to warm the Eastern Sea's waves wet:
and Nisus's daughter sang with fresh intent,
when Troilus for his Pandarus sent:
and on the walls of the town they waited,
to see if they could see aught of Cressid.

160.

Till it was noon they stood there to see
who came there: and everyone that might
have come from afar, they said that it was she,
until they could see them aright.
Now their hearts were dull, now they were light:
and thus deceived they stood and stared
after nothing, this Troilus and Pandar.

161.

To Pandarus this Troilus then said:
‘For aught I know, before noon, truly,
into this town comes not Cressid.
She has enough to do, assuredly,
to part from her father, so think I:
her old father will yet make her dine
before she go: God make his heart pine!’

162.

Pandar answered: ‘It may well be, for certain:
and therefore let us dine, I beseech:
and after noon you may then come again.’
And home they went without more speech:
and came again, but long may they seek
before they find what they desire to meet:
Fortune intends to treat them with deceit.

163.

Troilus said: 'I see well now that she
is delayed by her old father so,
that before she comes it will nigh evening be.
Come now, I will to the gate go.
These porters are they not witless though:
and I will make them hold the gate
without a reason, though she come late.'

164.

The day goes fast, and after comes the eve,
and yet came not to Troilus Cressid.
He looked out to hedge, and grove, and tree,
and far his head beyond the wall he set,
and at the last he turned him and said:
'By God, I know her meaning now, Pandar!
Almost, indeed, renewed was all my care.

165.

Now without doubt this lady knows what's good
I think, she means to ride secretly.
I commend her wisdom, by my blood!
She will not make people foolishly
gaze at her when she comes: but softly
by night into the town she thinks to ride.
And, dear brother, we have not long to bide.

166.

We have nothing else to do but this.
And Pandarus, now, will you believe me?
By my truth, I see her! There she is!
Raise up your eyes man: do you not see?
Pandar answered: 'No, as I might rich be.
All wrong, by God: what see you, by what art?
What I see yonder is but a travelling cart.'

167.

'Alas, you see truly aright,' said Troilus:
'but certain it is not all for aught
that in my heart I rejoice thus.
Of some future good I have a thought.
I know not how, but since I was wrought
I never felt such comfort, I dare say:
she comes tonight, my life on that I lay.'

168.

Pandar answered: 'It may be, well enough:
and agreed with him in whatever he said:
but in his heart he thought and softly mocked,
and to himself full soberly he said:
'From the *hazel-wood*^[p. 458] where Jolly Robin played,
will come whatever you wait for here.
Yes, farewell all the snows of yester-year.'

169.

The warden of the gates began to call
to the folk who beyond the gates were,
and asked them to drive in their beasts, all,
or all night they must remain there.
And very late at night, with many a tear,
this Troilus began the homeward ride:
for he could see it was no help to abide.

170.

But nonetheless he cheered himself like this:
he thought he had miscounted the day,
and said: 'I have understood it all amiss.
For the very night before Cressid went away
she said: "I shall be here, if I may,
before the moon, O dear sweetheart, sees
the Lion, passing from this Aries."'

171.

So that her promise she may yet keep?
And on the morrow to the gate he went,
and up and down, by West and then by East,
upon the walls he made many an ascent.
But all for naught: his hope was spent.
So that at night, in sorrow with sighs sore,
he went home without one hope more.

172.

Thus hope all clean out of his heart was fled:
he had nothing left to which he could hang:
but with the pain he thought his heart bled,
so sharp were his throes and wondrous strong.
For when he saw that she delayed so long,
he knew not how to judge of it aright,
since she had broken promise, or she might.

173.

The third, fourth, fifth, sixth day
after those ten days, of which I told,
between hope and dread his heart lay,
yet trusting to her promises of old.
But when she did not her appointment hold,
he could see now no other remedy,
but to shape him soon to die indeed.

174.

At which the wicked spirit (God us bless!)
which men call mad jealousy,
began to creep in him through all this heaviness:
because of which, as he'd soon die indeed,
he neither ate nor drank from melancholy,
and also from all company he fled.
This was the life that all the time he led.

175.

He was so changed, that all manner of men
scarcely recognised him, where he went.
He was so lean, and also pale and wan
and feeble that he walked on crutches, bent:
and he thus injured himself with ill intent.
And whoever asked him what gave him smart,
he said the harm was all about his heart.

176.

Priam often, and also his mother dear,
his brother, and his sisters asked again
why he was so sorrowful in his cheer,
and what was the cause of all his pain
but all for naught: he would not explain,
but said he felt a grievous malady
about his heart, and fain would die indeed.

177.

So one day he lay down to sleep,
and it happened that in his sleep he thought
that he walked in a deep forest to weep
for love of her who these pains in him wrought.
And as, up and down, his way he sought,
he dreamed he saw a boar, with tusks so great,
that slept against the bright sun's heat.

178.

And by this boar, fast in its limbs' fold,
and ever kissing it, his lady bright, Cressid.
For sorrow of which, when he did behold,
for grief, out of his sleep he fled,
and loud he cried to Pandarus and said:
'O Pandarus, now I know this, all about:
I am a dead man: there is no way out.

179.

My lady bright, Cressid, has me betrayed,
in whom I trusted most of any knight,
she elsewhere has now her heart laid.
The blissful gods through their great might
have in my dream showed me it aright.
So in my dream Cressid I did behold.'
And all this thing to Pandarus he told.

180.

'O my Cressid, alas! what subtlety,
what new desire, what beauty, what science,
what wrath justly caused have you towards me?
What guilt towards me, what fell experience
has reft from me, alas, your adherence?
O trust, O faith, O deep assurance bright,
who has reft Cressid, from me, all my delight?

181.

Alas, why did I let you from this place go,
from which well nigh out of my wits I fled?
Who will trust now in any other oath?
God knows I thought, O lady bright, Cressid,
that every word was gospel that you said.
But who can better beguile us when they must,
than those in whom men place their greatest trust?

182.

What shall I do, my Pandarus, alas!
I feel now anew so sharp a pain,
since there is no remedy in this case,
it is better that with my hands twain
I slay myself, than ever thus complain.
For through my death my woe will have an end,
while I ruin myself with each day of life I spend.'

183.

Pandar answered and said: 'Alas the day
that I was born: have I not said before this,
that dreams will many a man betray?
And why? Because folk read them amiss.
How dare you say that false your lady is,
because of some dream, simply through your fear?
Let that thought be, of dreams, you're no interpreter.

184.

Perhaps since you dreamed of a boar,
it may be there so as to signify
her father, who is also old and hoar,
lying against the sun, about to die,
and she for sorrow begins to weep and cry,
and kisses him, where he lies on the ground:
thus should you your dream rightly expound.'

185.

'What can I do then,' said Troilus,
to know if this is true, however slight?'
'Now you say wisely,' said this Pandarus,
'my advice is this, since you compose aright,
that hastily a letter to her you write,
through which you will easily bring about
your knowing the truth of what it is you doubt.

186.

And see now for why: this I well dare say,
that if it is so that she is untrue indeed,
I cannot believe that she'll write back again.
And if she writes, you will quickly see,
whether she is in any way at liberty
to return again, or else in some clause
of it, if she cannot, she'll assign a cause.

187.

You have not written to her since she went,
nor she to you: and this I dare lay,
that there may be such a reason for her intent,
that you yourself will scarcely say
it is not best for you both that she delay.
Now write to her then, and you will know soon
the truth of it all. 'There's no more to be done.'

188.

They reached accord in this conclusion,
and that at once, these same lords two:
and hastily Troilus sat down,
and turned in his mind to and fro
how he might best describe to her his woe:
and to Cressid, his own lady dear,
he wrote thus, and said what you may hear:

189.

'Right fresh flower, whose I have been and shall,
never serving elsewhere in any guise,
in heart, body, life, desire, thought and all:
I, woeful knight, humble in every wise
that tongue can tell or heart devise,
as truly as matter occupies space,
recommend myself to your noble grace.

190.

May it please you to think, sweetheart,
of what you know, how much time has gone
since I was left in bitter pain's smart,
by your going, and relief there is none
that I have had, but ever worse become
from day to day, and so I must dwell
while you wish it, you of joy and woe my well.

191.

Because of which, with fearful heart true,
I write (as one that sorrow drives to write)
my woe, that every hour increases new,
lamenting as much as I dare, or can write.
And stained this is, that you may have sight
of the tears which from my eyes rain,
that would speak, if they could, and complain.

192.

I first beseech you that your eyes clear,
looking at this, defiled you will not hold:
and besides this, that you, my lady dear,
will deign this letter to behold.
And also because of my cares cold,
that numb my wit, if aught amiss seems part,
forgive it me, my own sweetheart.

193.

If any lover were to dare, or ought by right,
unto his lady, to piteously complain,
then I believe that I should be that knight,
considering that these two months twain
you have delayed, though you said again
but ten days with the Greeks you'd sojourn,
and yet in two months you do not return.

194.

But inasmuch as I must needs like
all that you wish, I dare not complain more,
but humbly with sorrowful sighs sigh.
I write to you my unquiet sorrows sore,
from day to day desiring evermore
to know fully how you fare,
if it's your will, and what you do there.

195.

Whose welfare, and health also, God increase
in honour such, that upward in degree
it always grows and may it never cease:
as much as your heart can, my lady free,
devise, I pray to God so may it be.
And grant that you may pity me too,
as sure as I, in all, am true to you.

196.

And if you wish to know how I fare
whose woe no one can describe,
I can say no more, but that, full of every care,
at the writing of this letter I was alive
but ready from me my woeful ghost to drive:
which I delay, holding back, you understand,
pending the sight of a message from your hand.

197.

My two eyes, with which in vain I see,
of sorrowful salt tears are grown the wells:
my song is turned to sighs of my adversity:
my good to harm: my ease has become a hell.
my joy is woe: I can say to you nothing else,
but every joy or ease is turned, I see,
(for which I curse my life) to its contrary.

198.

Which with your coming home again to Troy
you might redress, and a thousand times in me
more than ever I had before increase the joy.
For there was never yet a heart so happy
to be alive, as I shall truly be
when I see you: and though no pity in sooth
may move you, yet think of keeping truth.

199.

And if it be my guilt has death deserved,
or if you no longer wish to see me,
in return for how I have served,
I beseech you, my heart's lady free,
that hereupon you would write to me,
for love of God, my true lode-star,
when death brings an end to all my war.

200.

Or if any other cause makes you there dwell
that with your letter you bring me comfort:
for though to me your absence is a hell,
with patience I'll endure woe as I ought ,
and with hope of your letter myself support.
Now write, sweet, and let me not complain:
with hope or death deliver me from pain.

201.

Indeed, my own dear heart true,
I know that, when you next me see
(I have so lost my health and my hue)
Cressid will not even know me.
Indeed, my heart's day, my lady free,
so thirsts my heart ever to behold
your beauty, that to life I barely hold.

202.

I say no more, though I have things to say
to you, many more than I can tell:
but whether you cause me to live or die,
yet I pray God to give you each good day.
And fare you well, lovely, fair, fresh may,
you who life or death may me command:
and to your truth I ever set my hand,

203.

with well-being such that, unless you give me
the same well-being, I'll no well-being have.
It lies in you to say, when you wish it to be,
that day when I'll be clothed by the grave.
In you my life, in you the power to save
me from the misery of all pain's smart.
And farewell now, my own sweetheart.'

204.

This letter was sent onwards to Cressid.
To which her answer in effect was this:
full piteously she wrote again and said
that just as soon as she might, that is,
she would come, and mend all that was amiss.
And finally she wrote and told him then
she would come, yes, but she knew not when.

205.

But in her letter she went to such excess,
it was a wonder, and swore she loved him best,
which he found were but empty promises.
But Troilus, you may now, East or West,
go pipe in an ivy leaf, if you so wish.
Thus goes the world: God shield us from mischance
and every one that holds to truth advance.

206.

The woe increased from day to night
of Troilus from this tarrying of Cressid:
And his hopes began to lessen and his might,
though which all down on his bed he laid.
He neither ate nor drank, nor slept, nor said
a word, imagining her unkind,
from which he well nigh lost his mind.

207.

This dream, of which I told you before,
was never lost from his remembrance.
He thought he had his lady never more,
and that Jove, from his providence,
had shown him in sleep the significance
of her untruth and his misadventure,
and that the boar was but a figure.

208.

Because of which for Sibyl, his sister, he sent,
she who was called *Cassandra* [p. 458] thereabouts:
and told her all the dream that he was sent,
and beseeched her to relieve him of his doubts
concerning the strong boar with tusks stout:
and finally, in a little while he found
Cassandra thus his dream began to expound.

209.

She began to smile, and said: ‘ O brother dear,
if the truth of this you wish to know,
you must first a few old stories hear,
concerning Fortune’s overthrow
of lords of old: so that, within a throw,
you well this boar shall know, and of what kind
he is, as men in books may find.

210.

Diana [p. 458], who was wrathful and in ire
because the Greeks had failed her sacrifice,
nor burnt the incense on her altar fire,
because the Greeks began her to despise,
revenged herself in a truly cruel wise.
For with a boar as large as ox in stall
she devoured their corn and vines all.



'Cassandra'
The Stratford gallery (p247, 1859)
Palmer, Henrietta Lee, b. 1834
Internet Archive Book Images

211.

To slay this boar the whole country was raised,
among whom there came, this boar to see
a maid^[p. 458], one of the world's most praised:
and *Meleager*^[p. 458], lord of that country,
loved so this fresh maiden free,
that with courage, before he went
he slew the boar, and her the head he sent.

212.

From which, as the old books tell us,
there arose strife and great envy.
And from this lord descended Tydeus
by line, or else the old books lie,
but how this Meleager was caused to die,
through his mother's act, I will not tell,
for it would take too long on that to dwell.

213.

She also told^[p. 459] how Tydeus went,
to the strong city of Thebes,
to claim the kingdom his intent,
on behalf of his friend Lord Polynices
whose brother, Lord Eteocles,
wrongfully of Thebes held the strength:
she told all this slowly and at length.



'Meleager gives the Head of the
Calydonian Boar to Atalanta'
Crispijn van de Passe (II),
after Antonio Tempesta, c. 1636 - 1670
The Rijksmuseum

214.

She also told how Haemonides with art
escaped when Tydeus slew fifty knights:
she also told all the prophecies by heart,
and how seven kings with their host's might
besieged the city in that fight,
and of the holy serpent and the well,
and of the Furies, she began to tell.

215.

Of Archemorus's burial, and the games,
and how Amphiaraüs fell through the ground,
how Tydeus Lord of Argos was slain,
and how Hippomedon quite soon
drowned, Parthenopaeus died of his wound.
and also how Capaneus, the proud,
was slain by a thunderbolt, that cried aloud.

216.

She told him then how each brother,
Eteocles and Polynices also,
in a skirmish slew the other,
and of Argeia's weeping and her woe,
and how the town was burnt, and so
she descended down from stories old
to Diomedes, and thus she spoke and told:

217.

This same boar betokens Diomede,
Tydeus's son, that down descended is
from Meleager who made the boar to bleed.
And your lady, wherever she be, I say this,
Diomede has her heart, and she has his,
weep if you will, or not, but without doubt
this Diomede is in, and you are out.'

218.

'You tell no truth,' he said, 'sorceress,
with all your false spirit of prophecy!
You think you are a great prophetess:
now do you not see this fool of fantasy
takes pains to give ladies the lie?
Away!' he said: 'may Jove bring you sorrow!
You'll be proved false, perhaps tomorrow.'

219.

As well tell lies about *Alceste* [p. 459]
who was of creatures (unless men lie)
the kindest there ever was, and the best.
For when her husband was in jeopardy
of death, unless she would accept to die,
she chose to die for him and go to hell,
and die she did, as us the books tell.'



'Alceste'
Ertinger, Franz, 1640-ca. 1710
The New York Public Library

220.

Cassandra went, and he with cruel heart
forgot his woe, with anger at her speech,
and from his bed all suddenly he starts
as though he is made whole by some leech.
And day by day he began to enquire and seek
the truth of it, with all his energy:
and thus he brings on his destiny.

221.

Fortune, who all the permutation
of things controls (as is committed
to her through providence and disposition
of high Jove, as how kingdoms are fitted
to pass from folk to folk, or be unseated),
began to pluck the bright feathers of Troy
from day to day, till it was bare of joy.

222.

Amongst all this, the end and destiny
of Hector began to near him, in full might:
the fate that willed his soul to un-body
had shaped the means to drive it forth in flight:
against which fate helped him not to fight:
but on a day when to war he did intend,
that day, alas! he met his life's end.

223.

Because of which I think that everyone
who takes up arms ought to bewail
the death of knight so noble, such a man.
For, while over some king he did prevail,
Achilles, suddenly, through his mail
and through his body pierced him in the strife
and thus this worthy knight was robbed of life.

224.

For whom, as old books tell us,
was felt such woe, that of it tongue may not tell:
and especially the sorrow of Troilus,
who was next to him in worthiness, as well.
And in this woe Troilus began to dwell,
that what through sorrow and love and unrest,
he often every day bid his heart burst.

225.

But nonetheless, though he began to despair
and dreaded that his lady was untrue,
yet ever his heart would return to her:
and, as lovers do, he sought anew
to gain again Cressid, bright of hue.
And in his heart her he went excusing
that Calchas caused all her delaying.



'Achilles vents his rage on Hector'
Domenico Cunego, after Gavin Hamilton (1766)
The Rijksmuseum

226.

And often times he was in purpose set
himself like a pilgrim to disguise,
to see her: but he could not counterfeit
enough to be unknown by people wise
to it, nor find an excuse that would suffice
if he were recognised by Greeks there:
for which he would often weep many a tear.

227.

Yet he often wrote to her anew
full piteously (he did not fail through sloth),
beseeching her that, since he was true,
she should return again, and hold to her truth.
So that Cressid one day, out of ruth,
(I judge it so), touching this matter
wrote to him again as you may hear:

228.

‘Cupid’s son, example of all goodness,
O sword of knighthood, source of nobleness!
How may someone in torment and distress,
and lacking health, still send you gladness?
I heartbroken, sick, I joyless,
since you with me nor I with you may deal,
I may neither send you my heart nor heal.

229.

Your letter full, the paper all complaint,
has aroused my heart's pity.
I have seen with tears all stained
your letter, and how you require me
to return again, which yet cannot be.
But why, lest this letter were found there,
I make no mention of now, out of fear.

230.

Grievous to me, God knows, is your unrest,
your hastiness, and the gods' ordinance
it seems you will not take it for the best.
Nothing else is in your remembrance,
as I think, but only your own indulgence.
But do not be angered, I beseech:
for I delay on account of wicked speech.

231.

For I heard more than I hoped in the end
touching us two, how things might stand:
which I shall, by dissembling, amend.
And (don't be angry) I was made to understand
that you were only toying with my hand.
But now no matter, I cannot in you guess
ought but all truth and all nobleness.

232.

I will come, yet things are so disjointed
as I stand now, that what year or day
it shall be is not yet appointed.
But in effect I pray you, as I may,
to let your good word and your friendship stay.
For truly, while my life may endure,
as a friend, of me you may be sure.

233.

Yet, that it's short, I pray you not to take
ill, that which to you I write.
I dare not, where I am, letters make,
and never could compose as I might.
Still great matters men write in letters slight.
The intent is all, and not the letter's space.
And now farewell: God have you in His grace.'

234.

Troilus thought this letter was all strange
when he had read it, and sorrowfully sighed.
He thought it was the beginning of a change:
but finally he could not believe she might
not do what she had promised him aright:
for he will think it evil in truth to leave
off loving, who loves well, though he grieve.

235.

But nonetheless men say that, at the last,
in spit of everything, men shall truth see:
and such a time arrived, and that full fast,
when Troilus understood that she
was not as true as she ought to be.
And finally he knew, without doubt,
that all was lost that he had cared about.

236.

Stood one day in his melancholy
this Troilus, and with suspicion
of her for whom he thought to die:
and it so befell that through Troy town,
as was the custom, they bore up and down
a surcoat of armour, as says the story,
before Deiphebus to show a victory.

237.

The which coat, as told by Lollius,
Deiphebus had taken from Diomedes
that same day. And when this Troilus
saw it, he began to take heed,
noticing the length and breadth indeed,
and all the work. But it to behold
made his heart suddenly grow cold,

238.

for on its collar he found within
the brooch that he gave Cressid on that morrow,
when she from Troy must needs begin
to part, in remembrance of him and his sorrow:
and she pledged him it would be there tomorrow
and ever kept. But now he knew, right just,
his lady was no longer one to trust.

239.

He got him home, and soon did send
for Pandarus, and all this new mischance
and of the brooch he told him, start and end,
complaining of her heart's variance,
his long love, his truth, and his penance.
And after, on Death, without words more,
full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

240.

Then he spoke thus: 'O lady mine, Cressid,
where is your faith and where is your honour,
where is your love, where is your truth?' he said,
'In Diomedé you now take pleasure.
Alas! I would have thought, in true measure,
that since you would not in truth to me stand,
that you would not have taken me by the hand.

241.

Who shall now trust in anyone's oath?
Alas! I never would have thought, ere this,
that you, Cressid, could have altered so.
No, had I been guilty and done amiss,
I never thought your heart so cruel is
as to slay to me thus. Alas, your name for truth
is lost and gone, and that is now my ruth.

242.

Was there no other brooch you might yet
have invested your new love with,' said he,
'but that same brooch that I, with tears, wet,
and gave to you as a remembrance of me?
No other reason, alas, had ye
than spite, and also you meant
all utterly to show your intent.

243.

Through which I see that clean out of your mind
you have cast me: and I neither can nor may,
for all this world, within my heart find
to un-love you a quarter of a day.
In a cursed time was I born, welaway,
that you, that make me all this woe endure,
still love I best of any creature.

244.

Now God,' he said, 'send me yet the grace
that I might meet with this Diomede!
And truly, if I have strength and space,
I shall yet make (I hope) his sides bleed.
O God,' he said, 'who should take heed
to further truth, and punish wrongs beside,
why do you not take vengeance on this vice?

245.

O Pandarus, who, because in dreams I trust,
have blamed me, and often used to upbraid,
now you can see yourself, as you must,
how true your niece is now, bright Cressid.
In sundry ways, God knows,' he said,
'the gods show both joy and grief
in sleep, my dream proves that belief.

246.

And certainly without more speech,
from henceforth, as far as I may,
my own death in arms I will seek:
I do not care how soon may be the day.
But truly, Cressid, my sweet may,
whom I have with all my power served,
for you to do this I have not deserved.'

247.

This Pandarus, that all these things heard,
and knew well that he spoke the truth of this,
never a word to him answered:
for sorry for his friend's sorrow he is,
and ashamed that his niece has done amiss:
and stands, astonished by these causes two,
as still as stone: since no words will do.

248.

But at the last thus he spoke and said:
'My dear brother, I can do no more.
What can I say? I hate, indeed, Cressid,
and God knows, will hate her evermore.
And all that you asked of me before,
without regard to my honour or my rest,
I did, all that you wished, and for the best.

249.

If I did anything that might please thee,
I am glad: and of this treason now,
God knows, it is a sorrow to me:
and indeed, for heart's ease of you,
I would dearly amend it, if I knew how.
And from this world Almighty God I pray
deliver her soon. I can no more say.'

250.

Great was the sorrow and complaint of Troilus:
but Fortune as ever to her course will hold:
Cressid loves the son of Tydeus,
and Troilus must weep with cares cold.
Such is this world: whoever it beholds,
in every state there is little heart's rest:
God grant that we might take it for the best!

251.

In many a cruel battle, indeed,
of Troilus, this same noble knight
(as men may in the old books read),
was seen the knighthood and his great might.
And, indeed, his anger day and night
full cruelly the Greeks were taught:
and always most this Diomed he sought.

252.

And often times I find that they met
with bloody strokes and with high words both,
trying how their spears were whet.
And, God knows, with many a cruel oath
Troilus began on his helmet to beat.
But nonetheless Fortune was no ally,
that either at the other hand's should die.



'Penelope Weaves the Shroud for Laertes'
Bernard Picart, 1733
The Rijksmuseum

253.

And if I had undertaken to write
the deeds in arms of this worthy man,
then I would of his battles give you sight.
But because to write I first began
of his love, I have said what I can.
Of his worthy deeds, who wishes to hear,
read Dares: he relates them all clear.

254.

Beseeching every lady bright of hue,
and every gentle woman, who so she be,
that, although Cressid was untrue,
that for that guilt she be not wrath with me.
You may her guilt in other books see:
and gladlier I will write, if that is best,
of *Penelope* ^[p. 459]'s truth and good Alceste.

255.

I say this not only for these men,
but most for women that betrayed be
by false folk. God give them sorrow, Amen!
who with their great wit and subtlety
betray you. And this moves me
to speak, and in effect to you all I pray,
be wary of men, and hear what I say.

256.

Go little book: go, my little tragedy:
let God, to your maker yet, before he die,
send the power to make a comedy!
But, little book, do not go in envy,
but be subject to all poesy:
and kiss the steps where you see pace
Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan and Stace.

257.

And because there is such great diversity
in English and in writing of our tongue,
so I pray God that none mis-write thee,
nor mis-scan you through default of tongue.
And read, wherever you be, or else sung,
that you are understood I God beseech.
But now to the purpose rather of my speech –

258.

The anger, as I began to say
of Troilus the Greeks bought dear,
for thousands his hands made away,
as one who was without a peer,
save Hector in his time, as I hear.
But, welaway, were it not it was God's will,
mercilessly, fierce Achilles did him kill.

259.

And when he was slain in this manner,
his light ghost full blissfully went
up to the hollowness of *the eighth sphere* [p. 459],
leaving behind every element.
And there he saw, clear in his ascent,
the wandering planets, hearing harmony
in sounds full of heavenly melody.

260.

And down from there he spies
this little spot of earth that with the sea
is embraced, and begins to despise
this wretched world, and hold it vanity
compared with the true felicity
that is in heaven above. And at the last
down where he was slain, his gaze he cast.

261.

And in himself he laughed at the woe
of those who wept for his death now past:
and damned all our work that follows so
on blind lust, which can never last,
when we should all our heart on heaven cast.
And forth he went, briefly to tell,
where Mercury appointed him to dwell.

262.

Such ending has Troilus, lo, through love:
such ending has all his great worthiness,
such ending has his royal estate above,
such ending his desire, his nobleness,
such ending has false words' fickleness.
And thus began his loving of Cressid,
and in this way he died, as I have said.

263.

O young fresh folks, he or she,
in whom love grows when you age,
return home from worldly vanity,
and of your heart cast up the visage
to that same God who in His image
made you, and think it but a fair,
this world that passes soon as flowers fair.

264.

And love Him, who truly out of love
on a cross, to redeem our souls that day,
first died, then rose, to sit in heaven above:
for he deceives no one, I say,
who his heart shall wholly on him lay.
And since He is best to love, and most meek,
what need is there for feigned loves to seek?

265.

Lo see, the pagan's cursed ancient rites:
Lo see, how much their gods avail:
Lo see, this wretched world's appetites:
Lo see, the end and reward of the travail
of Jove, Apollo, Mars, their rascally tale:
Lo see, the form of ancient clerks' speech
in poetry, if you their books should seek.

266.

O moral *Gower*^[p. 459], this book I direct
to you, and you, philosophical *Strode*^[p. 459],
to warrant, and where need is, to correct,
in your benignity and zeal's good.
And to that true Christ who died on rood,
with all my heart for mercy ever I pray,
and to the Lord right thus I speak and say:

267.

Thou one and two, and three^[p. 459], eternally alive,
who reign forever, in three and two and one,
un-circumscribed, that may all circumscribe,
us from foes visible, and the invisible one
defend: and of Thy mercy, everyone,
so make us, Jesus, worthy this grace of thine,
for love of Maid and Mother thine benign. Amen.

NOTES

BkI:1 Tisiphone [p. 7]: One of the three Furies, The Eumenides, in Greek mythology. The Three Sisters, were Alecto, Tisiphone and Megaera, the daughters of Night and Uranus. They were the personified pangs of cruel conscience that pursued the guilty. (See Aeschylus – The Eumenides.) Chaucer invokes her as his Muse, and invokes her again in Bk IV:4 along with her sisters.

BkI:21 Dares and Dictys [p. 15]: Two supposed eye-witnesses of the war at Troy. To Dares the Phrygian was ascribed *De Excidio Troiae Historia* (The History of the Fall of Troy) a late sixth century Latin text. To Dictys the Cretan was ascribed the *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* (A Calendar of the Trojan War) a fourth century text. These works are the basis of the medieval Trojan legends.

BkI:23 Palladion [p. 15]: The Palladium, the sacred image of Pallas, supposed to save Troy from defeat, and stolen by Ulysses and Diomedes.

BkI:25 First Letter [p. 17]: A reference to Anne of Bohemia wife of Richard II, indicating the poem was written after their marriage in 1382.

BkI:32 Bayard [p. 19]: A generic name for a carthorse.

BkI:57 Lollius [p. 28]: Chaucer's work was based not on the works of the fictitious Lollius, but on Boccaccio's poem *Il Filostrato*, deriving some lines and words closely from the Italian and also from a French translation by Beauveau.

BkI:58 'If no love is...' [p. 28]: An adaptation of Petrarch's poem 132 from the Canzoniere. (*S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?*)

BkI:65 Polyxene [p. 31]: Polyxena was one of the daughters of King Priam of Troy and Queen Hecuba, and sister of Troilus. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Bk XIII:429-480. She was sacrificed to appease the ghost of Achilles.

BkI:131 Tityus [p. 47]: The giant, a son of Earth and Jupiter, sent to Hades to be tortured for attempting to rape Latona. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Bk IV:416-463. Vultures feed on his liver, which is continually renewed. Bk X:1-85. His punishment in the underworld ceases for a time at the sound of Orpheus's song.

BkII:2 Clio [p. 65]: The Muse of History. The nine Muses were the virgin daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory). They were the patronesses of the arts. Clio (History), Melpomene (Tragedy), Thalia (Comedy), Enterpe (Lyric Poetry), Terpsichore (Dance), Calliope (Epic Poetry), Erato (Love Poetry), Urania (Astronomy), and Polyhymnia (Sacred Song).

BkII:8 The White Bull [p. 68]: The constellation and zodiacal sun sign of the Bull. The sun is in Taurus in May. It represents the white 'Bull from the Sea', a disguise of Jupiter when he carried off Europa. Its glinting red eye is the star Aldebaran one of the four Babylonian guardians of the heavens, lying near the ecliptic. (The others are Regulus in Leo, Antares in Scorpius, and Fomalhaut 'the Fish's Eye' in Piscis Austrinus. All four are at roughly ninety degrees to one another.)

BkII:10 Procne [p. 69]: See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book VI:401 onwards. Procne was the daughter of Pandion, king of Athens, married to Tereus, king of Thrace. She persuaded Tereus to bring her sister Philomela to stay with her. Tereus raped and mutilated her sister, and told Procne that Philomela was dead. Philomela communicated with her by means of a woven message, and she rescued her during the Bacchic rites. She then murdered her son Itys and served the flesh to Tereus. Pursued by Tereus she turned into a nightingale. The bird's call, mourning Itys, is said to be 'Itu! Itu!' which is something like the occasional 'chooc, chooc' among its wide range of notes.

BkII:11 Janus [p. 69]: The Roman two-headed god of doorways and beginnings, equivalent to the Hindu elephant god Ganesh. The Janus mask is often depicted with one melancholy and one smiling face.

BkII:12 Thebes [p. 72]: They were listening to a reading from the *Thebaid* of Statius. The poet Publius Papinius Statius, born at Naples c 50AD, died there c 96AD. He lived at Rome in Vespasian's and Domitian's reigns, and dedicated his *Thebaid* to the latter, an epic about the War of the Seven against Thebes. His *Achilleid*, dealing with the Trojan War, was left unfinished.

BkII:15 Amphiaraus [p. 74]: A Greek seer, one of the heroes, the Oeclides, at the Calydonian Boar Hunt. He was the son of Oecleus, the father of Alcmaeon, and the husband of Eriphyle. He was present at the Calydonian Boar Hunt. Fighting in the war of the Seven against Thebes he was swallowed up alive by the earth, as he had foreseen, trying to hide from this fate he was betrayed by his wife Eriphyle and forced to join the war.

BkII:34 Minerva, Jupiter, Venus [p. 81]: **Also Bk II:61 Pallas** [p. 91]: Minerva was the Roman name for Pallas Athene the goddess of the mind and women's arts (also a goddess of war and the goddess of boundaries – see the Stele of Athena, bas-relief, Athens, Acropolis Museum). Jupiter was the sky-god, son of Saturn and Rhea, born on Mount Lycæum in Arcadia and nurtured on Mount Ida in Crete. The oak is his sacred tree. His emblems of power are the sceptre and lightning-bolt. His wife and sister is Juno (Iuno). (See the sculpted bust (copy) by Brasseides, the Jupiter of Otricoli, Vatican). Venus was the Goddess of Love. The daughter of Jupiter and Dione. She is Aphrodite, born from the waves, an incarnation of Astarte, Goddess of the Phoenicians. The mother of Cupid by Mars. (See Botticelli's painting – Venus and Mars – National Gallery, London)

BkII:60 Achilles, Hector [p. 91]: Achilles was the Greek hero of the Trojan War. The son of Peleus, king of Thessaly, and the sea-goddess Thetis, (See Homer's *Iliad*). Hector was the Trojan hero, son of Priam and Hecubawhom Achilles finally killed.

BkII:63 Mars [p. 93]: The war god, son of Jupiter and Juno.

BkII:63 Furies [p. 93]: The Furies, Eumenides, or The Three Sisters, were Alecto, Tisiphone and Megaera, the daughters of Night and Uranus. They were the personified pangs of cruel conscience that pursued the guilty. (See Aeschylus – The Eumenides). Their abode is in Hades by the Styx.

BkII:64 Neptune ^[p. 93]: God of the sea, brother of Pluto and Jupiter. The trident is his emblem.

BkII:98 Seventh House ^[p. 105]: In astrology the seventh house or division of a natal chart is the house of relationships. Well aspected, Venus, the planet of love and relationship, in the seventh house would be in a congenial position in the chart.

BkII:121 Apollo ^[p. 113]: Son of Jupiter and Latona (Leto), brother of Diana (Artemis), born on Delos. God of the arts and poetry.

BkII:139 Just as flowers' ^[p. 120]: This passage was adapted by Chaucer from Dante's *Inferno* Canto II:127. As in his use of Boccaccio, his 'author' and source for the tale, and his use of Petrarch's sonnet in Book I, Chaucer is here revealing his Italian ('Latin') learning, writing here sixty years after Dante's death.

BkIII:1 The Third Heaven ^[p. 159]: In the Ptolemaic system the seven planets moved in their own spheres or heavens. From the stationary central earth the spheres were those of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The eighth sphere was that of the fixed stars. Venus therefore holds the 'third heaven'.

BkIII:7 Calliope ^[p. 161]: The Muse of epic poetry. The mother of Orpheus.

BkIII:59 Polyxene ^[p. 179]: The daughter of King Priam and Hecuba of Troy. See Ovid's *metamorphoses* Book XIII:429-480. She is sacrificed to appease the ghost of Achilles.

BkIII:85 Tantalus ^[p. 189]: The king of Phrygia, son of Jupiter, father of Pelops and Niobe. He served his son Pelops to the gods at a banquet and was punished by eternal thirst in Hades.

BkIII:88 Wade ^[p. 190]: Wace (?) the Anglo-Norman poet (c1100-1175), born in Jersey, made canon of Bayeux by Henry II of England. His major works were the *Roman de Rou* concerning the history of Normandy, and the *Roman de Brut*, a free translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*,

dedicated to Eleanor of Aquitaine and containing material relating to the Arthurian legend.

BkIII:90 *Joined in Cancer* [p. 191]: The relatively rare conjunction of the new Moon with Saturn and Jupiter in Cancer, occurred in the spring of 1385.

BkIII:103 *Adonis* [p. 195]: In Greek myth the son of Myrrha by her father Cinyras, born after her transformation into a myrrh-tree. (As such he is a vegetation god born from the heart of the wood.) Venus fell in love with him. He was killed by a wild boar that gashed his thigh. His blood became the windflower, the *anemone*. Adonis is the hellenised form of the Semetic *adoni*, Lord, and identifies him with Tammuz the vegetation God of the Lebanon and Phoenicia. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book X:503-559.

BkIII:104 *Europa, Cypris, Daphne* [p. 195]: Europe (Europa) was the daughter of Agenor, king of Phoenicia, abducted by Jupiter disguised as a white bull. Cypris was beloved by Mars. Daphne was the Daughter of Peneus the river-god, loved and pursued by Phoebus Apollo. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book I:525-552. She was turned into the laurel bough.

BkIII:105 *Herse, Diana, The Fates* [p. 197]: One of the three daughters of King Cecrops. The most beautiful of the Athenian virgins and admired by Mercury. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book II:711-832. Mercury elicited the help of her sister Aglauros. Envy poisoned her heart and she was ultimately turned to stone.

BkIII:134: *Dilemma* [p. 208]: The text uses the term *Dulcarnon* from the Arabic *du'lqarnayn*, meaning two-horned, a name given to Euclid's forty-seventh proposition in his First Book. Pandarus confuses this with the fifth of the First Book known as *flemyng of wrecches* (the scourge of wretches) known nowadays as the *Pons Asinorum* or Ass's Bridge.

BkIII:180: *Cytherea and Hymen* [p. 223]: Cytherea is an epithet for Venus from Cythera, the Aegean island, sacred to Venus-Aphrodite who rose from the sea there. Hymen or Hymenaeus was the god of marriage.

BkIII:199: *Crassus and Midas* [p. 230]: Midas King of Phrygia turned all he touched to gold. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book XI:85-145. Crassus was killed in the Roman war against the Parthians in 53BC. Orodes the Parthian King showed his contempt for his wealth by pouring molten gold into his dead mouth.

BkIII:203: *Lucifer and Fortuna Major* [p. 233]: Lucifer is a name for the morning star (the planet Venus). Venus, closer to the sun than Earth, often appears before sunrise in the morning sky. *Fortuna major* is a configuration of the last stars in Aquarius and the first in Pisces, indicating by its position in the east at dawn that the sun is in Pisces, or possibly Aries, that is the time is early spring. This corroborates the spring positioning of the planets in the note '*Joined in Cancer*' [p. 453].

BkIII:204: *Alcmena* [p. 233]: The daughter of Electryon king of Tiryns, wife of Amphitryon, and mother of Hercules by the god Jupiter, raped by Jupiter disguised as Amphitryon.

BkIII:210: *Titan Sun* [p. 237]: The name Titan is applied to Sol the sun god, son of the Titan Hyperion. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book I:1-30.

BkIII:229: *Phlegethon* [p. 243]: One of the rivers of the Underworld.

BkIII:244: *Pyrois* [p. 248]: One of the four horses of the Sun. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book II:150-177. The others were Eous, Aethon, and Phlegon.

BkIII:250: *The Hymn to Love* [p. 251]: This is a free rendering in rhyme royal of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* Book II metre 8.

BkIII:259: *Dione, The Nine, Helicon, Parnassus* [p. 254]: Venus was the daughter of Jupiter and Dione (an ancient goddess of Dodona in Greece). The nine are the nine Muses, the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory). They are the patronesses of the arts. Clio (History), Melpomene (Tragedy), Thalia (Comedy), Euterpe (Lyric Poetry), Terpsichore (Dance), Calliope (Epic Poetry), Erato (Love Poetry), Urania (Astronomy), and Polyhymnia (Sacred Song). Helicon was their mountain in Boeotia from which flowed the stream Hippocrene. Parnassus was their mountain in Phocis.

BkIV:4 The Holy Ones: Megaera, Alecto, Tisiphone [p. 258]: The Furies (Erinys, Erinnys, or Eumenides), The Three Sisters, were Alecto, Tisiphone and Megaera, the daughters of Night and Uranus. They were the personified pangs of cruel conscience that pursued the guilty. (See Aeschylus – The Eumenides). Their abode is in Hades by the Styx.

BkIV:4 Quirinus [p. 258]: The name for the deified Romulus, the son of Mars and Ilia, hence Iliades, the father of the Roman people (genitor).

BkIV:5 Hercules's Lion [p. 258]: The constellation Leo the Lion. The sun's presence there indicates that it is late July/August. The constellation and zodiacal sign of the Lion contains the star Regulus 'the heart of the lion', one of the four guardians of the heavens in Babylonian astronomy, which lies nearly on the ecliptic. (The others are Aldebaran in Taurus, Antares in Scorpius, and Fomalhaut 'the Fish's Eye' in Piscis Austrinus. All four are at roughly ninety degrees to one another). The constellation represents the lion killed by Hercules as the first of his twelve labours.

BkIV:18 Laomedon [p. 266]: The king of Troy, son of Ilus the younger, father of Priam, Hesione and Antigone. He reneged on his agreement to reward Apollo (Phoebus) and Neptune for building the walls of Troy. His daughter Hesione was chained to a rock to be taken by a sea-monster. Hercules rescued her and was also denied his reward. He seized Troy and married Hesione to Telamon.

BkIV:29 Juvenal [p. 269]: Chaucer refers to Juvenal's satires X 2-4 '*pauci dignoscere possunt/ vera bona atque illis multum diversa, remota/ erroris nebula*....few can distinguish their own true good often, and separate it from the distant cloud of error...'

BkIV:60 Zeuxis [p. 280]: Chaucer calls him Zansis. Zeuxis was a Sicilian artist fl 468BC. His paintings were noted for their realism. The remark here attributed to him actually comes from Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* (462).

BkIV:113 Eurydice [p. 297]: The wife of Orpheus. The tale of her death and Orpheus's visit to the underworld to attempt to redeem her is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book X:1-85.

BkIV:139 (thru 154) great clerks [p. 307]: These stanzas are a rendering of Boethius's Consolation Book V, prose 3, used here by Troilus to denote the power of Fate and Pre-destination and the lack of Free Will in human affairs.

BkIV:163 Myrrha [p. 315]: The daughter of Cinyras, mother of Adonis, incestuously, by her father. See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book X:298-502. She conceives an incestuous passion for her father, attempts suicide, and is rescued by her nurse who promises to help her.

She sleeps with her father, is impregnated by him, and when discovered flees to Sabaea, and is turned into the myrrh-tree, weeping resin. Adonis is born from the tree.

BkIV:170 Minos [p. 318]: The King of Crete, ruler of a hundred cities. Son of Jupiter and Europa. With his brother Rhadamanthus Jupiter (Zeus) made him a judge of the underworld. (See Dante's Divine Comedy)

BkIV:173 Atropos [p. 320]: One of the Fates (Parcae or Moerae) The Three Sisters, the daughters of Night. Clotho, the spinner of the thread of life, Lachesis, chance or luck, and Atropos, inescapable destiny. Clotho spins, Lachesis draws out, and Atropos shears the thread. Their unalterable decrees may be revealed to Jupiter but he cannot change the outcome.

BkIV:202 Delphic shrine [p. 331]: This refers to the oracular shrine of Apollo at Troy of which Calchas was the priest. He may also have visited Delphi in Greece or the island of Delos to consult Apollo's oracles there and hence learnt the fate of Troy.

BkIV:209 Argus [p. 333]: A creature with a thousand eyes, the son of Arestor, set to guard Io by Juno. See Ovid's Metamorphoses

Book I:622-746. He was killed by Mercury and after his death, Juno set his eyes in the peacock's tail.

BkIV:220 Athamas [p. 339]: The son of Aeolus, and husband of Ino. The uncle of Pentheus. See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book IV 512-542. Punished by Juno, his is maddened by Tisiphone and kills his child Learchus.

BkIV:222 Simois [p. 339]: With the Scamander (Xanthus) one of the two great rivers of Troy. (See Homer's Iliad)

BkIV:228 Diana (Lucina in the original text) [p. 341]: Lucina is a name for Diana as Moon Goddess. Diana is Artemis the sister of Apollo (Phoebus). The moon is here in Aries the Ram, and Cressid promises to return when it has passed through Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer that is in ten days time when the moon will be at the new in the sun-sign Leo.

BkIV:230 Cynthia [p. 343]: A name for Diana, the Moon goddess.

BkV:1 Parcae, the Fates [p. 349]: The Three Fates. The Three Sisters, the daughters of Night. Clotho, the spinner of the thread of life, Lachesis, chance or luck, and Atropos, inescapable destiny. Clotho spins, Lachesis draws out, and Atropos shears the thread. Their unalterable decrees may be revealed to Jupiter but he cannot change the outcome. Here Chaucer makes Lachesis the spinner of the thread of Troilus's life.

BkV:31 Ixion [p. 359]: King of the Lapithae, father of Pirithoüs, and of the Centaurs. He was punished in Hades for attempting to seduce Juno by being fastened to a continually turning wheel.

BkV:46 Escalipho [p. 365]: Chaucer's version of Ascalaphus. See Ovid's Metamorphoses Book V:533-571. The son of Orphne and the River Acheron, he sees Persephone eat the pomegranate seeds, informs on her, and is turned into a screech-owl.

BkV:86 Juno and Thebes [p. 379]: Following Jupiter's rape of Semele, daughter of Cadmus of Thebes, Juno pursued vengeance against the House of Cadmus ultimately leading to the war of the Seven against Thebes. See various parts of Ovid's Metamorphoses for elements of her vengeance. See Aeschylus: Seven Against Thebes.

BkV:92 Charybdis [p. 382]: The whirlpool between Italy and Sicily in the Messenian straits. Charybdis was the voracious daughter of Mother Earth and Neptune, hurled

into the sea, and thrice, daily, drawing in and spewing out a huge volume of water. (See Homer's *Odyssey*)

BkV:94 *Lucina* [p. 383]: A Roman title of Juno as moon-goddess (strictly Juno Lucetia) and goddess of light and of childbirth.

BkV:95 *Phaethon* [p. 383]: Son of Clymene, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys whose husband was the Ethiopian king Merops. His true father is Sol, the sun-god (Phoebus). He asked his mother for proof of his divine origin, and went to the courts of the Sun to see his father who granted him a favour. He asked to drive the Sun chariot but lost control and was destroyed by Jupiter in order to save the earth from being consumed by fire. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* end of Book I and Book II:1-328.

BkV:128 *Manes* [p. 395]: The Roman *Manes* or *Di Parentes* were Gods of the Underworld. They were the object of public and private cult, whose anger was placated by sacrifices. Their festivals were the *Parentalia* and the *Feralia*.

BkV:134 *Polynices* [p. 397]: The brother of Eteocles, the son of Oedipus. The brothers were co-kings of Thebes who fought each other after Eteocles seized the throne. They mortally wounded each other in single combat during the ensuing war of the Seven against Thebes.

BkV:168 *Hazel-wood, Jolly Robin* [p. 409]: Hazel-wood is a never-never land or land of fantasy. Jolly Robin the fictional Robin Hood.

BkV:208 *Cassandra the Sibyl* [p. 423]: The daughter of Priam and Hecuba, gifted with prophecy by Apollo, but cursed to tell the truth and not be believed. Taken back to Greece by Agamemnon. The Sibyl was a name for the prophetesses of Apollo in particular the priestess of Apollo in the temple at Cumae built by Daedalus. She prophesied perched on or over a tripod.

BkV:210 *Diana and the Calydonian Boar* [p. 423]: Slighted by King Oeneus, the goddess Diana sent a wild boar against Calydon. This led to the incident of the Calydonian Boar Hunt. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book VIII:260 onwards. The

maid in verse 211 is Atalanta, whom Meleager loved. For Meleager's death see Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book VIII:515-546.

BkV:213 *The Thebaid told by Cassandra* [p. 425]: She recounts the events of Statius's *Thebaid*. The poet Publius Papinius Statius, born at Naples c50AD, died there c96AD. He lived at Rome in Vespasian's and Domitian's reigns, and dedicated his *Thebaid* to the latter, an epic about the War of the Seven against Thebes.

BkV:219 *Alceste* [p. 428]: Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias who married Admetus. He was allowed to avoid death if a member of his family voluntarily died for him. This Alceste offered to do.

BkV:254 *Penelope* [p. 443]: The wife of Ulysses, and daughter of Icarius and the Naiad Periboa, who waited patiently for Ulysses return from the Trojan War.

BkV:259 *The Eighth Sphere* [p. 445]: The sphere of the fixed stars above the orbits of the 'planets' (Greek for wanderers from their visually erratic positions relative to the fixed stars as viewed from Earth) in their seven spheres of the Ptolemaic scheme. (Earth, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn)

BkV:266 *Gower, Strode* [p. 447]: John Gower (c1325-1408) the poet a friend of Chaucer's, and author of *Confessio Amantis*. Strode is probably Ralph Strode, Fellow of Merton College Oxford, who probably died in London in 1387.

BkV:267 *Paradiso quote* [p. 447]: Troilus's ascent from the Earth is derived from Dante's *Paradiso*, and lines 1-3 of this last verse are translated from *Paradiso* XIV, 28-30.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Geoffrey Chaucer was born c1343 in London to a prosperous family of wine-merchants. Through his father's connections, he began his official duties as page to the Countess of Ulster, the wife of Lionel, second son to the king, Edward III. Chaucer subsequently served as courtier, diplomat and civil servant while also establishing his poetic reputation. He appears to have travelled widely in Europe during his varied court career. He married Philippa de Roet, lady-in-waiting to the queen, and sister to Katherine Swynford, John of Gaunt's third wife, and flourished under John of Gaunt's patronage. His most prolific period of writing was during his time as comptroller of customs for the port of London, between 1374 and 1386, both *Troilus and Criseyde*, his finely constructed poem based on classical and Renaissance sources, and the early *Canterbury Tales*, his celebration of the English social landscape, dating from that time. Chaucer is thought to have died in October 1400, not long after the overthrow of his royal patron Richard II and the accession of Henry IV, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey, that being his right as a tenant of the Abbey Close, in what has become known as Poet's Corner. His son Thomas had a significant career at the court of successive kings, and as Speaker of the House of Commons.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Anthony Kline lives in England. He graduated in Mathematics from the University of Manchester, and was Chief Information Officer (Systems Director) of a large UK Company, before dedicating himself to his literary work and interests. He was born in 1947. His work consists of translations of poetry; critical works, biographical history with poetry as a central theme; and his own original poetry. He has translated into English from Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Chinese and the European languages. He also maintains a deep interest in developments in Mathematics and the Sciences.

He continues to write predominantly for the Internet, making all works available in download format, with an added focus on the rapidly developing area of electronic books. His most extensive works are complete translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.