

Adam de la Halle

Chansons, Rondeaux, Motets

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Introduction

Adam de la Halle (c1247-c1287) also known as Adam d'Arras, and Adam le Bossu, poet and composer, and considered the last of the troubadours, was probably born in the city of Arras in Picardy, of which his father Henri was an established citizen. Adam was educated at the Cistercian Abbey of Vaucelles, near Cambrai, and joined the household of Robert II, Count of Artois (a nephew of Louis IX of France, and creator of the great park at Hesdin mentioned by Guillaume de Machaut, and one of the many who perished at the Battle of the Golden Spurs) with whom he probably travelled to Naples, and there attended the court of Robert's uncle, Charles of Anjou (brother to Louis IX, and King of Sicily). Adam wrote two secular musical dramas, possibly the first such of the period, and a number of chansons, rondels and motets for all of which the music is extant, as well as various other pieces. He appears to have studied polyphonic composition at the University of Paris (founded by Robert de Sorbonne in 1253). His works anticipate the French 14th century developments that led to those of Guillaume de Machaut, and display a like mastery of the language of courtly love. In these translations the rhyme-scheme has been varied in places due to the paucity of rhymes in English, while seeking to retain the robust flavour of the originals.

'Robins m'aime, Robin m'a,
Robins m'a demandee, si m'ara.
Robins m'acata cotele
D'escarlare bonne et bele,
Souskanie et chainturele. A leur i-va!
Robins m'aime, Robin m'a,
Robins m'a demandee, si m'ara.'

'Robin's am I, Robin loves me,
Robin has asked, his shall I be.
Robin has bought me, for my own,
A pretty smock, that's neatly sewn,
A robe, a belt that's mine alone. Along, with me!
Robin's am I, Robin loves me,

Robin has asked, his shall I be.'

(Marion's first song from Adam de la Halle's secular musical drama 'Li gieux de Robin et Marion' or in modern French 'Le Jeu de Robin et Marion')

Chansons

I: Of the amorous heart I'd sing (D'amourous cuer voel canter)

Of the amorous heart I'd sing,
So as to earn my ease.
I can dare no other thing
For one hard to please,
From whom there is no parting,
Though she assails me sorely
If she seeks to ignore me,
So smitten, truly,
I think of her, nor can cease
From loving.

She's wise, in reprimanding
One who's gone astray;
So lovely on first viewing,
Whate'er they might say,
There's no hope of leaving.
For how could I forget her,
She, of such great honour,
You, vile folk ever,
Who'd have me from the true way,
Go turning?

No grace that's of her giving
Shall I receive; it's true
She slays me; though, yet living,
My hope I still renew.
Recourse there is no knowing,
For since the day I saw her,
Delight dwells in me; ever
The great desire I treasure,
Of once more that sweet view,
Regaining.

Oft one who proves demanding
Wins but refusal,
While lower sinks in standing,
One who's too humble.
So, I suffer, without asking,
In the hope of finding grace,
And consent my fate to face,
Since the victor's place
Escapes, oft, those who stumble
While hastening.

Truly, they'd see me losing
Of life's joy my share,
Who'd commend my quitting
She who is so fair,
Whom all should be praising.
Since, by my faith, I've never
Believed folk that forever
Envy; so, to her,
I pray, that she'll show her care;
Ease may bring.

A gift of song to her I'd bring,
My lovely lady.
Gladly she would hear me sing;
Hope offering daily –
Which is most comforting –
And the virtue within her.
So, I deem none worthier;
Many are richer
In grace, for her courtesy
Frequenting.

**II: The pleasant ills I feel do not require (Le plaisant mal que je sens
n'exige pas)**

The pleasant ills I feel do not require
That I, as yet, of singing must be cured,
For I love deeply, heart filled with desire,
Hope too, for suffering I have long endured.
By pleading I'll not stir my lady's ire,
Great wonder it doth afford,
With rejection its reward,
That any should brave the fire.

Fools place their trust in imagination:
One often sees those who, in hope of gain,
Dare that which deprives them of their station;
So that I fear to ask of her again,
For I'd rather spend life in this fashion,
Remembering joy, and not pain,
Than such fierce desire maintain
That I lose all, through passion.

I do not deny that, ever, lady
I have sought to win your condescension,
Your aid, fair seeming, sans villainy,
That might ease me of the ills I mention,
Whether that might be in part or wholly;
But think not your attention
To gain, lack all pretension
To tell you my thoughts, truly,

Unless your gentle heart, lady, grants me
The power those sentiments to avow
That in my heart's depths rise eternally:
For no silence then would my heart allow
Whatever the answer then granted me;
For what mercy doth endow,
That she grants to whom I bow,
Strengthening the will endlessly.

My noble lady, gracious and lovely,

How then may any resist the power
Of your beauty? I'm full of jealousy,
For my poor heart succumbed that very hour
When your bright, loving face I first did see.
Sweet life be now your dower,
Ere harsh death doth me devour,
In your service, where I'd be!

III: I've no other fair reward (Je n'ai autre retenanche)

I've no other fair reward,
From my love, except my song,
And what sweet hope doth afford,
Which in me is ever strong,
When I think long,
On what slays me, the beauty,
And the glance that doth belong
To the sweet face that I see,
Both clear and strong,
Such that all whom she's among
Her captives be.

There is no sweeter torment
Than in hope to live and die;
I've no ill, I rest content
In suffering for such, say I.
To cast an eye
On her form is such delight,
That if any should be nigh
Of those who deny my right,
They too would sigh
With love, at her glance so bright,
Her wisdom high.

Those found the most capable
Of abstinence, wise, patient,
Would be the least culpable,

In showing their fond intent,
Their longing bent
On my lady, whom I serve.
All worth she doth represent,
So, think not that I deserve,
Since I consent,
To be cause for wonderment;
In thrall, observe.

Such is of Love the power
He'll make the man who abstains,
Desirous in full measure;
Courage fills the coward's veins,
And Love constrains
The wise to think they'll profit
From what they flee, which pains.
Nor has the mind within it,
Aught that remains
Fixed, that sight of her sustains
But a minute.

Ah! Lady of such great worth,
Greater than e'er I can say,
Sweetest, noblest on this Earth,
Wise in word and deed alway,
I serve each day
With joyous heart, faithfully,
Though the song I sing and play
Is heard not, by you, truly,
Howe'er I pray:
Your heart matches in no way,
The face I see!

Slander the sight denies me
Of her today,
So, this, my song, must convey
My loyalty.

IV: He lacks true wisdom who complains forever (Il manque de sagesse celui qui épargne)

He lacks true wisdom who complains, forever,
Of pain and woe from which he wins advantage:
Nor do I see that he can love well ever,
Who's unprepared to suffer for love's wage.
He that suffers not, and lacks true courage,
Should never mix in the affairs of love,
For he shall find no profit, who doth prove
His heart one that doth faithlessness encourage.

He who Love's praise seeks never to forgo,
Cannot, in serving so, be brought to shame.
Who serves well, feels the benefit also;
Who ill, tis right dishonour mar his name.
He is not wise who doth perform that same,
The service of his lady, with false love,
Each must himself from such ill acts remove,
Be one who makes not loyalty a game.

True it is that Love attains every prize,
And every brave exploit to him is due;
He arms his own, all cruelty denies;
All know to him my service will accrue:
I shall, to the rules of Love, be ever true,
Nor could I seek to spend my life more sweetly,
My worth derives from such thought completely,
And joyous hope, that soothes my heart anew.

No small thing the ill that constrains me:
Witness my pallid and discoloured face;
I owe it to your heart, that ne'er ordains me
Though I ask not a thing, one moment's grace,
I who, in serving you, e'er know my place.
That which you've obliged me to endure,

Would drive another to despair, or more;
For all that, I'd do naught that brings disgrace.

Mercy, my lady! Whose loveliness has won
My heart, that ever shows you faithful homage!
Since tis true, now, that you are the only one
Who has the power to tend and heal the damage
Love has brought, and so restore my courage,
Seek then to comfort me with but a glance!
And let me not be harmed by circumstance,
For timely aid ensures us timely passage.

Howe'er, to me, my lady shall prove savage,
To accomplish her request, I yet advance
Simply to offer her, her wrath to chance,
My song, which humbly bears my message.

**V: Alas! There are none, now, who know (Helas! Il n'est mais nus qui
aint)**

Alas! There are none, now, who know
How to love as one should love
Every lover feigned love doth show,
Waits not a day his suit to move.
On her guard, each one should prove
Whom men haunt so;
For no woman's praised, to her woe,
Except as none do her reprove!

A lover will restrain his power
Only while he demands her!
For if he wins her, from that hour
He'll claim he doth command her,
And she'll not a word dare utter,
Unless he says.
Alas! How sad, they yield always,
Though they deserve far better!

Who doth a pallid look maintain,
And murmurs his speeches sadly,
Loves not, for that he doth complain,
Or doth spend his largesse widely.
Many claim a lover falsely,
Though lacking one.
So, a woman, ere she is won,
Should try a man's feelings closely.

She's at fault who doth her lover
Too much torment, because of pride,
And he, if he doth mar her honour.
The middle road we all should ride:
Dedalus who on wings did glide,
Teaches us so,
And his son, who did folly show,
And flew too high and, failing, died.

Naught yet have I won through loving,
Nor dare request, nor prayer advance,
Though my heart is ever burning,
Rather I live but for her glance,
And sigh and hope, as in a trance:
Such are my days!
He will find naught but ill, always,
Who's ill content with circumstance.

My sweet lady, one should but fear
A polished tongue.
Such folk I dread, who've ever sung
That which may harm one I hold dear.

**VI: Alas! There are none, now, know not (Helas! Il n'est mais nus qui
n'aint)**

Alas! There are none, now, know not

To love more than they ever ought.
Ill I consider my sad lot,
That ever to sing a word I sought
For woman, since but tears it brought
Through perfidy.
Friends, and study, and mastery,
I have lost by paying them court.

Love it is naught but bitterness
Which it engenders, to speak true.
Love stifles reason, tis foolishness,
Love makes the sufferer pursue
Madness, of all and every hue,
In his folly,
Deeming reason melancholy.
Heed Love and less clear grows the view!

None wins aught by his fond service
To his lady, or by faithfulness.
But the deceivers who feign bliss,
And so lie their way to success,
Or with fine gifts false love express,
Such find lovers.
While noble heart, shame discovers
That dare not beg, though in distress.

In love there lies many an ill,
But naught, for all that, is to blame
But woman, her inconstant will,
Man may trust not, to her shame.
One day she'll love, the next will maim:
Such is man's lot!
Shame on you, Love, if you do not
Repay them for that heartless game!

Those fools that are smitten by love,
Such is the life that doth await:

If she a tormentor doth prove,
Her lover must endure his fate,
And she also, if she hears men bait
Her, mockingly.
Yet each should ne'er seek to win free,
But help the other, and not hate.

Yet I curse not Love, nor my state,
Though harsh it be,
For I must live this life you see,
Due to my folly, which is great.

**VII: I'm forbidden ever to trust my heart (On me deffent que mon
coeur pas ne croie)**

I'm forbidden ever to trust my heart,
And yet I shall, for it deserves my trust!
Joy and delight it brings me, for its part,
For Love it sent to me, and Love is just,
And to my being doth entrust
The pleasure it finds in the sight
Of her form and face, with the bright
Glance from her eyes, those of one whom I must
Beg for aid, and ne'er show mistrust.

If my heart had not led me on my way,
I might then have missed this delight I know.
Yet I think that others do honour pay,
And I fear lest she loves others, also.
I lack surety, to my woe;
And, to banish uncertainty
I'd wish my hope ever to be
That love to none she did ever show:
Let her lovers the same path go!

I'd be quit of these doubts, that make me sigh,
If but one glance of pity should reach me,

From my lady's bright eyes as she passed by,
Nor would I have doubted, most certainly,
If she'd heard me, with sympathy,
When I spoke of my suffering.
I know not what thought it should bring,
When the harshness of her manner I see,
But that she keeps fond company.

Alas! Pride in her power deters her
From loving me. Yet I render her grace:
Other pursuits have more to offer her,
It seems, she disdains my choice, my place.
Yet I pray that she may embrace
The memory, being so high,
And of such greater worth than I,
Of the torments every hour I face,
Whene'er she holds me in disgrace.

Sweet lady, I used to be so tender,
But through my suffering you've hardened me.
I thought, once, ease you might engender,
But the more twas earned, the more it did flee.
Your sweet regard you promised me,
For my solace, without reserve,
And yet your heart, I now observe
Takes pride in my sorrows, arrogantly,
While scorning my woes, utterly.

**VIII: I feel within myself a love renewed (Je sench en moi l'amour
renouveler)**

I feel within myself my love renewed
That did make me suffer such sweet malaise
That, out of my deep longing, song ensued;
My power to sing returns, and mind obeys.
Fair is the ill that lights my days,
And yet Love's is a sorry game, say I,

For he has set my hopes too high,
And all my thoughts: tis how he plays!

Yet worthy of pardon is that error;
For when a lady's proud, and nobly born,
Fair, and fine, and honours good folk, ever,
She merits a love that should such grace adorn.
And then she must, she will not, scorn
A poor man, surely, but show him mercy,
Of her honour, for it must be:
Sweetest scent is by fairest borne.

And yet I must pay still for loving her:
My heart I've lost, my lady's contrary,
And you too, Love, who would have me suffer,
Leading others on to love my lady!
Such folk can never silent be,
And even Pity flies so far away.
There's misery enough, they say,
Before a moment's joy we see!

Lady, your glances made me hope for joy,
Yet your lips ne'er ceased joy to dispel,
Withdrawing the grace your eyes did employ.
Their sweetness doth imply all shall be well;
Kindness in such a face doth dwell,
So sweet it is, so loving, and so fair,
How could anger e'er come there,
Where laughter weaves its subtle spell.

Folk, from, afar are drawn to those sweet eyes,
Many a precious reliquary they hold.
Un-kissed, untouched must they be, by the wise,
To dream of such must e'en prove over-bold.
Passion one must hide or disguise,
Before such jewels, and take care to be
Free of the fool's audacity,

In speech or drawing near the prize.

**IX: It pleases me more to suffer love's woes (Li maus d'amer me plaist
mieux a sentir)**

It pleases me more to suffer love's woe,
Than joy's delights please many a lover;
My hope is worth others' pleasure I know,
Love cheers me so with all he doth offer.
For I'm pleased the more, the more I suffer,
And, gladly, I sing;
As happy in everything
As if I'd advanced further.

For such is my amorous memory
Of the best in this world, I'm subject to,
And yet if, now, rewarded I might be
With that which Desire would lead me to,
Hands clasped, smiling, I'd take that too.
Though the gift is great:
Wise and worthy of his fate
Must be him it's granted to.

And so, to my hope I must ever cling.
To own such a gift I am not worthy,
Unless her heart my lady yet might bring
To the point where she might view with pity
The service she has, and has had, from me,
Steadfastly, alway,
That is, if for but one day
Of her I might have mercy.

Lady, Love, both do make my heart suffer,
My heart that yields not to any blow,
Though I can't flee, or escape it ever,
For you hold my heart. Oh, if I also
Held yours, then I'd fear less every woe,

The slanders I hear,
For you are so wise, your ear
Would soon block their path, I know.

Ah! True heart and free, one born to be praised,
In manner noble, reserved, and worthy,
Accept my song, though tis woefully phrased,
For tis right to believe this, most truly,
That I'd prefer it were seen less clearly
That I'm full of woe,
That you do avoid me so,
Who'd speak more eloquently.

Song, go now, where I do not dare to be!
Go there in my guise,
And salute those laughing eyes,
For which, my heart fled from me!

X: The sweet ill now revives me (Li dous maus mi renouvelle)

The sweet ill now revives me:
With the breath of Spring,
Good reason I have to sing,
At the news it brings, truly,
For never felt any, surely,
Such ill or such woe, for one
So fair, so wise; no for none.
Thus, it must be:
That I now wait on mercy.

I've been my own master
For two years and more
Free of the power therefore
Of one lady or other,
Bright eyes, pale cheeks, however,
And those smiling crimson lips
My own powers do eclipse.

*Thus, it must be:
That I now wait on mercy.*

The goat so scrapes the gravel,
That he sleeps but ill:
So, it is with lovers still!
One so enjoys the revel
That but a single candle
Will kindle an ardent love:
And so, with me it doth prove.
*Thus, it must be:
That I now wait on mercy.*

Sweet face, and fresh young beauty,
Fair in every way;
A heart of diamond, I would say,
Twould melt with joy right swiftly.
By the stream, where I did see
You, was I marred, yesterday,
My heart lost to me alway.
*Thus, it must be:
That I now wait on mercy.*

XI: Why complain of Love anew? (Pour coi se plaint d'Amours nus?)

Why complain of Love anew?
Yet of Love we should complain,
For he grants far more, tis true,
Than reason could e'er obtain,
Or faithful service.
Undeserving, yet we wish
To receive both love and joy;
Who their wish does not enjoy,
Speaks ill of Amor,
And of her who, evermore,
Doth but courtesy employ.

He who'd be a loyal lover,
One that to Love would submit,
Wearies not of serving ever,
But his loyalty grows with it,
Faithful unto death.
Of pleas he'll dare not a breath,
Yet, if he doth speak, perchance,
And she but scorns his advance,
His heart will better
Sorrow endure, and suffer,
His pleasure to enhance.

Of those whom Love doth oppose,
One sees more renounce their arms,
And so, lay them down than those
Whom Love e'er turns pale, and harms,
And makes to suffer.
All pursue their wish ever,
Who'd win aid, as their share.
Tis why a woman needs care
For her true honour;
Who makes her slave her master
Breeds enemies everywhere.

Noble heart and generous,
Blessed with a wealth of virtue,
Body wise and decorous,
Silencing all slander too,
Glance that entering in
Captures the heart within,
Humble, and wise, and well-raised,
None there is, of you appraised,
Who would wish you ill;
For before your great worth still
All stand humble, and amazed.

When I see you, I am dumb,

And feel my vigour fail me
Such that I cannot, in sum,
Address you, nor bravely
Feign to hide my heart.
I tremble in every part,
And then my tongue is bound fast,
As if some faerie had cast
A spell upon me;
And, at every turn, I see
My sorrows are not past.

Song, be of the company
Of my lady, till, for me,
You shall hearing earn!
If chased away, yet return
To sing for her, and promptly.

**XII: My thanks, Amor, for the sweet weight of woe (Merchi, Amours,
de le douche dolour)**

My thanks, Amor, for the sweet weight of woe
With which your lordship burdens my poor heart,
All for the loveliest, this world can show,
That may be loved and served, with toil and art!
Never, for my part,
Did I deserve these, of you;
The fair, and noble, and true
Gifts that you gladly impart,
Such that I ask no ease of your swift dart.

I hold to hope, to love, and to desire,
For my delight, if these a man can taste
Who, at the same time, cannot yet aspire,
To win his lady's love, so ill he's placed;
For memories traced,
Within the heart, shall erase
Disdain, hatred, ills, always,

Scorn, and anger, and distaste,
Such that with youthful joy tis ever graced.

Lady of noble mien, and gentle heart,
Lovely of form, right pleasant to the sight,
Glowing with nature's colours, and not art,
With eyes that smile, ever shining bright,
Trembling, from great height
I fall, by fear rendered low,
Setting my love, and boldly so,
On a gem that brings delight,
And through Love's power, that surely none can fight.

I ask sweet mercy of you, fair lady,
For my love of you I can't contain.
I have not the strength, for I pay dearly,
To seek to render amorous feelings plain.
Speech I must restrain:
We are no equals, I know;
I shall not be rescued so,
But perish ere I complain,
Unless from you true pity I obtain.

Lady, mercy I beg of you, if ever
A noble heart took pity on a martyr;
Yet no word of pain or fear I utter,
Nor despair, however long I suffer;
For such great pleasure
I take in my pleasant ill,
True joy it brings me still;
Nor would I be cured, either,
For my sweet hope other's joy doth better.

**XIII: Folk often ask what is this Love, indeed (On demande mout
souvent qu'est Amours)**

Folk often ask what is this Love, indeed,

That leaves many a man mute, thereby.
But those who truly know, they have no need
For any but themselves to make reply,
Or they love not, so say I,
Or if they do, live, in woe,
A life like those who but show
They are full of foolishness,
For a master they confess,
But who that is fail to know!

For Love is a longing everlasting,
In amorous heart, that loves another,
To which Desire does its sweet savour bring,
In which fair Hope delights the true lover.
To be loved, doth grace offer;
From a glance doth love begin,
Follow, and worth lies within.
Treason love hates, and folly,
And makes each seem, as we see,
The flower of the world to win.

As for me, who think of naught else but this,
I have proved these things true, assuredly;
For I have felt that Love provides such bliss,
And in his service known much certainty,
Except for the surety
Of my winning true love still:
Hope promises that I will,
That ever grants hearts courage.
And until Love pays my wage
Why then should I think of ill?

Ever one sees the traitors are betrayed,
And a true woman heeds not what they say,
For she can tell a false from true court paid.
Who loves honour sees this, many a day,
And no true lover, I say,

Will e'er chastise his love.
Mere jealousy it doth prove,
For he who yet knows her worth
What fear has he, on this earth,
In regard to her, thereof?

Lady rich in joy, of aid the treasure,
Enriching the honour of the lowest,
Beauty's perfection and its true measure,
Solace to those who would to worth attest,
Gentle heart, scorn not in jest
A love that's free of treachery!
Love tilts his sharp lance at me,
And circles me where I stand;
Your glances, from either hand,
Show kindness though, and pity.

Song, pray he'll sing you, my lord
Of Saint-Venant; in honour
Of Love, when he has leisure,
Where a hearing you're assured!

**XIV: So, on my return to that sweet country (Au repairier en la
douche countree)**

So, on my return to that sweet country,
Where I left my heart when I did go,
All my sweet sorrow now returns to me,
And thus, prevents me singing of my woe.
Since a single memory so
Fills me else with happiness,
Why cannot I the like express
When I am where I may see
She who exalts me?

They say my manner is not changed at all
At the feast with which they honour me;

According to the ills their thoughts recall,
Must lovers show delight, and ever be.
How could a heart feel, tell me,
Such sweet ill, and not know joy?
The least means Love doth employ
Is to make us wish for grace;
Such then is my place.

And this pain pleases, so agrees with me,
That I now find joy's savour lies therein;
We show our thanks for whate'er may be,
Given the source from which it doth begin:
Thanks, from me, then it must win,
My ill; better is my fate
Than loving at lower rate,
Nor did a heart ever fill
With so sweet an ill.

Beloved by all the world, noble lady,
For your virtues that can ne'er prove less,
Sweet figure, desirable and lovely,
Deign to retain me, and my service bless!
I seek no reward; no less
Do I dare ask or think it;
I know I lack all merit,
Unworthy, ever, of you,
Unless Love proves true,

To me, and your nobility, that shows
In the smiling glance that your eyes display,
In that fair visage that with beauty glows,
Such that eyes and heart can ne'er turn away.
Rather, in such a way
I see, and long for you, that I
Ne'er saw on earth, or on high,
Such a vision, so intense,
It stirs every sense.

Song, I now shall send you there,
To where she is, if I but dare;
Go, Love, for I'm unmanned:
Place this in her hand!

XV: Amor, has me so sweetly (Amours m'ont si doucement)

Amor, has me so sweetly
Blessed, that no ill comes near me:
So, I will serve, loyally,
Amor, and my true love, he
Whose I shall be
And gift him my heart, and see
That ne'er, whate'er come to me,
Otherwise, shall my love be;
Rather my youth, endlessly,
Spend serving faithfully.

And it matters naught to me
If I am taunted cruelly,
Since my will I work, freely,
And enjoy thus, frequently,
His company.
No wind or storm troubles me,
I bear myself so wisely,
And behave so shrewdly,
None can cast a stone at me,
Or utter villainy.

You have asked me, ceaselessly,
My love, nay, begged of me:
If you love me loyally,
Shall I love you equally,
Or more deeply;
But every woman, firstly,
Must bear herself full proudly:

And, in her defence, must she
Ne'er cease her lover to see
Begging, insistently.

**XVI: Within me, I've a strong desire to sing (De chanter ai volenté
curieuse)**

Within me I've a strong desire to sing
For the one to whom I owe loyalty.
Yet the cost it seems is great, in serving,
For, though I know not why, she seems to be
Far too ready to dismiss my singing.
If she in fairer mood I could but see,
As that in which, most truly,
I beg, with heart so willing.

Alas! Amor, so artful, and so subtle,
You who own to the lordship, still,
Why to me allow her to be cruel,
She whom I cannot see, such is your will?
There's a reason she is so ungentle,
She loves another, my love she doth kill,
Who with love all hearts doth fill,
Nor for courtship need whistle.

She's wise, and good, and fair, and full of grace;
All show her loyalty for her virtue,
Many a night of woe I've had to face,
And many a word of blame have I had too,
Yet she of care for me shows not a trace,
It's clear no woman doth seek a view
Of my humble face, anew,
While others do seek my place.

Yet it is not right a lady decline
Fair-seeming, if she cares for her honour,
For fair-seeming costs naught, I opine,

And grants the poor man a hint of treasure.
I say not that my lady's aid is mine,
For perchance I lose it, in some measure,
Who oft am found in error;
So, far from her, must pine.

She yet doth ill, failing my love to prove:
Then she'd see to whom she might offer grace;
And yet I know not how her heart to move:
A fine lady must ne'er herself abase.
I fear Lucifer's pride she doth approve,
Who, in his beauty, sought the highest place,
And that she'll but scorn my face
Who loves her with a faithful love.

Song, go ask why she doth not reward me
According to my love, that's ever true.
Since, once she then has heard you,
Good, I pray God, may come to me.

XVII: My sweet lady and Amor (Ma douce dame et Amours)

My sweet lady, and Amor,
Make me to love my life so,
A year seems a day, no more,
And suffering a joy to know.
Yet I would not, even so,
Withstand such ills as annoy,
If the hope of future joy,
Did not bear me company.

That hope is my sanctuary,
While mercy on me attends.
There I find delight, you see,
Nor to aught else my thought tends:
The proof is that, oft, my friends
Salute me as I'm dreaming,

Yet I return not their greeting,
'God bless you!' nor make amends.

Lady, as the lily white,
So tender, and delicate,
The best sight of every sight,
Of courtesy the advocate,
God has granted you so great
A share of fair gifts that we
Would need another, surely,
The least one to demonstrate.

Who would not change their colour,
On viewing your majesty,
Your dignity and honour,
Endowed with which we see
You ennobled, endlessly!
Those who are but liars must
On hearing her speak, prove just,
And so, amend their folly.

So that your worth, my lady,
Might never now diminish,
I beg your aid and mercy,
That can yet fulfil my wish.
They're riches in your treasury,
That but lie there, in peace,
And, seeking not their increase,
Yet multiply, endlessly!

Too great are the gifts of love,
Nonetheless, such I desire.
Yet I can oft restrain the fire,
For less than might others move.

**XVIII: Who would serve Amor, rightly (Qui a droit veut Amours
servir)**

Who would serve Amor, rightly,
And sing on, with a joyous will,
Should entertain no thought of ill,
But think on what yet might be.
Wisdom will he
Gain, and his heart with courage fill,
And worth, and evil turn to good;
For this each man merits, who would
But serve him still.

Who is dismayed on feeling woe,
And troubles about his suffering,
His love is not long on the wing,
For the more that his dreams do glow
With desire, lo,
The more delay is in the thing.
Thus, he loses himself and Love,
And all reason he doth remove
From youth's fair spring.

Through laughter and hearing sweet speech
And through a joyous manner,
Love at the start comes ever;
And for this all lovers must reach;
Let patience teach
Them to hope for mercy from her,
Even though mercy they gain not.
Amor dictates that tis their lot,
Yet aids them ever.

They deserve to be hated, those
Who weary her with requesting:
Their foolish desire e'er seeking
The jewel that beyond them glows.

And, at the close,
In shame, they but forfeit the thing,
So doubly they then must suffer:
That which one wishes not ever,
Fate, oft, doth bring!

Tis better he should press her less;
For once a lover proves so brave
As to ask for what he doth crave,
He ought to show his fearfulness;
For to express
What's in the heart declares the knave,
True love lets mercy plead its case,
Who lets none perish in disgrace,
But all must save.

Robert Nasard, I, with this song
Send now a noble pledge to you.
Of grace, sire, hold us quits, we two!
For this, to me that doth belong,
I do no wrong
In offering, to pay my due.
For I'd commit no perjury:
Who proffers such a surety,
His word proves true.

XIX: Wondrous the desire that I (Merveille est quel talent j'ai)

Wondrous the desire that I
Have to sing,
Since I know no means whereby,
Not a thing,
That might my lady bring
To grant me of her mercy.
Others gain by falsity,
And yet I would die
Before I'd deceive and lie,

To win her pity.

I do not cease from hoping,
Every day,
For mercy. Naught expecting,
And I stay
Far from her, hid away;
For of her I'm unworthy,
And, since I'm concerned lest she,
If one word I dared say,
Should but cry: 'Be on your way!'
I'll love silently.

If I win mercy, I'll arrive
There, through love;
Vain would, howe'er hard I strive
Asking prove.
She knows, while I'm alive,
More than myself I love her:
And I'll no longer suffer
When she please. If I see
Her often, naught ill can be,
All's sweetness ever.

Red as is the rose in May,
So is she,
Bright as is the sun's bright ray;
Beyond me,
E'er, to recount would be
The wisdom she makes flourish,
The virtue she doth nourish,
That informs her gaze.
God made her His own always,
Who her form did wish!

Lady, I ask this of you,
As I end,

That you'll deign to listen to
This I send,
To which my skill I did lend,
And sing its sweet melody.
For so you will enrich me,
And a better song
I'll make, if its tune be wrong:
This I beg, humbly.

XX: Without hope of finding aid (Sans espoir d'avoir secours)

Without hope of finding aid
From any,
Full of the care Love has laid
Upon me,
I made this song;
And to her it doth belong
Who asked it of me,
And has such authority
I'll obey her every breath,
Until my death.

Although tis from another
Comes my woe.
She's the mirror, the flower,
Whence, also,
There doth come the will
In ill hearts for virtue still,
If they seek her company.
Long life I only wish me
So, I'll not cease to view
Her face anew.

No sweetness do I have there
Only ill.
Her loyalty my heart doth spare
Hoping still,

And as lovers should
I ask naught of her, nor would;
She'll know naught of it, also,
If she is not led to know
Through noting of my manner,
When I see her.

For my face changes colour
When I do,
And I lose heart and vigour
When we two
Speak, for my appeal
Is lost, since those bright eyes steal
My tongue, her anger awhile
She would but show as a smile,
Crystal, sapphire, in her eyes
But show surprise.

Though another's asked a song
Of me now,
My heart to her doth still belong,
Such my vow;
And yet one should not
Refuse fine lady, e'en a jot
Of aught she may wish or say:
So, for my love's sake, I'll play
And sing, hold dear each she
That asks me.

**XXI: I sing not as one who seeks for mercy (Je ne chant pas reveleus
de merchi)**

I sing not as one who seeks for mercy,
But as one in need of aid,
One who seeks a remedy
For an affliction he could scarce evade.
My heart has aimed above me,

Too high, tis my death.
Alas! Why, each breath
Long for such a lady,
Whom I dare not see?

The slanders of vile fools, are frequently
Endured by those who never
Deserved such fierce enmity.
Because of my ardent heart, that ever
Has proved a strong shield to me,
When bearing disgrace
And her sullen face,
I speak; for ne'er will body
Oppose heart's decree.

Alas! How great my recompense should be!
Many a day I've begged her,
And I have offered, surely;
Twice what was on offer from another;
For I've offered all of me,
And without reserve.
Rebuke she'll deserve,
If she would be free
Yet finds worse than me.

But the splendour she owns, and beauty,
She glories in, so blind her
That she rejects me, neglects me,
Because she thinks I am far beneath her,
In grace and in dignity.
I am in ill straight,
Sorrow is my fate,
For naught can I ask, truly,
That she'll grant me.

Oh! Bring joy to this heart of mine, lady,
That with love doth overflow

And, with magnanimity,
Stoop from your noble place, and aid me so!
None else loved, you see,
So excessively!
Tis that thought that comforts me,
Hoping such may be.

My lord of Amiens, whom all do praise,
Wisdom is this, or folly
To dwell where Amor holds me,
Despite the many woes I feel always?

**XXII: It pleases me as much to be in Love's power (Tant me plaist
vivre en amoureux dangier)**

It pleases me as much to be in Love's power
As I am little pleased at my reward.
So, I sing not to render my ills less sour,
For I complain, that few doth Love afford.
The name of torment doth but ill accord
With so sweet a pain.
For the ills of Love, tis plain,
But serve to maintain the fire
Of joy and desire entire,
Without thought of folly.

If the one for whom I sing did e'er perceive
Or merely suspect that I might have dared
To desire her love, then I would, I believe,
Find her heart to show cruelty prepared.
But wise and of such renown she's declared,
Her nobility
Allows not a soul to see
If she hates me or loves;
Yet often a swift glance proves
That she's taken note of me.

And that indeed must suffice me, to speak true,
Whom she retains but as a man to serve her.
It seems to me that he who would seek to view
His lady's thoughts, if she'll love him ever,
Seeks but a reason why he should quit her.
For should he seek love,
And she doth that prayer reprove,
His hopes may be lost thereby,
While if she yields, and says aye,
His desire that may remove.

Then, he may advance too far, and too swiftly,
For what's granted changes his intention:
He'll covet the right to be where she may be,
And when he has obtained her affection,
Then he'll soon commit some indiscretion;
Thus, she is betrayed,
If slight defence she has made.
For from whom should she defend?
Since the prouder in the end
The heart, the humbler he'll be.

And so, the better to serve her I demand
Naught but the hope of being healed, no more;
For if I receive that cure, you understand,
I can live long, without ill, neath her law.
And, if she grants me more than heretofore,
All within, smiling,
A sweeter life I shall sing,
And she'll earn fair thanks of me,
Though I dare ask not, truly,
For fear of what it might bring.

XXIII: Lady, your servant brings you (Dame, vos hom vous estrine)

Lady, your servant brings you
A new song for you to sing:

Your kindness I come seeking,
Of one courteous and true.
For loyally I love you,
Though wrong you do me too,
For the greater your beauty
That strikes me but cruelly,
The more my heart breaks anew.

A queen must pardon ever
His manner in a servant:
The heart doth scant reason grant
Why Love doth make it suffer.
Less swiftly we go after
A girl who's poor and meagre,
And lacking in every grace
Than one who is fair of face,
A smiling, blushing creature.

I've given you, willingly
Body, soul, reputation:
With recompense or with none,
No more can you claim from me.
I've granted all, without fee,
Yet you elsewhere make free,
Faithless like many a one,
As faithless as Ganelon:
Another dines there, not me.

Alas! For my sole reward
I've the soiled end of the rod.
When I speak, as before God,
Of all my heart can afford,
So, my health may be restored,
You still put me to the sword,
Claiming I'm wrong every way,
And there's naught in what I say:
While striking the Sybil's chord!

You weave a garland of thorns,
And yet cast the rose away
Which is worth more, all would say,
Like one who refined gold scorns,
Takes but the dross, and then mourns.
He hates not who merely warns,
Nor speaks from mere suspicion,
But still beware of the surgeon
Who takes the bull by the horns!

Jealousy's my neighbour,
She makes me speak unreason,
On every such occasion:
Your punishment I'll suffer!

**XXIV: Amor torments me yet more to inflame me (Mout plus se paine
Amours de moi esprendre)**

Amor torments me yet more to inflame me
Rather than seeking to relieve my pain;
Yet by these ills troubled I must not be,
But rather, as if she loved me, sing again.
There's ne'er a lover lives free of such bane
But who serves at a venture;
For Love, of its own nature
Brings longing, to excess,
Hope, pensiveness, and wakefulness.

Who dare not face all such matters, bravely,
Is ne'er worthy of winning recompense,
But rather would snare and trap his lady
A thing which lovers should guard against;
For, howe'er harsh she be, no man of sense
Will prison a loyal heart;
And those who can't sustain their part,
If she rejects their prayer,

Must go, and try their luck elsewhere.

I speak not, my lady, to teach you aught,
For naught there is, in you, needs correction:
Wisdom and worth you've no need to be taught,
And you know how to detect deception;
Naught in yourself but seeks perfection.
But passion, and jealousy,
And that you care not for me
To gain my due reward
But foolish thought doth me afford.

Alas! I cannot comprehend the thing,
For I have loved, without disloyalty,
Many a day and yet to me you bring
Not one sweet smile, I dare claim, truthfully;
The more I need your aid, it seems to me,
The less do I win from you.
Think you to torment me too,
And cause me deep dismay,
To drive my poor heart far away?

'Tis good so as to more enjoy one's meal,
To eat a morsel before, and often;
Lady, if you'd but condescend to feel
Enough for me that I might be given
Such as would aid me in granting welcome
To your sweet person this day,
I'd ne'er feel the like dismay,
Nor seek to go apart,
Through the action of your proud heart.

XXV: For all, that I have not been (Pour chou, se je n'ai esté)

For all, that I have not been
Tuneful and happy,
I am no less loved, I ween,

And love more deeply
Than ever, and more truly.
For tourneys, nor sweetest song,
Fancy dress, nor a smooth tongue,
Nor a fine pointed shoe
Signify true love, but long
Service, and a heart that's true,
That knows no wrong.

Take pity on such a heart
Not those who presume!
So many do work their art,
To false words grant room,
Deeds, smiles, and manners assume,
Dishonouring some lady;
Fair women must be ready,
Whom to their assay
Are not thus inclined to yield.
'Away, with you!' they must say,
To all the field.

Slanderers oft have spoken
Against some lover
Who, if he'd shown some token
Of shyness ever,
They'd have excused forever;
But, through his frivolity,
His nature others can see,
And he feels their dart.
While he who love doth desire,
Must shyness, yet a heart
Of joy, acquire.

XXVI: Now, I am sure that Amor (Or voi jou bien qu'il souvient)

Now, I am sure that Amor
Still remembers me;

He treats me worse than before,
And most savagely;
Which makes my heart to rejoice,
That doth sing:
Thus, to sweet ill lovers bring
A pleasant voice.

It grips me the memory
I retain of her,
Whence this sweet woe comes to me
Many have through her;
For never do they possess
Power of speech.
I judge from what mine doth teach,
Their hearts, no less.

For Love has but one manner
He who's silenced me;
Such that he'll seize another
As he now doth me,
Should they see her I do see,
And frequent,
Forgetting sight, sound and scent,
So fair is she.

My Lord, if it goes for naught
How I have served you,
Still, I joy in having sought
Your mercy too.
Moreover, hope comes to me
Of true grace,
Pity that, in loving face,
I might yet see.

A loyal heart bound to you
A fine choice has made;
Though none is a match for you.

Nonetheless, displayed
Is that mercy without end,
Yours always,
Leading, all the world, I say,
To one sweet end.

Would that I might pardon see
For aiming
So high, for such suffering
Ne'er came to me!

**XXVII: Since I am of Love's loyal company (Puis que je sui de
l'amourouse loi)**

Since I am of Love's loyal company,
Tis well I celebrate that in my song.
And there's a better reason yet for me
To sing, while my desire waxes strong,
For, without warning, long
Ago, my heart was pierced through
By two bright eyes, clear and true,
That smile but to strike deeper:
Nor will a shield serve either,
Their onset to undo.

And yet I am not anguished by the blow,
And nor do I seek for solace ever:
For if there were a lessening of woe,
The love would lessen also, and wither.
While love is no other
Than a fire, ever blazing,
For one feels it on nearing
More than if one escapes it,
And who'd not be scorched by it
Stays clear of its burning!

I must, if I would love, and truly,

Approach the nearer to what will burn me,
So long as I keep faith with my lady,
As I have done; and she doth aid me!
Though I tremble, wholly,
Yet never has her heart been
So cold towards me, I ween,
That I might fear rejection,
Without, from her eyes' action,
Solace I did glean.

And so, I renounce not, for that reason,
My love of her nor my request for grace.
When I hear her lips scold me, in season,
Though I depart I must regain that place,
Despite her angry face.
And yet when I do, she'll say
Quite fiercely: 'Away, away!'
Before I can even speak,
Nor to withdraw me, seek,
I'm so far astray.

Oh! Flower of the world, for whom I toil,
Sweet one, who makes every heart rejoice,
Wise and noble lady, and no man's foil,
Fair example, and in judgement choice,
You may yet scold me so
And more: and yet conquer too,
For I'd render all to you,
And such a ransom offer
As you would ask moreover,
Or others pursue.

Whether please or no it may,
My song must retrace its road
To the place from whence it flowed,
For such is my way.

XXVIII: Mary Virgin, ever glorious (Glorieuse Vierge Marie)

Mary Virgin, ever glorious,
Since serving you is dear to me,
You who rejoice the heart in us,
A new song I'll make, willingly,
I who sing as one that, always,
Must answer for his foolish ways;
For my pleasures I'll pay full sore,
When we are called to judgement, such is sure,
Unless you speak a little in my praise.

None would wish to smile: all refuse,
When young, to think such aid they'll need!
Yet ignorance is no excuse,
For the sins one commits; indeed,
All must render their last account.
Ah! Noble, sovereign lady, fount
Of aid, be my cloak, my shelter,
I, who've ever risked my soul, a sinner
One that on pride's vain throne did ever mount.

Gentle lady raised to glory,
Of sweetness too the source and spring,
Queen born of royal ancestry,
Recall those who in everything
Seek to serve you, faithfully;
So that the Foe, by treachery
May ne'er prove our lord and master!
For he has poisoned arrows that must ever
Strike, and reveal our frail mortality.

With pride he strikes the clerics down,
Dominicans with gluttony,
For such reigns there beneath their gown;
Yet spares Cistercians, as we see.
Monks, and priests, he fills with envy,

Fair knights he drives to robbery:
He counts on striking us en masse:
This bird of prey, he works far worse, alas:
For, with Lust, he blights us, endlessly.

Pray to your Son that he may lead
His flock as a good shepherd will!
He will do much, for you, indeed,
Pure vessel that His grace did fill.
Take up for us the burden now,
We who forgot our every vow,
Yet repent of our great folly.
Be for us a fortress, our strong city,
When the foul Enemy would make us bow!

XXIX: If the ills Amor doth bring (Se li maus c'Amours envoie)

If the ills Amor doth bring
Did not please us so,
None could long endure the woe
Without despairing of the thing,
Or worse; yet it so pleases,
Its sweet pain never ceases,
And Love, it is so gentle,
And thinking on it noble,
A paradise it offers
To true lovers.

And the hope of finding joy
That is granted us,
On paths sweet and generous,
Sees grace every means employ
That mercy is ne'er denied,
And, thus, all are satisfied,
So that we're content to serve
Hoping better we'll deserve;
And all those who truly love,

This do approve.

Not for aught would I believe,
Nor do, that a lover
Could in affection alter,
Or fear of harm could conceive,
Whose heart and intent are set
On a smile none could forget,
And loving eyes and tender,
And worth, and noble manner,
Such prizes as ever pleased,
By which they're seized.

Tis what comforts, reassures,
Those who most suffer,
That which makes them sing, ever,
While Mercy prayer outpours
For them; the presumptuous
Shall ne'er gain advantage thus
Who love but at their own will,
But those who are faithful still,
Given to true loyalty,
Mercy shall see.

If a hundred thousand years,
Lady, I might live,
Though you died, I could not give,
So far are you above your peers,
My thoughts to any other,
In me none see, moreover,
Naught but the bed, wherein lie
Those thoughts; so, I shall die,
Possessing this bed of woe,
That I do know.

Ah! Sweetest April and May,
Denied is that place, always:

Yet let my song there be heard,
Every word!

**XXX: Sweet is the ill that sets folk on the way (Dous est li maus qui
met le gent en voie)**

Sweet is the ill that sets folk on the way
To where but good they speak, and praise, and do;
Truly one must believe in him, I say,
Who guides them, and him serve and honour too:
Amor it is who makes me sing anew,
And sing my song with more skill
Than when I knew not this ill,
So that I my thought employ
On that sweetest savour still,
No price too high for that joy,
That end, we will.

I oft regret the time that I let slide,
Before I began to be a lover.
And yet it comforts me, my powers applied
To labouring towards the good ever,
The longing that I have to recover
All the time that I have lost;
So, I seek, whate'er the cost,
To own a heart, forever,
That never True Love crossed,
To serve him, ne'er another
Bound forever.

Sooner than her, myself I would betray,
That is if ever I had the heart to fail her;
On the contrary I could not, nor may,
For she's so sweet a sight to her lover,
That no ill thought could one discover
In the heart of one who saw her.
So how then could I wrong her

Who would preserve her honour,
As Love requires me ever,
Who makes one evade and fear
Vice forever?

Frank, generous heart, where virtue multiplies,
Sovereign form that does the heart ennoble,
None wastes his time who your sweet service plies,
Not even if he wins naught for his trouble
Than sight of you, and with hope to dwell.
No more do I ask or dare,
Nor ever will I declare
My heart to you, but by my song;
For I would rather die of care,
Starved of grace, and for you long,
Than do you wrong.

I would not be treated worse for that I
Dare not come or go where she may be;
For Mercy knows many more reasons why
She might grace me, who shun audacity:
Better the shame of honest poverty
Than a beggar who seeks aid!
How should my heart be displayed
To you? I lack bravery,
Heart and tongue, and self, afraid
Whene'er I must speak, or see
You or salute you, humbly.

Song, go thither; pray, swiftly,
Before Robert Nasard played,
That he'll repeat, willingly,
Your all, for me!

XXXI: Amor will not hear of me (Amours ne me veut oïr)

Amor will not hear, of me,

That I pray or make a song,
Nor that I serve loyally
Nor follow amidst his throng,
Rather he doth wrong
And my lady too,
That they care not what I do,
Nor for my ills, borne so long.

I dare not be where she is,
For my presence she likes not,
And, when I think to persist,
Her withdrawal is my lot.
Naught thence have I got,
No welcome. Alas!
Cruel what may come to pass,
For me, with all hope forgot!

Yet, I scarce dare to admit,
Doing so, hurts me, on sight;
For however I desire it,
No reward is mine by right.
Better, lips sealed tight,
To suffer, quietly,
Till she is seized by Pity,
Who is cruel in her might.

For I prefer to languish
For you, my noble lady,
Than to renounce your service,
And go wandering idly:
Now I rejoice me,
Count myself happy
That e'er my heart betrayed me
For a lady so worthy!

And, my body must follow
My poor heart, at one remove,

Lest it but leave me hollow.
While should the body move
To perfect its love,
Following, promptly,
Sweet heart, take pity on me!
And their parting ne'er approve!

So that it shines the brighter,
This song I have made
To Robert Nasard be it played;
What he says pleases ever.

**XXXII: The pensive heart, full of longing (De cuer pensieu et
desirrant)**

The pensive heart, full of longing
Moves the lips to open widely,
For they serve to show, more clearly,
All that's of the heart's devising.
Of such seeming,
Love makes my being fill with joy,
By which such plenty I enjoy,
Relief I must seek in singing.

I cannot say that I advance
In my love for my lady fair,
Except in thoughts of her, perchance;
Yet that she pains me, everywhere,
Makes me despair
Of her, and of her cruelty,
Hope makes me live, in which many
Find solace that love's pains do bear.

The more my lady sees that I
Desire to serve and honour her,
The less she grants me hope, her eye
Harsher in its glances, ever.

Must I suffer
Such punishment for aiming high?
Pity and Mercy are my
Guarantors, now and forever.

Ah! Sweet lady whom I love so
That every other I forget,
Fair form made that we might know
Beauty, with loving glances met,
Hopeful yet,
My time I spend, though lacking joy;
Diamond the likeness I'd employ
For you, about with harshness set.

Why my dolorous complaining?
Perchance I despair too swiftly:
Often many lose, in hastening,
What renders the patient happy.
So, you see,
Lady, I now await your will,
Nor can any reproach me, still,
With serving less than loyally.

To you, goes this gift of my song,
Lady: be pleased to hear it now,
So that it might my heart endow
With your loving glance e'er long.

**XXXIII: The closer I come to my own country (De tant com plus
aproime mon país)**

The closer I come to my own country
The more doth Love renew me and inspire,
The more he sees me longing joyously,
Finding, in folk, all that I may desire.
Tis why, as I draw nigh her,
– And this fact too

That, in returning, I now view
Such fair ladies, in this place –
That, in one or other, the grace
Of my lady I find anew,
Such that her savour I renew
In the semblance of her face.

Thus, the tigress stands before a mirror,
Imagining she sees her lost cub there,
And so, finds what she seeks, yet in error:
While those who seized it vanish in thin air.
Do not toy so, my prayer,
With me, lady!
Nor yet may you forget me,
During so long an absence!
For tis in sweet remembrance
Before my mirror, I muse;
For with you, not here, I choose
Heart, hope to be, in this trance.

**XXXIV: Who has e'er girl or woman loved (Qui a puchele ou dame
amee)**

Who has e'er girl or woman loved,
There where all's but air and lies,
Knows well, if he be one that's wise,
Why the Virgin is so approved,
She from whom a better reward
Shall come, such is my argument;
For her image doth him afford
Delight in all things, sweetly sent.

One cannot but marvel at those
Who delight, in the carnal sense,
And display all their eloquence
Praising some piece of flesh, they chose,
And dwelling on her so foolishly,

Of her fair form their thoughts so full,
That they think not of you, lady,
A hundred times more beautiful.

Lady through whom joy is given
As a heritage to all those who
Spend it not in sinning; by you,
The soul is led towards heaven,
You, stainless advocate, who pray,
For it, to your womb's fruit, your Son,
Loved, in your heart's depths, always,
You who eternal life have won.

My soul should be desolate indeed,
That would live in saintly manner,
When the flesh, it maintains ever,
But to vain foolishness doth lead.
Seek an end to this conflict, Lady!
The body's boldness we suffer.
The affair's managed so badly,
That it makes the soul to quiver.

Noble queen, who are crowned on high,
Who grants us love without reserve,
Of grace, my errant Self preserve,
And if, that day, you are asked why
I yielded so to vanity,
And evil counsel, frequently,
Ne'er consent, redoubted Lady,
To see my tardiness hurt me!

I invoke you, Lady, ever,
For of salvation I'd despair,
If, fond hope of every sinner,
You seek to deny my prayer.

**XXXV: Great delight I have, and life is sweet (Grant deduit a et
savoureuse vie)**

Great delight I have, and life is sweet,
In honouring and serving True Amor:
Who loves, as one must, free of deceit,
He renders all they deserve, and more.
So, I serve him, and could do no better,
And if grace none do offer,
Though I serve, and suffer woe,
I yet would wish to spend my whole life so.

For I consider him the most distinguished
Of all the heart may love, or eye can see,
His nobility is ne'er extinguished,
All are pleased to salute his mastery.
Alas! I dare not follow where he goes,
For my presence barely shows,
And none here do, care for me,
If Love does not, nor my saviour, Mercy.

Yet, at such distance I did ne'er deploy,
That, when I saw him ope his friendly eyes,
I was not, then, inflamed by perfect joy,
Loyalty, and desire for love's sweet prize.
And if I had such joy of that one sight,
What would I feel, if I might
But hear him call me friend?
Lord, on no other mercy I depend.

For I have often quit fair company,
Whene'er True Love has stirred my memory,
So as to savour pleasant reverie,
Recalling his merits, once I was free,
And so, alone, I locked myself away:
Then it seemed that I might stay,
Beside him, and silent still.

Tis thus that sometimes I forget all ill.

If I dare greet, and turn to him, once more,
When I see him approach me on the way;
So, my eyes might watch him go before,
Not my heart merely, that is his alway;
Then I would think it a sweet recompense.
Yet I dare not journey hence,
With a heart so bold, I know,
For I love, fear, and seek his honour so.

XXXVI: Ne'er was any seized by Love (Onkes nus hom ne fu prise)

Ne'er was any seized by Love,
Who was not found more worthy,
And all did the more approve
As more at ease, and happy.
For True Love made them pleasing;
And right it is that him we sing;
All honour from Love doth flow;
Fools all who'd not serve him so.

Since I gave myself to him,
Great reward have I obtained:
My heart is full to the brim
With the fairest sight attained;
Nor are my thoughts contrary
When that sweetest face I see,
For the ill that brings me pain
Doth, in me, joy yet maintain.

For her bright eyes and sweet smile,
Her noble and lovely form,
Her gentle heart, free of guile,
That Nature's grace doth inform,
Are exemplary, and breed
Honour in both word and deed;

He loves these not who shuns not
All ill, which is then forgot.

Lady, if I had to choose
Between you and paradise,
On your gentle face I'd muse,
Whom you wrong otherwise.
I would seek my refuge there,
If you were pleased so to care,
And, even if you loved me not,
Sweet, near you, would be my lot.

So attentive I would be
To you, and your every word,
Sweeter than honey to me
Would prove the ills I incurred.
Alas! I cannot come or go,
Nor gain aught from doing so,
For my heart's so full of woe,
Those ills, to all, are now on show.

Rondeaux

I: I die, I die of careless love (Je muir, je muir d'amourete)

*I die, I die of careless love,
Alas! Ah me!
Since in her I fail to move
Sweet mercy.
At first, she did gentle prove,
Of surety,
Yet, with pride that folk reprove,
She scorned me.
I die, I die of careless love,
Alas! Ah me!
A graceful manner, all approve,
I did see.*

Then, with pride we disapprove,
She scorned me.
I die, I die of careless love,
Alas! Ah me!
Since in her I fail to move
Sweet mercy.

II: My fair lady's sweet regard (Li dous regards de ma dame)

My fine lady's sweet regard
Yet grants me hope of mercy.
God, from blame, its beauty guard!
My fine lady's sweet regard.
By my soul, it would be hard
To find one fair as is she:
My fine lady's sweet regard
Yet grants me hope of mercy.

III: Aid me! The ills of love (Hareu! li maus d'amer)

Aid me! The ills of love
Slay me!
Full of desire I prove,
Aid me! The ills of love,
At a glance, life remove
Swiftly
Aid me! The ills of love
Slay me!

**IV: Fair the lovers I have got. Sweet Lord! (Fines amouretes ai.
Dieus!)**

Fair the lovers I have got. Sweet Lord!
When I'll see them, I know not.

I'll summon my fair lover,
Full of grace, sweet as ever,

So delightful is she, never
Could I let such be forgot.
Fair the lovers I have got. Sweet Lord!
When I'll see them, I know not.

If with child, I her render,
Pale soon, and livid after,
There'll be complaint and slander:
Sad dishonour's then her lot.
Fair the lovers I have got. Sweet Lord!
When I'll see them, I know not.

Better then, that I refrain;
And for her a smile maintain,
Think of her, now and again,
And her honour, never blot.
Fair the lovers I have got. Sweet Lord!
When I'll see them, I know not.

V: To God, I commend my loves (A Dieu commant amouretes)

*To God, I commend my loves,
For I must go,
And sighs to a far land lend.
Grieving, I leave my sweet doves,
Great is my woe.
To God, I commend my loves,
For I must go.
As king, queens in far removes,
Were I crowned so,
I'd make, should fate so intend,
To God, I commend my loves,
For I must go,
And sighs to a far land lend.*

VI: Fi, husbands, on your true love! (Fi! maris, de vostre amour)

Fi, husbands, upon your love!
I've a lover.
Fair is she and sweet doth prove:
Fi, husbands, upon your love!
Night and day her I approve:
I so love her.
Fi, husbands, upon your love!
I've a lover.

VII: Lady, I'm betrayed (Dame, or sui traïs)

Lady, I'm betrayed,
All by reason
Of your eyes, those thieves, I gaze upon.
By your smile, dismayed,
Lady, I'm betrayed.
For tis but a jade,
Your cruel heart's hidden,
Such that I accuse your face of treason.
Lady, I'm betrayed,
All by reason
Of your eyes, those thieves, I gaze upon.

VIII: Amor, and my lady too (Amours et ma dame aussi)

Amor, and my lady too,
I pray sweet mercy of you!
What use your beauty, on view?
Amor, and my lady too,
If you grant not mercy too,
What use all your fine virtue?
Amor, and my lady too,
I pray sweet mercy of you!

**IX: Bayard is in the meadow now hurray! (Or est Baiars en la
pasture hure!)**

*Lord, how to endure
Without her, who all
Joy doth give, and more?
Sweet she is, and pure,
Lord, how to endure?
I'd not leave, for sure,
Being in her thrall,
Though we two did war.
Lord, how to endure
Without her, who all
Joy doth give, and more?*

XIII: Too great, my wish to see (Trop desir a veoir)

*Too great, my wish to see
Her I love!
I'll not leave, for twould be
Too great, my wish to see.
Night and morn, woe is me,
Sad, I prove.
Too great, my wish to see
Her I love!*

XIV: Sweet pretty lover (Bonne amourete)

*Sweet pretty lover
Bring me joy.
Fair friend, forever,
Sweet pretty lover!
For you I'll ever
This employ:
Sweet pretty lover
Bring me joy.*

XV: While there's life in me (Tant con je vivray)

While there's life in me

*None else shall I love but you,
I'll not seek to flee
While there's life in me,
But your slave I'll be,
And loyally I'll serve too:
While there's life in me
None else shall I love but you.*

XVI: God be in this house, this day (Dieus soit en cheste maison)

*God be in this house, this day
And plenty, and joy, I pray!
Our Lord Christmas sends
Us to every lover,
That is to his friends,
And to all folk moreover
Who many a sou oft lends,
On this Christmas Day.
God be in this house, this day
And plenty, and joy, I pray!*

Our Lord's not of those
Who to begging e'er descends:
Fine houses he chose
To send us to, for his ends;
Each of us on him depends,
His children, we say.
*God be in this house, this day
And plenty, and joy, I pray!*

Motets

**I: No man is ever wholly pleased with Love (Aucun se sont loé
d'Amours)**

No man is ever wholly pleased with Love (Voice 3)
Yet more than most I've reason to complain,

Never could I prove
Loyalty he doth maintain.
I believed
That I, at first, a lover by loyalty
Might gain;
But I'd have waited endlessly,
Tis plain,
The more to Love I cleaved,
The more must I endure the pain;
And never once did she I loved offer me
The least sign of encouragement, nor did she
Grant slight hope of mercy.
Ever she dealt ill, to avoid me, truly.
Of her my thoughts were ne'er free,
Ere I forgot here, utterly:
Now without doubt, in truth, I see,
The loyal man is lost who in love would be,
None, I think, should go swimming in that sea,
Unless they aim to serve deceptively!

To God I commend my loves, now (Voice 2)
As I take wing –
Sorrowing, I will allow –
From Artois, where everything
In silent fear is breathing,
Since those who earn a living,
Have been so badly treated,
Law, right ruling,
Lacking.
Mere coining
Has blinded,
Count and king,
Judge and prelate, profit-seeking,
So many a fair company,
Our ruined Arras choose to flee,
Their friends, homes, possessions, leaving,
Two here, three there, to go grieving,

Sorrowing, in a strange country.

Super Te (*Upon you*)

(*Voice 1*)

Note: for the source of the Latin 'Super te' consider the Benediction 'Pax et benedictio Dei omnipotentis, Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, descendat super te, et maneat semper'.

II: From my lady springs (De ma dame vient)

From my lady springs

(*Voice 3*)

This sweet ill, every sigh
From which I die
If hope denies me wings,
And *the great joy thereby.*
For folk harm me, such that I
Am at odds with her, whereby
She has forgot me, ever averts her eye
Whom I once thought in my power.
Lord! When is the hour
That I'll speak with her
And there from slander's bitter shower
Find true shelter!
Sweet friend, aid me;
May true pity flower;
Pray God, mercy!
None ever loved was loathed so easily;
Tis not, you see,
Deserved by me,
It comes of envy,
And slandering me;
Yet I'll thus break free,
And now will I go
And to that slanderer show
A prouder face than I should e'er employ.
Traitor, flee! Cease, annoy!
Ope the gate leads to joy:

Such shall I, late, enjoy!
Though you have done me harm, I say
She'll treat me in a kinder way
Than yesterday,
If ever
I should find, as I stray,
My little lover,
Sweet forever,
Soft and tender,
Fair, and fairer,
Sweet her savour:
Whom God bless alway!

Lord! How then may I (Voice 2)
Some way spy,
To find him, ever,
Who is my lover?
Sash, you were once his; twere far better
If you went, and no other.
He'd believe you I know.
How am I to live without you, though?
Sash, once his, Lord! Moreover,
You stave off death for me.
In my misery
I have you for solace;
Your silk I embrace,
Ah me!
And then his handsome face I see.
Nonetheless
I have others for my dress,
Of silk, silver thread, I'm sure;
And yet! *How then may I*
Without you, endure,
Who bring joy to me?
Little song, go, ask humbly,
Him whose gift it was,
Since I can't go myself, alas,

If he will come here, to me,
When the day doth flee,
To take his pleasure; sweet time he'll pass,
And hear me sing, in a high voice so:
This way goes sweet affection, this way that I go.

Omnes (*All*)

(*Voice 1*)

Note: for 'Omnes' see the responsory, 'O vos omnes' originally sung as part of the Catholic Liturgies for Holy Week. The text is adapted from the Vulgate translation of Lamentations 1:12. 'Attend all people, regard my sorrow: if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.'

III: Twixt Adam and Haniquel (Entre Adan et Hanikiel)

Twixt Adam and Haniquel (*Voice 3*)
Hancard and Gautelot,
It's great fun to see them show
Their mettle:
When they're in liquor
Their lips move quicker
And as well,
As all can tell,
As any man's here will that's kissed Saint Tortuel;
And sing all without a score
Old tunes and novel.
And Gautelot what's more
Plays a drunk so fine and well
That to view his muzzle
He looks set to drop down dead.
When they sing a round instead,
All the four together,
And rattle the plaster,
With their singing,
To everyone's liking,

All ears delighting
Madly smiling,
Those four lads sing
Past anything!

A fine head of hair, (Voice 2)
Waved and curling there,
Brow gleaming and fair,
A sweet pair
Of bright eyes, the rare
Clear-grey eyes that share,
Eyes that care,
Yet may dare,
Nose whose measure most suits the whole affair,
Smiling lips,
That white teeth oft eclipse,
Throat full and sweet,
Soft neck and neat,
Firm each pointed breast,
Round belly, and the best
Manner, fine folk attest,
And then, there's all the rest,
Such gifts there granted,
Adam's enchanted!

Aptatur (*It is fitting*) (Voice 1)

Note: The religious source of 'Aptatur' frequently used for the single-word tenor part in 13th century Motets, is obscure, possibly originating in a responsory for Saint Winoc (who founded an abbey at Wormhout in the Nord department of France). The verb 'aptare' means to be ready, suited to, fit for etc. Aptatur may therefore be translated as he/she/it is ready suited to, fit for etc.

IV: I dare to speak to my love (J'os bien m'amie aparler)

I dare to speak to my love (Voice 3)
Her husband by,
Her kisses and affection prove,
When he is nigh;
Jealous in his every move,
A cuckold, fi!
Then, I shut the house-door in his face,
So, I take my delight in her embrace,
And put that boor in his place.

I dare not to my lover go, (Voice 2)
Her husband by,
Lest he try when I am nigh
To stop me; though
I can't stop myself e'en so
Gazing, say I,
On that lovely face I know;
For tis wrong to hide a sigh
Twixt lovers, who ought to show
Love's pain and woe.

Seculum (*Ever*) (Voice 1)

Note: a seculum or saeculum is a human age, but may be translated as 'ever', with saeculum saeculi translated as 'forever' for example see its use in Psalm 110 of the Vulgate (Confitebor)

V: I have ever served, and sung of Amor (J'ai adés d'Amours chanté et servi)

I have ever served and sung of, Amor (Voice 2)
In hopes of her,
My lady, and, what is sure,
To be with her,
I've quit school, and friends, and more.
Is it then right

*That Amor leaves me?
No, never!*

Omnes (*All*)

(*Voice 1*)

Note: for 'omnes' see the note to Motet II.

**The End of the Chansons, Rondeaux and Motets of Adam
de la Halle**