

# **Eustache Deschamps**

## **Selected Poems**

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## Introduction

Eustache Deschamps (c1340-1406/1407) was born in Vertus (Blancs-Coteaux, Marne, south of Reims, in the Champagne-Ardenne region). A pupil and friend of Guillaume de Machaut he later studied law at Orléans. He then travelled through Europe as a For age leaves us, involved in missions to Bohemia, Hungary and Moravia. In 1372 he was made an officer-at-arms to the king. He received many other important offices, was the king's bailiff of Valois (Oise/Aisne), and afterwards of Senlis (Oise), squire to the Dauphin, and governor of Fismes (north-west of Reims). As well as his numerous ballads, rondels, lays and virelays, Deschamps wrote a short treatise on French poetry, *L'Art de dictier et de fere chansons, balades, virelais et rondeaulx* (1392) the first to define and illustrate the verse-forms.

### Of Neptune and of Glaucus I complain (*De Neptunus et de Glaucus me plain*)

Of Neptune, and of Glaucus, I complain,  
That against me work their wickedness;  
And, of Aeolus, the Wind-God, maintain  
That he sends Eurus, causing me distress,  
Blocking my path, denying me success,  
Stirring the waters, tempestuously,  
While crying out, as I fail to progress:  
'Against the wind, none can gain aught at sea.'

Evening and morn, the gods above send rain,  
Darkening the sky: for Jupiter, no less,  
To the sea-gods extends his hand, tis plain.  
Saturn sends wintry cold; ever they press  
My wretched self to stay, my course oppress.  
They force me to anchor, unwillingly.  
Move I cannot, troubled by their excess:  
Against the wind, none can gain aught at sea.

From Mars, who is sovereign in war, I gain  
Every strength; from Ceres, the fair goddess,

And Bacchus, flour, wine, biscuit and grain,  
Cured meat too; and Juno, of her largesse,  
Wealth supplies, while, of Venus, I possess  
The courage she grants young men, graciously,  
To love; yet I prosper not, nonetheless:  
Against the wind, none can gain aught at sea.

I await spring's sweetness, Lord Mars, in pain,  
When one can strike a rhythm, peacefully;  
Ill winter past, the weather fair again;  
Against the wind, none can gain aught at sea.

**Who possesses his ancestral mansion (*Qui maison a de grant anceserie*)**

Who possesses his ancestral mansion  
Awhile, and from inheritance the name  
Of count, duke, or ruler of his kingdom,  
Should guard full closely, and maintain, that same.  
Never should he, so as to win brief fame,  
Forgo it in some perilous exchange,  
For he'll bring sorrow upon his person,  
Who quits his path, to covet what is strange.

Naught should alter his estate, tis certain,  
Unless he doth, himself, what can but maim,  
Coveting what is not his, on occasion.  
He who would seek another's goods, I blame,  
Who, against all reason, would so lay claim,  
And, in a trice, his whole world disarrange.  
Many a man one sees that doth the same,  
Who quits his path, to covet what is strange.

To rest content with one's situation,  
Is good and wise; covetousness is lame.  
Envy is foolish, breeding confusion,  
Being nothing worth, and a cause of shame.  
By which many have lost their own domain.

Let each man keep his own, and never range.  
Let that suffice! He can but lose, tis plain,  
Who quits his path, to covet what is strange.

Prince, a fool is he that, without reason,  
Would lose a great palace to gain a grange.  
He is but wretched, such is my conclusion,  
Who quits his path, to covet what is strange.

**To full many a place my books I've lent (*J'ay mes livres en tant de lieux  
prestez*)**

To full many a place my books I've lent,  
To several folk from whom they are due,  
For, indeed, the term of their loan is spent.  
And I've no wish to lend them out, anew,  
My songs, or lays, or my love-poems true,  
My tales of history, or deeds of honour,  
When none return the fruits of my labour,  
Playing me false, without cause, I say,  
Such that I grieve. I swear to God, never  
Will I lend another book, come what may.

Enough if (and this was my sole intent)  
I've wished my work to inform the few.  
And out of the idleness that I frequent,  
Have wrought something useful that might so do,  
It'll not sell, but place that same on view,  
If someone but copies it, whenever  
I am at home. So let all remember  
From now on, not to pester away,  
For never, howe'er urgent the matter,  
Will I lend another book, come what may.

Many I've lost, and much trouble it's meant,  
Through such foolish loans, and many I rue,  
So, I'll act so no more, to my detriment,

And let none attempt it, such I eschew.  
Let my oath be good, and my word hold true.  
But those who would my efforts discover,  
I'll show them willingly, as proud author,  
But only within. Visit any day,  
Unless you're some powerful lord! But never  
Will I lend another book, come what may.

Prince, your Eustache, who feels it ever,  
Asks all to recall my words, and, I pray,  
Return my fair texts, at once, for never  
Will I lend another book, come what may!

**Time of sorrow and time of temptation (*Temps de douleur et de  
temptacion*)**

Time of sorrow, and time of temptation,  
Age of tears, of jealousy, of torment,  
Time of suffering, time of damnation,  
Lesser age, near now to its effacement,  
Time of horrors, falsehoods, concealment,  
Age of deceit, full of pride and envy,  
Time without honour, without true judgement,  
Age that shortens life, with your misery!

Time without respect, time of perdition,  
Age of deceit, and treacherous intent,  
Time of error, near to its completion,  
Age of the thief, action without consent.  
Time, view your depths of darkness, and repent!  
Age ever sinning, for your faults cry mercy,  
Time that corrupts, be on salvation bent,  
Age that shortens life, with your misery!

Life without sweetness, in ill condition,  
Age that to every vice gives its assent,  
Time of folly, be wise, seek remission.

Age of the flatterer, view your punishment!  
Time of high Justice, furious in descent.  
Age, whose soul may not from the reckoning flee.  
Time of the fraudster, change yourself, relent,  
Age that shortens life, with your misery!

**I've heard the rats and mice met together (*Je treuve qu'entre les souris*)**

I've heard the rats and mice met together  
In a parliament, strange and wondrous,  
Against the cat, their enemy ever,  
To consider the path to some glorious  
Way of living, one not too arduous,  
By which they might prosper yet, and grow fat,  
Which raised the question, phrasing it thus:  
'Who's ready, and willing, to bell the cat?'

That course they agreed, swiftly, however  
Before they parted, and with little fuss.  
Yet, as they left, incurred an encounter  
With a country mouse, who was curious  
As to what they had been led to discuss.  
They replied their foe would be balked, in that  
Around its neck, a bell twould discover!  
'Who's ready, and willing, to bell the cat?'

The other asked. The greyest rat ever  
Then gravely replied: 'A most serious  
Question is that, and deserves an answer.'  
Each of the mice, feeling little jealous  
Of the role as described, nor covetous  
Of the honour, vanished; the thing fell flat,  
For, as they said: 'Though tis fine by us,  
Who's ready, and willing, to bell the cat?'

Prince, we oft hear the swelling chorus,  
Yet should seek an answer, as did the rat,

Where none will reply to the obvious:  
Who's ready, and willing, to bell the cat?

**Ballad on the Death of Guillaume de Machaut (*Armes, amours, dames, chevalerie*)**

Arms, lovers, ladies, knights of chivalry,  
Musicians, clerks, all that seek to pursue  
True knowledge in France, and sweet poetry,  
All those with melodious voices, who  
Sing well, and perchance play the organ too,  
Who cherish the art of music, now shed  
Your tears, and mourn, for the news is true  
That the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

Of pure love he never spoke foolishly,  
But in all his works gave the god his due,  
His songs composed ever with courtesy,  
Pleasing both highest and lowest. Now, you,  
Alas, Orpheus, striking your lyre anew,  
Must lament forever, to sorrow wed,  
As Alpheus, and Arethusa, must do,  
That the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

Pray for him, and recall him silently,  
This the Bailiff of Valois asks, who knew  
No man finer in this, our age, than he,  
Nor shall find any man, now, of his hue.  
Princes and kings must their tears subdue.  
Grieve (for you've lost art's sovereign head,  
Champenois, in black, who sweet flowers strew)  
That the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

*Note: Champenois, the people and language of the Champagne region of France. Machaut had long been canon of Reims there (from 1337 to his death in 1377). Alpheus (the river god who flowed secretly beneath the sea seeking his love) and Arethusa*

*(who was transformed into a fountain) may be a reference to Deschamps himself and to Machaut's correspondent Péronne d'Armentières.*

**Second Ballad in Memory of Machaut (*O fleur des fleurs de toute  
melodie*)**

O flower of flowers of all melody,  
Sweetest master, that such skill did show,  
O Guillaume, lord of earthly harmony,  
After your deeds, who is there, here below,  
Can lead the field? None, surely, that I know;  
Your name a precious relic, in your stead,  
Ile-de-France, Artois, shall mourn, in woe,  
For the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

Castalia and Hippocrene agree,  
Of which you were the source, the constant flow,  
You the poets' study, for momentarily  
Their springs fall silent, their streams run slow.  
Alas, for you I grieve, cold as the snow,  
For you, the singer of all song, now fled.  
Weep harps, and you Saracen trumpets blow,  
For the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

Lutes, vielles, rebecs, all the symphony,  
Psaltery, fiddle, sounding high and low,  
Rotes, gitterns, pipes, and flutes, in unity,  
Traversaines, and you, wood-nymphs also,  
On tambours, let your fingers labour so,  
And none deny the zither's music fled.  
Weep dutifully, all you of France, bow low:  
For the noble maker, Machaut, is dead.

*Note: The two ballads written on the death of Guillaume Machaut in 1377, were set to music by François Andrieu as a double-ballad lament. The music is extant, and is the only*

*contemporary setting of Deschamps' work (vid. Chantilly Codex, r52).*

**When I journeyed about the land and sea (*Quant j'ay la terre et mer avironneë*)**

When I journeyed about the land and sea,  
And went visiting each far country,  
Damascus, Jerusalem, Galilee,  
Alexandria, Egypt, I did see,  
Cairo, Syria, Babylon, Tartary,  
    And all the ports that they possess,  
Their spices and sugars, in rich excess,  
Their gold brocades and silk finery, there.  
Yet the French own more of worth, I confess:  
For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

Crowned, above all other cities, is she,  
The fount of all knowledge and artistry,  
Bordering the Seine, on its path to the sea.  
With vineyards, fields, woods, meadows aplenty,  
Of the pleasures of mortal life, no city  
    Owns to more, in her loveliness.  
All strangers love her, and her graces bless,  
Since for joy, and pleasure in all that's fair,  
None can equal her for sheer happiness.  
For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

Far finer than towns midst sweet scenery,  
Or castles that boast of their ancestry,  
Her people and merchants noble and free,  
Her goldsmiths the best of all that may be,  
She's the flower of the arts; their mastery,  
    Shows only the highest address.  
Subtle skill, and deep knowledge, they express,  
And in all things, integrity; I declare,  
That in all she does she achieves success,

For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

**O city, blessed with justice, as we see, (*O tu, cité, de justice aourneë*)**

O city, blessed with justice, as we see,  
That ne'er opened yourself to tyranny,  
Daughter of God, led by divinity,  
Mother of faith, stepmother to heresy,  
The branching stem of true theology,  
    On whom all Christians press!  
Sacred city that doth all folk address,  
God grant you paradise, its balmy air,  
Its perfect climate that the heart doth bless.  
For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

None is your equal, in any country.  
Not Babylon, that was once so mighty,  
Nor Rome, famous in every century,  
Nineveh, Florence, Pavia, those three,  
Nor Troy with which begins your history,  
    None equals you, for all seem less.  
For you alone, the crown of all, profess.  
Those qualities amaze, in which you share,  
The more you yield, the more you yet possess.  
For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

Thus, you are praised where'er true folk may be,  
And all do now respect your sovereignty.  
You're adorned with many a lovely lady,  
Many a knight too, skilled in chivalry;  
Much gold and silver, and rare jewellery  
    On the Pont au Change, too, doth impress,  
And there's the Palais de Justice, no less;  
Its lord the prince of fleurs-de-lys, I swear.  
Your fame will last, all shall your worth express:  
For to Paris there's naught that can compare.

**Ever the present time incurs our blame, (*Chascun blasme toujours le  
temps present*)**

Ever the present time incurs our blame,  
Past ages we hold to have been better,  
When people were superior, we claim,  
Yet, in truth, tis little different ever,  
We find both the good and bad, forever.  
There were, and are, and seemingly will be,  
Both rich and poor, fine and wretched weather,  
For, as to that, naught changes I can see.

Of Adam's brood, Abel, the innocent,  
Was murdered by Cain, his only brother.  
Joseph, tis writ in the Old Testament,  
Was sold by his brothers to another.  
Yet Moses and Aaron were friends ever.  
If one thing comes, behold its contrary;  
We love the one, and we hate the other,  
For, as to that, naught changes I can see.

Many behaved quite badly in the past,  
Nero, for instance, proved the Romans bane,  
And Ganelon, he betrayed, at the last,  
Twelve peers at Roncesvalles; some are slain  
Some live quite happily, some lose, some gain,  
Some grow rich, while others know poverty.  
Tis always so: one smiling, one in pain,  
For, as to that, naught changes I can see.

**Ballad on the Death of Bertrand du Guesclin (*Estoc d'oneur et arbres  
de vaillance*)**

Mighty tree of courage and of honour,  
Lion-hearted flame gainst the enemy,  
Glory of France, and flower of valour,  
Fierce combatant, e'er claiming victory,

Wise in your actions, striving steadfastly,  
A sovereign prince in war,  
Of men and lands, ever the conqueror,  
The most valiant this our world will see.  
All now must dress in black and, evermore,  
Weep, weep, for the flower of chivalry!

O Brittany, weep, for your hope is gone,  
See now to his interment Normandy,  
Guyenne also, Auvergne now make one,  
Languedoc, raise him a fair tomb, nobly!  
All of the East, Champagne, and Picardy,  
Must ask that sad tears now pour,  
Tragedians, Arethusa implore,  
Who turned to water through her misery,  
So that all hearts might but ache the more.  
Weep, weep, for the flower of chivalry!

Alas! Brave soldiers-at-arms, remember  
The great Bertrand; for his children were you!  
Ever powerful in battle, your father  
Who loved you with a love so deep and true.  
'Guesclin!' was his battle-cry. With fervour,  
Pray that he gains Paradise.  
Lacking is he whose tears fill not his eyes,  
For the light of the world has failed, wholly;  
While the path to honour is barred likewise.  
Weep, weep, for the flower of chivalry!

*Note: Bertrand du Guesclin, 'The Eagle of Brittany', Constable of France under Charles V, and many times victorious against the English, died on campaign in the Languedoc, in July 1380.*

**Ballad on the Manner of Being at Court, (Tant de perilz sont a suir la court)**

Many a grave peril there is at court,

For trouble's incurred there, by one and all.  
He that's in favour, Envy cuts him short,  
He that is powerful risks a sudden fall.  
Many an ill there doth the heart befall.  
Such that, I hold it wiser, for my share,  
To have one foot at court, and one elsewhere.

At court tis often safest to be blind,  
And deaf, and mute, as well, about the hall,  
To flatter others and deceive, I find,  
Dissimulate, be pleasant, suffer, stall.  
Tis ill to, endlessly, be there on call,  
Far better I would counsel, to take care;  
To have one foot at court, and one elsewhere.

For, one foot at court, should the need arise,  
Is useful to seek favours there withal,  
And one outside, if under stormy skies,  
One must evade those dangers I recall,  
Live independently, and cease to crawl,  
One's heart at peace. Else seek (my friend, beware!)  
To have one foot at court, and one elsewhere.

**Ballad with a Double Meaning (*L'en me demande chascun jour*)**

Every day they ask of me  
What I think of the present age  
And I reply: 'All is loyalty,  
Honour, faith, truth on every page,  
Largesse, valour, and order too,  
And charity; all work away  
For the common good.' Yet, tis true,  
All that I think I seldom say.

'All folk fear the Lord above,  
No man will another annoy,  
Noblemen show naught but love,

And never labour to destroy,  
Kings seek peace and order also,  
Not gold and silver, night and day;  
War's a thing of the past.' Yet, know,  
All that I think I seldom say.

'The great, the small, and the lesser,  
Are never for themselves, I find,  
But all unite, in loving manner,  
Free of dissent; none lag behind.'  
If you observe the contrary,  
And to my statements here cry 'Nay!',  
I beg that you will pardon me,  
All that I think I seldom say.

'Prince, the good reside at court,  
And are honoured there, sincerely,  
While the liars stay far away,  
The flatterers, and their cohort,  
Not daring to dwell there, clearly.'  
All that I think I seldom say.

**At twelve, I'd a lively imagination, (J'oy a XII ans grant ymaginative)**

At twelve, I'd a lively imagination,  
Never ceased to learn till I was thirty.  
The seven liberal arts, with elation,  
I studied, till I knew, with certainty,  
    The heavens, entire, the elements,  
All of the stars on high, and their movements.  
Then folk brought me robes in which to dress.  
Yet age has weakened my intelligence,  
Pardon me, now, for I'll depart with less!

When I was young, my mind was more than quick;  
I knew the law, read each proclamation,  
And argued, with subtlety and logic,

Rendering true judgement, on each occasion.

Then was I shown due reverence,  
Assigned to the first rank, for eloquence.  
Now, behind my back, they mock, to excess,  
As I once mocked them for their lack of sense.  
Pardon me, now, for I'll depart with less!

Wise are the folk who in their prime take care  
To guard against poverty, with good reason:  
The world makes fun of age, all lean and bare,  
Disputes our knowledge, in our wintry season.

For age leaves us with no defence.  
Be on your guard gainst future indigence,  
Or be humbled, shamed, in your wretchedness;  
Now old, I'm mocked, my wits but give offence.  
Pardon me, now, for I'll depart with less!

**Ballad Addressed to Geoffrey Chaucer (*O Socrates, plein de philosophie*)**

O Socrates, full of philosophy,  
Seneca in morals, in rules likewise  
An Aulus Gellius, and in poetry,  
An Ovid, concise, in rhetoric, wise;  
Eagle on high, that, studying the skies,  
Illuminates the realm of Aeneas,  
The Isle of Giants, where Brutus once was,  
Planting the rose, scattering the flower,  
For those who know not our tongue, Pandras,  
Masterful translator, noble Chaucer!

You are the god of love, terrestrially,  
And of the *Rose* in England, whose true name  
Derives from the Angles, historically,  
For tis *Angleterre* that we call that same;  
Such is its etymology I claim.  
You rendered that work, into good English,

Into that garden you seek to furnish  
With plants, demanded of those hereafter  
That seek your long effort to embellish,  
Masterful translator, noble Chaucer!

I ask of you to drink, and drink deeply,  
Of the true Hippocrene's brimming well,  
O'er whose source you hold authority,  
That you my feverish thirst may quell,  
For palsied I lie, in France, neath a spell,  
Until I drink those waters that restore.  
Eustache am I; a plant I send, and more:  
Take, in thanks, the prentice work, I offer,  
That, through Clifford I trust, shall reach your door,  
Masterful translator, noble Chaucer!

Great poet, to be praised your destiny,  
This one nettle in your garden, let be:  
And all I have said above, consider,  
As to your plant, and your sweet melody.  
Reply, that I might know you, privately,  
Masterful translator, noble Chaucer!

*Note: Chaucer (1342/3-1400) as well as penning his own poetry, translated Boethius' 'On the Consolation of Philosophy', and Guillaume de Lorris' and Jean de Meung's 'Roman de la Rose', into English, as well as writing a 'Treatise on the Astrolabe', which was intended to also cover astronomy and astrology, the two being interwoven at that date. In legend (vid. Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'History of the Kings of Britain'), Brutus of Troy, a descendant of Aeneas, journeyed to Britain, then Albion, the Isle of Giants. 'Pandras' is likely a form of the name Pandarus, the go-between in Chaucer's 'Troilus and Criseyde'. Chaucer by analogy acted as a go-between in linking the French language to the English. Clifford is Sir Lewis Clifford (c1338-before 1404) Knight of the Garter, and friend to both poets.*

**Ballad addressed to Péronne d'Armentières (*Après Machaut qui tant  
vous a amé*)**

After Machaut, he who loved you ever,  
Who was indeed the very flower of flowers,  
Noble poet, and most renowned maker,  
(A finer salve than Ovid for lovers),  
Who nourished me, the kindest of masters,  
In honouring the dead, indulgence lend:  
Receive me now, as your most loyal friend.

All instruments have wept and complained,  
Music has waited on his obsequies,  
While Orpheus pure silence has maintained,  
Rendered both deaf and mute at his decease.  
His sweet songs will deepen our miseries,  
As will mine, if your grace you'll not extend:  
Receive me now, as your most loyal friend.

Eustache am I, for those that seek my name.  
Alas, Péronne, you are my sole recourse,  
You that reveal but kindness, I would claim,  
Aid me, I pray, as I pursue my course.  
Accept my sad complaints, my efforts endorse.  
Revive me thus, for on you I depend:  
Receive me now, as your most loyal friend.

**Because I love with so perfect a love (*Quant je vous aym de si parfaite  
amour*)**

Because I love with so perfect a love  
That never did any love a woman so,  
May you willingly my request approve!

Else in languor am I, and naught can move  
My sorrowful heart; all is pain and woe,

Because I love with so perfect a love.

Refuse me not, lest my sad heart should prove  
A well of tears, and I mere bitterness know.  
For honour's sake, do not your grace remove,  
Because I love with so perfect a love.

**Go, my heart, for the love that in you lies (*Cuer, pour l'amour que to as  
a ton corps*)**

Go, my heart, for the love that in you lies,  
Go, tell my lady of the pain you feel;  
The fire of love, that burns you so, reveal!

A means to follow you, I'll needs devise,  
These flames so scorch me, from head to heel.  
Go, my heart, for the love that in you lies,  
Go, tell my lady of the pain you feel!

Or I must die, and you perish, likewise,  
For your fault condemned, without appeal.  
Dare you not speak; meet a woman's eyes?  
Go, my heart, for the love that in you lies!

**Oh, exchange not the time that's passed away (*Le temps passé ne mettez  
en oublie*)**

Oh, exchange not the time that's passed away  
For other delights, but remember me!  
Though your lovely face I may cease to see,

Forget not one who'll love you alway!  
The promise you made, keep faithfully;  
Oh, exchange not the time that's passed away.

Be gracious and lovely, sing, and play,  
And dance, adorned most beautifully,

Yet hold to our vow of loyalty,  
Oh, exchange not the time that's passed away  
For other delights, but remember me!

**Virelay: How can my heart endure the pain, (*Comment pourra mon  
cuer durer*)**

How can my heart endure the pain,  
The sweetest of glances yet sustain  
                    From your lovely eyes?  
Unless Fair Hope her aid supplies,  
I now lack, they'll prove this lover's bane.

Of their perilous arrows, I complain  
Wounding the heart, ever and again;  
                    Tis no surprise,  
That from their blows I may ne'er regain  
My feet, since I must die, tis plain.  
                    God, help me rise!

Let Mercy hear, and Fair Hope deign  
To comfort me, as I maintain  
                    My piteous cries!  
For should harsh Refusal ordain  
Fresh woe, I ask (tis my whole refrain):

'How can my heart endure the pain,  
The sweetest of glances yet sustain  
                    From your lovely eyes?  
Unless Fair Hope her aid supplies,  
I now lack, they'll prove this lover's bane.'

*Note: Compare Chaucer's 'Your eyen two whole slay me  
suddenly, I may the beauty of them not sustain.'*

**Joyously, with a joy that's sweet (*Joyusement, par un tresdoulx joir*)**

Joyously, with a joy that's sweet,  
A joyful life I lead, joyously,  
As one who should rejoice, tis meet,  
In a life that is lived, lovingly.

All can hear that my joy's complete,  
From my sweet song, sung gracefully!  
Joyously, with a joy that's sweet,  
A joyful life I lead, joyously.

I need naught, when I sit at your feet,  
Sweet, precious flower, since they flee,  
Trouble and sorrow, for both I greet  
With this song for you, melodiously:

'Joyously, with a joy that's sweet,  
A joyful life I lead, joyously,  
As one who should rejoice, tis meet,  
In a life that is lived, lovingly.'

**Among all the fine and pleasant places (*Sur tous les lieux c'om puet  
imaginer*)**

Among all the fine and pleasant places  
A man might dream of, that arouse delight,  
One that pleases, whose beauty embraces  
All one might wish, and gratifies the sight,  
Where one might, in every way,  
Liven the heart, in this sweet month of May,  
In woods which the nightingale doth haunt,  
Its song the sweetest of them all, I'd say,  
I know of no better place than Cachant.

Its chateau offers many a garden,  
Many a stream, many a profitable  
Vineyard, and many a rabbit-warren,  
A dovecote, and a host of arable

Fields, a grange, eight, indispensable,  
Founts, woods, a noble willow,  
A hunting chase, a fine cavern also,  
And hot springs, by the river, it doth vaunt;  
Among all domains, on this earth below,  
I know of no better place than Cachant.

A league or less from Paris you will see  
The chateau, which is well-situated,  
Just beyond the outskirts of Gentilly,  
Its enclosed park artfully created  
To rid one's heart of all dismay,  
Filled with the scent of roses, night and day,  
And irises; little fishing-boats flaunt  
Their catches there, and hosts of conies play;  
I know of no better place than Cachant.

*Note: Cachan(t), south of Paris, beyond Gentilly, in the Val-de-Marne, was a royal domain associated, historically, at one time, with Bertrand du Guesclin, who yielded tenancy to the Duke of Anjou in 1377.*

**Delightful to see, and in bearing gracious, (Tresdoux plaisir, et  
maintien gracieux)**

Delightful to see, and in bearing gracious,  
Shapely of form, and adorned most nobly,  
Charming in your desires, and memory,  
Modest of speech, and yet glancing freely,  
Such that the heart yields to love completely,  
All this, ladies, is you,  
You, with whom I am enamoured, tis true,  
More than Jason was with his Medea.  
Yet you will hide your visages from view.  
I beg you, ladies, raise your veils higher!

Then I might gaze on your faces and eyes,

The which you keep marvellously hidden,  
Though many wish to see them, I'd surmise;  
For those folds that render them forbidden,  
Cover you so none views them unbidden.

For God's sake, let such things be!  
Who invented them, should accursed be,  
Lord, let him not to my company aspire!  
Let none alive hide their sweet face from me.  
I beg you, ladies, raise your veils higher!

Oh, how strange it would be to discover,  
The springtime flowers concealed from mortal sight,  
That send forth their precious perfume ever,  
They whose pleasant savour yields delight!  
Yet tis so with you, ladies of honour.

When, in Paris, you parade,  
Your faces hidden, all in silk arrayed.  
Leave off this fashion; let us all admire  
Your features, and let beauty be displayed.  
I beg you, ladies, raise your veils higher!

My prince, all such lovely ladies, say I,  
Should reveal their faces to every eye,  
Else sight of them no man can e'er acquire.  
I would view all the charms that may apply  
To their sweet forms, and so no longer sigh:  
I beg such ladies, raise your veils higher!

**'One suffers more ills in war than in love ('Plus a de mal en armes  
qu'en amours)**

'One suffers more ills in war than in love,  
And more woes,' Tignonville doth maintain.  
'One must be ever armed, or on the move,  
In cold and stormy weather, drenched by rain,  
Pounded by hail, and often for little gain,  
Keeping watch, or charging our enemies,

Risking a sword-blow, or some disease,  
Far from home, perchance on a foreign shore,  
And dying of hunger.' The lover disagrees:  
'One suffers more ills in love than in war.

For most soldiers ply their trade willingly;  
Many a hundred thousand have done so  
For spoils, or seeking honours, gloriously,  
And thus experience less pain and woe,  
Since tis their preference to meet the foe,  
Unconstrained, and of their own volition.  
But Amor, with cut and thrust, his mission,  
Is to strike many a grieving heart full sore,  
Against their will. Such is my position:  
One suffers more ills in love than in war.

For Sweet-Glance pierces the body through,  
Skewers the heart, as, with a subtle blow,  
Fair-Welcome strikes, and then Desire, too,  
From the other side. Fair-Manner doth show,  
Yet, with Refusal, yields the answer: 'No!'  
Shame and Fear dispute, Hope doth depart.  
Do we wage noble battle, on our part?  
No, rather, with the outcome all unsure,  
A wild fracas, fought in the lover's heart:  
One suffers more ills in love than in war.'

O sovereign Prince Amor, you who know  
The paths of love and conflict, all their woe,  
All their attractions, that few men ignore,  
Hark to the clamour of each, here below!  
Judge, if you still can hear, if tis not so:  
One suffers more ills in love than in war.

*Note: Guillaume de Tignonville (d.1414), friend to Deschamps, was bailiff of Chartres, chamberlain to Charles VI and his brother Louis d'Orléans, and also a man of letters.*

**Sadness, pride, jealousy and treason (*Tristesse, orgueil, envie et traison*)**

Sadness, pride, jealousy and treason,  
Avarice, false-seeming, and idleness,  
Deceit and lies, cruel dissimulation,  
Faint-hearted cowardice, and laziness,  
To your rule, tis folly to acquiesce,  
For, through you, many a realm must decay,  
Nobility lost; its honour rendered less:  
Through you, the '*bon temps*' have fled away.

Too long have you enjoyed your ill season,  
Leaving this world in chaos and distress,  
Lacking all joy, denying consolation,  
To the good; tis that which doth so oppress.  
Now get you gone, false folk in falser dress!  
I'd love to see you sent upon your way,  
That honour might return, and noblesse.  
Through you, the '*bon temps*' have fled away.

I'd restore the reign of truth and reason,  
Love and delight, loyalty and largesse,  
Mercy, kindness, and fair remuneration,  
The chase, the joust, courage and steadfastness,  
The peal of the horn, song, dance, and finesse  
In love, for which one labours night and day.  
Depart from here, besiege not my fortress,  
Through you, the '*bon temps*' have fled away.

Prince, let your household shun abandon,  
Be good and humble, courteous to excess,  
Such that none say, whate'er the occasion,  
Through you, the '*bon temps*' have fled away.

**If all the world's virtues, all earthly grace (*Se les vertus et les graces mondaines*)**

If all the world's virtues, all earthly grace  
That ever was displayed in human form,  
All the fair folk, divine in body and face,  
Alive once more, did this our age transform,  
And all the dead authors, a living swarm,  
Could speak again, freed from mortality,  
Of ink and paper, they'd lack sufficiency  
To pen the honour her presence confers,  
The beauty, kindness, wisdom, courtesy,  
This lady owns, not mine, though I am hers.

The flame of her loveliness fills every vein  
Of my poor body, that labours fruitlessly,  
Burns in her glance, is in her eyes made plain,  
Seizing me like a fish hooked from the sea.  
No wonder I love and fear her, equally,  
Whom I see praised above every other,  
The sweetest, the most noted, she who's honour  
None can doubt, for to her each man defers.  
The sovereignty I must fear and love, ever,  
This lady owns, not mine, though I am hers.

She is the treasury of sovereign virtue,  
The mirror of all (I hold that a certainty),  
Tower of chastity, realm of all that's true,  
In whom all do find themselves shown rightly.  
She has my heart, though I deserve pity,  
Rendered jealous through my fond desire.  
Yet she knows nothing of my inner fire.  
I cry mercy; netted, my heart incurs  
But woe, when to the beauty I aspire,  
This lady owns, not mine, though I am hers.

**To you I yield a heart both fine and true, (A vous m'octroy de vray cuer  
et de bon)**

To you I yield a heart both fine and true,  
Sweet lady, who like to a Siren sings,  
Pleasing to all, graceful in all you do,  
Sovereign, with every title honour brings.  
Your house is ever full of joyous things.  
So that, most humbly, I beg you, fair one,  
Receive me! I've had no joy of Péronne.

Loving you more than Paris did Helen,  
Naught but the name of lover, I seek so,  
And shall, thus, find more than did Jason  
In Medea, or Aeneas in Dido.  
In amorous vein am I wounded, know  
Your sweetness wounds me sweet Gauteronne,  
Receive me! I've had no joy of Péronne.

And, if I love not, of songs I'll make none.  
For love of you, at the clear fount am I,  
In which Narcissus found not salvation,  
But rather death, and so I too shall die,  
If I'm not welcomed, but must ever sigh.  
Of your mercy, answer me kindly anon;  
Receive me! I've had no joy of Péronne.

*Note: Gauteronne is the female equivalent of Gauthier, a French Christian and surname of Germanic origin, corresponding to the English given name Walter.*

**He that must choose twixt two alternatives (Qui est a choix de deux  
choses avoir)**

He that must choose twixt two alternatives  
Must needs prefer the finer of the pair.  
And so must I, from any plant that lives,

Select or leaf or flower, when I compare.  
The leaf is most pleasing for its verdure,  
Easing the heart of every true lover,  
As the birds sing sweetly to each other,  
Lasting all season not some passing hour.  
Its beauty is a thing of naught however;  
More than the leaf, I ever love the flower.

For the leaf is lesser in those virtues  
Of richness and scent, worth and vigour,  
That the flower possesses, with its hues,  
Displaying the freshness of its colour,  
Its loveliness, goodness, precious odour,  
While it yields the fruit that we desire,  
And to whose possession we aspire.  
Hence, the leaf, lacking all such power,  
Scent, colour, we oft consign to the fire.  
More than the leaf, I ever love the flower.

For its worth is far greater, I believe,  
Than the leaf which is lacking in sweetness,  
And, engendering no fruit, morn or eve,  
Plays the role of a servant, more or less,  
To guard the other from the storm's excess,  
From the harm inflicted by wind and rain;  
While the flower, whose aid it doth obtain,  
Remains ever graceful, in its bower,  
And doth a pleasing loveliness maintain.  
More than the leaf, I ever love the flower.

**What's become of the Spring, April and May? (*Qu'est devenu  
printemps, avril et may?*)**

What's become of the Spring, April and May?  
Where's the fine weather I knew, at fourteen?  
My body a proud and pleasing display,  
With blonde hair, I was a sight to be seen,

When I was more loved than any has been,  
When I reigned, was honoured, in every way,  
Young and noble, fresh, and ready to play.  
Twenty-five years a sweet youth I did prove,  
And yet at thirty my colour drained away.  
Alas, I languish in the desert of love!

I've watched my blonde hair turn a shade of grey,  
Which I scarcely expected at the start,  
My face pale, thus, many that, in my day,  
I honoured, and cherished with all my heart,  
Now turn aside, and from me go apart,  
Who once the laws of friendship did obey,  
In years past. Ah! Age my poor skin you flay,  
And deal me harm, as from me you remove  
All vigour; I die, in sadness and dismay.  
Alas, I languish in the desert of love!

What then is its nature? I now will say.  
Pleasure, it lacks, and joy; not leaves of green,  
But spines, and thorns, and woes, it doth display,  
Languor and fear, painful thoughts that demean.  
The screech-owl sings her ode to death, this day;  
No other voice a presence doth betray,  
But all is sleet and snow; naught can allay  
My sadness at sweet memories which disprove  
The dream that life endures; they tell me 'Nay!':  
Alas, I languish in the desert of love!

Dream on, fair youth, as I did, yet now pay  
With sorrows that oppress. Beware! I pray  
You'll seize the hour, the sunlit sky above.  
Twenty and five the years when many a ray  
Of light I knew; at thirty none would stay.  
Alas, I languish in the desert of love!

**Is one at ease when one can't close an eye, (*Est cilz aise qui ne se puet dormir*)**

Is one at ease when one can't close an eye,  
Obliged to lie awake the whole night through,  
Plagued by lice, with children crying too,

On a mattress fit to burn, or well-nigh,  
The pillow hard, the soiled sheets hardly new?  
Is one at ease when one can't close an eye?

And then to hear naught but the breakers' sigh,  
And the hooves on the cobbles, no small few.  
Such is Calais, Granson; come, tell me true,  
Is one at ease when one can't close an eye?  
Obliged to lie awake the whole night through.

*Note: Oton de Granson, knight, diplomat, and poet, was born in Savoy, and was well known at court in both France and England, spending the better part of his career in the service of the English king.*

**Letter from a student at Orléans (*Lettres des escoliers d'Orliens*)**

From Orléans, father, I write to you.  
Dear father, my purse is empty now,  
For, without your aid, I've not a sou.  
Tis most dear to study here, I avow,  
Nor may I stay, grievous my lot, and how,  
To read of my 'Code' and my 'Digest';  
That's all over. And as for the rest,  
Ten crowns I owe to the provost here,  
I can't raise a loan, I'm sorely pressed;  
It's cash that I need; I wish you good cheer.

We poor students ever lack money.  
If we would our studies thus advance,

Our fathers, and wider family,  
Must grant us help, in dire circumstance,  
So, we need not pawn our books; finance  
Our robes and furs, and keep us honest,  
For we must needs be decently dressed,  
Or we'll look but wretched, soon, I fear.  
If you'd have me give of my very best,  
It's cash that I need; I wish you good cheer.

The wine's dear, lodgings, most everything;  
I should depart. And yet, debts must be paid,  
So that I owe naught, not a blessed thing;  
Dear father, I'd have you come to my aid!  
I'll be sent down, for certain, I'm afraid.  
Not a bone to gnaw I'll own, I attest,  
If I've not a purse right full at my breast  
Come Easter; nor in church dare appear.  
Dear father, fulfil my humble request;  
It's cash that I need; I wish you good cheer!

Dear father, to pay the tavern-keeper,  
And the baker, you'll have to dig deeper,  
The professors, officers, too, cost dear,  
Then there's the fees to pay, as ever,  
To the fair laundress, and the barber;  
It's cash that I need; I wish you good cheer.

**Riding at Hesdin, in the park, one day, (*En chevauchant par le part de  
Hesdin*)**

Riding at Hesdin, in the park, one day,  
Distraught with love, thinking of her beauty,  
Came Memory with news of my lady,  
From whom Denial keeps me far away.

That false villain doth ever growl and bray,  
While his slanderers are never far from me.

Beneath the heart they wounded me sorely,  
Riding at Hesdin, in the park, one day.

Hence, I dare not approach, in any way,  
Fair-Welcome, who could heal me completely.  
And yet I find new hope, through Memory,  
Who murmured: 'Love with a true heart, always!'  
Riding at Hesdin, in the park, one day,  
Distraught with love, thinking of her beauty.

*Note: Guillaume de Machaut, in Le Remede de Fortune, speaks of the wonders of the park at Hesdin, the castle, filled with marvellous mechanisms and devices, formerly located at Vieil-Hesdin in Artois, and built by Count Robert II of Artois (1250-1302) in 1288.*

**In the mere blink of an eye, Love seized me, (Bien m'a Amour prins au saut de la pÿe)**

In the mere blink of an eye, Love seized me,  
Suddenly, as my way I thought to wend,  
All through a glance, in which I saw my end.

That young maid, trim, elegant, and pretty,  
Sweetly her golden tresses did descend.  
In the mere blink of an eye, Love seized me.

She won my poor heart, my soul, my body,  
To her every wish my will I would bend.  
She knows it not, but I'd die for her, my friend.  
In the mere blink of an eye, Love seized me,  
Suddenly, as my way I thought to wend,  
All through a glance, in which I saw my end.

**Sweet Glance has pierced me, Sweet Thought assails me (Regart me trait et Doulz Pensers me rië)**

Sweet Glance has pierced me, Sweet Thought assails me,  
Desire assaults me, Memory does me harm.  
My lady, through her beauty, torments me,  
Fear yields me, night and day, many a qualm,  
Shame grips me, while Refusal brings alarm.  
I must die if there's no trace of Pity,  
If Sweet Hope leads me not, nor sheds her balm.  
I wait on nothing less than death, or mercy!

Alas! Amor has trapped me in his cage,  
And I can neither flee, nor find delight,  
Nor the heavens with my poor eyes engage,  
That beauty, like the sun above, doth light;  
For Ill-Talk drums in my ears, day and night,  
And, with evil slanders, pains me cruelly.  
I wait on nothing less than death, or mercy!

Sweet Pity, what has now become of you,  
And you, Freedom, and resplendent Grace?  
Come to me, and you Sweet Longing too!  
Of your goodness, Accord, let me renew,  
If these I lack, safe conduct, and so view  
Her whom I love so, whose sweet face I'd see!  
Else must this fire burn, ever and anew.  
I wait on nothing less than death, or mercy!

**Rondel: Adieu to Troyes (*Noble cité, ville tresamoureuse*)**

Noble, and most kindly of cities, too,  
I now must say adieu till I return.

Virtuous countess of Champagne, are you,  
Noble, and most kindly of cities, too.

Troyes is your name, welcoming, as you do,  
Noble fellows, ladies that praise do earn.  
Noble, and most kindly of cities, too,

I now must say adieu till I return.

**Palm of peace, and cedar of loftiness, (*Palme de paix et cedre de  
hautesse*)**

Palm of peace, and cedar of loftiness,  
Flower of the olive, lily of valour true,  
My heart, body, and soul, I give to you.

You are the tree, root of all nobleness,  
The most precious flower of old and new.  
Palm of peace, and cedar of loftiness.

I hold you to be my lady, my goddess,  
My refuge, my fortress, my tower too,  
My earthly good, to whom all praise is due,  
Palm of peace, and cedar of loftiness,  
Flower of the olive, lily of valour true.

**Amor, Amor, I thank you most humbly (*Amour, Amour, humblement  
vous mercÿe*)**

Amor, Amor, I thank you most humbly,  
And I shall prove your servant alway,  
In the name of honour, and of courtesy;  
Sweet thoughts you bring, sweet gifts you display.  
No earthly god shall I worship, night or day,  
But you, to whom I yield myself entire,  
In heart, in body. Your man am I, I say,  
Since I possess, now, all that I desire.

For sweet hopes, on the path of love, have I,  
Hopes that I hold in fief, my lord, from you,  
Of the loveliest lady, for whom I sigh,  
She of the noblest, finest form to view,  
That ever was. For this I shall prove true,  
Wishing to serve you both, through flood and fire,

And never shall my heart wander anew,  
Since I possess, now, all that I desire:

The present hope that never deserts me,  
Her sweet regard that wounds with a glance,  
The beauty of her physiognomy,  
Her gentle words that solace in advance,  
Even the sadness that hurts me, deeply,  
The longing in my heart, when I aspire,  
A longing that I'd not wish to leave me,  
Since I possess, now, all that I desire.

Prince of Love, I'll live more joyful still,  
If you consent, my spirits ever higher,  
Guarding my thoughts from every kind of ill,  
Since I possess, now, all that I desire.

**He who has never seen your noble face (*Cil qui onques encore ne vous  
vit*)**

He who has never seen your noble face,  
He loves you deeply, and longs to see you.

He lives in hopes of your most warm embrace,  
He who has never seen your noble face.

For hearing of your kindness, and your grace,  
He'd yield you, body, heart, soul, power, too,  
He who has never seen your noble face.

**My lady, I shall think on you no more (*Je ne veul plus a vous, dame,  
muser*)**

My lady, I shall think on you no more.  
And you: go seek another dupe, this day.

Too late, I see twas idle to adore.

My lady, I shall think on you no more,

Nor waste my time in hopes of what's in store,  
For you make sparrows out of birds of prey,  
My lady, I shall think on you no more.

**Farewell my heart, and my delight (*Adieu mon cuer, adieu ma joyë*)**

Farewell my heart, and my delight,  
Farewell what yields me joy outright,  
Farewell my more than perfect love,  
Farewell one that my heart doth move,  
Wherever I dwell, or day or night.

Many a tear follows my remove,  
My leaving painful, far out of sight  
Till I return, and my loyalty prove:  
Farewell my heart, and my delight.

Your gift to me was scarcely slight,  
Sweet Hope, that ever sets me right;  
And, by the grace of Heaven above,  
Naught shall grieve me, that I know of,  
While I dream of your eyes so bright.  
Farewell my heart, and my delight.

**You'll find the names of servant and master (*Les noms sarez du  
seigneur et servent*)**

You'll find the names of servant and master  
*Couched* in this rondel, such my prophecy,  
Though you must search it closely, I agree:

The first syllable of the second line however  
And the very last, should solve one mystery.  
You'll find the names of servant and master  
*Couched* in this rondel, such my prophecy.

Take three syllables of the last line moreover;  
If, in those, the answer, you, most subtly,  
Pursue, *at second glance*, a name you'll see.

*Note: Enguerrand VII (1340-1397), Sire de Coucy, Eustace Deschamps' patron, was the last Lord of Coucy. Son-in-law to Edward III of England, following his marriage to the latter's daughter, Isabella, he was subsequently granted several English estates, and the title Duke of Bedford. He died of the plague at Bursa, after participating in the battle of Nicopolis, fought during the failed crusade of 1396.*

**I once lived and dwelt on virtuous ground (*Je fu jadiz de terre vertueuse*)**

I once lived and dwelt on virtuous ground,  
Born in Vertus, that well-renowned place,  
Where a most gracious town was to be found;  
Famous the vineyards that its soil did grace.  
From there I take my name, its fields' embrace;  
Tis that of *Eustache*, granted in infancy,  
Yet all is burnt, and scorched is its sad face,  
Mere *Ash des Champs*, it seems that I must be.

I had a house, and land, outside Vertus,  
A gracious site, to which I gave much care,  
Many were those who lived in joy there too,  
Maison des Champs, the name that it did share,  
Thanks be to God, the fields were fertile there,  
Yet the English burnt the crops, wantonly.  
Two thousand francs they've cost me, I declare.  
Mere *Ash des Champs*, it seems that I must be.

Alas! My land in ruins, devastated,  
I am but desolate, destroyed, distraught.

I must flee the home that I created  
(Rendered dangerous), comforted by naught.  
I shall be exiled from all that I wrought,  
Wretched, condemned to utter poverty,  
If, my lords, no pity's displayed at court.  
Mere *Ash des Champs*, it seems that I must be.

*Note: Eustache was born, Eustache Morel, at Vertus, in Champagne, c1340. The town was set on fire by the English forces in 1380, and it was not till 1388 that he received funds from the king to rebuild his house and restore his estate. The play on the last syllable of his Christian name displayed here is not present in the original text.*

**Come, celebrate my birthday now! (*Venez a mon jubilé*)**

Come, celebrate my birthday now!  
Fifty years have passed away,

The good times are all gone, I trow.  
Come, celebrate my birthday now!

My body's feeble, forced to bow.  
Adieu! Remember me, I pray!  
Come, celebrate my birthday now!  
Fifty years have passed away.

**No one feels joy in their sixtieth year (*Pour soixante ans ne doit nulz  
avoir joyë*)**

No one feels joy in their sixtieth year  
Of human life, that, one miserable day,  
Towards heaven or hell, will lead the way.

Twenty years, youth's perilous path, in fear,  
We tread, with all of hellfire on display.  
No one feels joy in their sixtieth year.

Twenty seeking wealth, that costs us dear,  
Ten straying, ten in which, with pain, we pay.  
Oh, defend yourselves from old age, I say!  
No one feels joy in their sixtieth year.

**O the sweet air, and land, of France! (*O doulz air et païs de France*)**

O the sweet air, and land, of France!  
I long for you more than I can say.  
Dull and cold, it goes on its way,

The air here, that strikes like a lance.  
I lack good wine, and fish alway.  
O the sweet air, and land, of France!

In Bohemia, detained by chance,  
My health is worsened, night and day.  
Grant swift return to my own, I pray.  
O the sweet air, and land, of France!

**Ballad on the Birth of Flowers (*Doulez Zephirus qui faiz naistre les  
flours*)**

Sweet Zephyrus, that makes the flowers to grow,  
And you, Dawn, and Autumn, Spring and Summer,  
Weep with me, as in grief my sad tears flow,  
For the fair garden that she did water,  
Calliope, from Delphi's spring; moreover,  
Of flowers, a garland she wove, sweetly,  
So perfumed, so precious, of such beauty,  
That its scent would ease every ill and woe,  
Till the wind bore it away, suddenly:  
Oh, what a bitter thing, to lose it so.

For twenty years those fair flowers I grew,  
Upon the ground that Ovid once created,

Sowing the seeds of Socrates' virtue,  
And Seneca's. There Virgil was fated  
To labour, with Orpheus' notes twas sated.  
That garland's circle was of Poetry,  
Rhetoric rounded its crown completely,  
Adorning it with noble names also,  
So pleasantly, that I mourn it deeply:  
Oh, what a bitter thing, to lose it so.

I pray to Juno, true goddess of love,  
And the Wind-God, who's stolen all my fruit,  
And all the deities of the air above,  
To aid me, ere my work be rendered mute.  
For my sad heart's unfit for the pursuit  
Of its replacement, nor would it excel  
At such a task. Think of Eustache Morel;  
Render my treasure, or a copy show!  
Hold it, if you must, but for a spell.  
Oh, what a bitter thing, to lose it so.

**Ballad in Reply to Christine de Pisan (*Muse eloquent entre les IX,*  
*Christine*)**

Muse eloquent amidst the Nine, Christine,  
To whom I know no equal in our day,  
For skill acquired, and principles, I mean.  
From God derives the science you display.  
Your epistles, your books, a fine array,  
I've read, which treat of high philosophy,  
And the letter but now you sent to me  
Confirms your deep knowledge at a glance,  
Whose abundance multiplies, endlessly,  
Alone, in your works, in this realm of France.

God granted you the mark of Solomon,  
That which he asked of Him, a wise heart,  
Your studies following the path whereon

Your father started you, of science and art,  
Thomas of Pizzano, who, for his part,  
Was learned in all works of astronomy.  
Charles the Fifth knew of his mastery,  
Sought for him, and his status did advance.  
Thus, the liberal arts you followed closely;  
Alone, in your works, in this realm of France.

Ah! What honour amongst women you earn,  
As amongst men! And of your school am I,  
You who condemn that sin of which we learn,  
The root whose fruit makes all the world to sigh,  
You speak of in your letter I have by,  
For which I must thank you most profusely.  
Make yourself more fully of my party,  
I, who, in all ways, pay you obeisance,  
And find here, for those ills, a remedy;  
Alone in your works, in this realm of France.

O fair sister, I, Eustache, beg you humbly,  
As your servant, to be of your company,  
And so, gain knowledge, by that circumstance.  
It would enhance my life, endlessly;  
Boethius at Pavia, are you to me;  
Alone in your works, in this realm of France.

*Note: The ballad is a reply to a rhymed epistle sent by Christine (dated 10th February 1403), in imitation of his style, criticising the 'ill-governed' world. Deschamps, the peer of Chaucer, here acts as the literary link between Machaut's generation and Christine's. Her father, Thomas da Pizzano (near Bologna), was invited to Charles V's court as his astrologer, and accepted the position there in 1368. He was also learned in medicine and law, having studied at both Bologna and Venice.*

**All you alive in this world of woe (*Vous qui vivez a present en ce monde*)**

All you alive in this world of woe,  
You that reign sovereign in virtue,  
Is your hour of death e'er in your view?

Your fathers are buried deep below,  
Consumed by worms, sans lance or shield true,  
All you alive in this world of woe,  
You that reign sovereign in virtue!

Think on it, and chasten yourself so,  
For tis but grey hairs that you pursue,  
Naked and cold we die, pallid of hue!  
All you alive in this world of woe.

**What's become of David and Solomon, (*Ou'est devenu David et  
Salemon*)**

What's become of David and Solomon,  
The Maccabee, Joshua, Methuselah,  
Holofernes, Alexander, and Samson,  
Caesar, Pompey the Great, and Hector?  
Where is rich Croesus, the fair King Arthur,  
Hercules, Charlemagne, and Godfrey?  
Ptolemy, Darius, Persia's ruler?  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

What of Dionysus, bringer of woe,  
The tyrant; Job, Tobias, and further,  
Hippocrates, Aristotle and Plato,  
Judith, the fair Penelope, Esther,  
Pallas, Juno, Dido, Medea,  
Guinevere, Helen, and all her beauty,  
Palamedes, Tristan, Iseult's lover?  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

Where is that brave heart, Lancelot,  
And Theseus, that abroad did wander,

And Diomedes. Is Jason forgot,  
He that the Golden Fleece did recover?  
And Romulus, of fair Rome the founder?  
Where's Saladin, who fought so wisely,  
That Saracen, bold mover and shaker?  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

Where's he who conquered all Aragon?  
King Mérovech, Clovis famed forever?  
Where's the ruler that founded Avignon,  
Or he who built Paris beside her river,  
Reims, or Rouen? Their lives are over.  
None wins, on this earth, immortality,  
Whether richer than others or wiser;  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

The good deeds we do depart with the soul;  
Fame lasts, an example to the inheritor.  
No other reward had these; Death's toll  
Of the living is likely to grant no better;  
And all that work ill, to folly sink ever,  
All those that are mired in mere villainy.  
Those names that I have cited, remember:  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

Prince, today, the fool is made master,  
Audacity rules, the greedy grow fatter;  
They flaunt their full paunches, as we see,  
Without a thought for their fate hereafter.  
So, seek what's good; for, as to the former,  
They're dead. This world is but vanity.

**Ballad on the Changing Climate etc. (*Les temps, les ans, les meurs, les gens*)**

The age, the days, the folk, their ways,  
The lives of every animal,

The elements, the crops we raise,  
The aspects of things corporal,  
The virtues named as cardinal,  
The trees, the fruit, the fish we eat,  
The meadows, vineyards, fields of wheat,  
The reproduction of each creature,  
Diminishes. This Earth complete,  
All things, now, forego their nature.

Summer, autumn, winter, spring,  
Our climate, all things temporal,  
Are altered, altering everything,  
Now drawn to sin, in general,  
All seek pleasure, precious metal,  
Prone to envy, pride, detraction,  
Depravity, or gross inaction.  
Greed in every mind doth feature.  
The end of the world in action,  
All things, now, forego their nature.

Faith and loyalty are done for,  
Through our sins, and to our shame,  
The heavens grant us, conflict, war,  
In royalty and religion's name.  
On us they bring, for those same,  
Bitter cold, and inundation,  
Pestilence, midst dissipation,  
Mortal sickness, famine, ever  
Careless as to our salvation.  
All things, now, forego their nature.

Prince, if we but reflected on  
Our sin, and punishment, all one,  
For which heaven harms the creature,  
We would mend our ways, have done,  
Ere we must perish, neath the sun:  
All things, now, forego their nature.

## **The End of the Selected Poems of Eustache Deschamps**