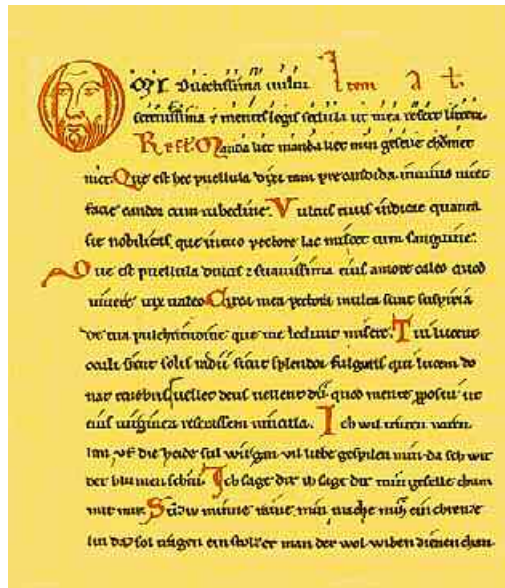


Carmina Burana

Selected Verses

From the Codex latinus monacensis – c. 1230AD

*(Commencing with the sequence of texts utilised by Carl Orff in his
'scenic cantata')*



(Above: – The manuscript page of CB180)

Translated by A. S. Kline © 2008 All Rights Reserved
This work may be freely reproduced, stored, and transmitted, electronically
or otherwise, for any non-commercial purpose.

Contents

‘O Fortuna’ – CB17	5
O Fortuna	5
‘Fortune plango vulnera – CB16	7
From Fortune’s wound I’m weeping where	7
‘Veris leta facies’ – CB138	8
Now the happy face of spring	8
‘Omnia sol temperat’ – CB136	9
Sunlight warms all the fields.....	9
‘Ecce gratum’ – CB143	10
Now, the pleasing.....	10
‘Floret silva nobilis’ – CB149	11
The lordly woods are all ablaze	11
‘Chramer, gip die varwe mier’ - From CB16*	12
Pedlar, give to me some rouge.....	12
‘Swaz hie gat umbe’ - CB167a	13
Those who are dancing	13
‘Chume, chume, geselle min’ - CB 174a	14
Come, come, oh love of mine,	14
‘Uvere div werlt alle min’ – CB145a	15
Were the whole world mine.....	15
‘Estuans intrinsicus’ – CB191	16
Burning, here inside,.....	16
‘Olim lacus colueram’ – CB 130	23
Once the lakes I swam upon,	23
‘Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis’ – CB222	24
The Abbot of Cockaigne I am, and this	24
‘In taberna quando sumus’ – CB196	25
When we’re in the tavern there,.....	25
‘Amor volat undique’ – CB87	27
Love rules all things,.....	27
‘Doleo, quod nimium’ – CB118	29
I mourn the vast extent.....	29
‘Stetit Puella’ – CB177	31
And there the girl stood,.....	31

‘O mi dilectissima!’ – CB180	32
Oh, all my supreme delight!	32
‘Si puer cum puellula’ – CB183	34
If a lad and his sweet lover	34
‘Veni, veni, venias’ – CB174	35
Come now, come now, come now nigh,.....	35
‘Estat is florigero tempore’ – CB70	36
At the height of summer’s flowering.....	36
‘Tempus est iocundum’ – CB179	40
It’s time to sport again, o you maidens!.....	40
‘Si linguis angelicus’ – CB77	41
If I spoke with the tongues of angels and of men,.....	41
‘Dum Diane vitrea’ – CB62	46
When Diana’s crystal light.....	46
‘Exiit diluculo’ - CB90	49
At daybreak her way she took.....	49

'O Fortuna' – CB17

O Fortuna
like the Moon there
ceaselessly you're varying,
always waxing
ever waning;
how detestable a thing
life, that teases
and then eases,
powers of mind in play,
our poverty
authority
it melts like ice away.

Fortune monstrous
wholly worthless,
your swift wheel you're whirling,
ill condition,
vain remission
evermore dissolving,
veiled and shaded
adumbrated
on me too you're pressing;
at your pleasure
my bare back there
wretch to you I bring.

Fortune, easing,
virtue-pleasing,
turned now away from me,
you're withering
you're weakening
ever in misery.
Now today
without delay
pluck the quivering heart-string;
since by ill fortune
strength is brought down,
all join with me in weeping!

'Fortune plango vulnera – CB16

From Fortune's wound I'm weeping where
my eyes are wet with crying,
the gifts she gave me for my share
she takes now in denying.
It's true, what has been written,
we start with curling hair,
but generally we're bitten
by futures bald, threadbare.

On Fortune's throne I once might boast
I sat there glorious,
crowned with prosperity's fair host
of flowers various;
yes, though I have flourished
happy once and blessed,
from the heights I've vanished
of glory, now distressed.

Fortune's disc revolving, I
descend and am made less;
others swiftly rise on high;
exalted to excess
the king sits on the summit –
all beware of ruin!
For beneath the wheel, we read,
lies Hecuba the queen!

'Veris leta facies' – CB138

Now the happy face of spring
shows favour to the earth,
and winter's sharpest keening
defeated is cast forth;
in her garments various
Flora starts her reign,
all the woods harmonious
praise her in song again.

Clinging to Flora's breast
Phoebus with manner new
smiles once more, all is dressed
with flowers of various hue:
Zephyrus breathes all around
his nectar-scented breeze.
Let us run, as lovers bound,
to strive for love's victory.

On the men of letters call
all the lovely maidens;
execrating laymen all
inferior beasts of burden.
Love entices everyone
its power universal;
Venus sharing with the throng
through summer bright eternal.

Like a dulcimer the while
sings sweet Philomena,
now the joyful meadows smile
with flowers of every colour.
See the flocks of birds arise
from the pleasant woodland,
the maiden chorus promises
now of joys a thousand.

'Omnia sol temperat' – CB136

Sunlight warms all the fields
gently now and purely,
to a new world it reveals
April's face completely;
to love itself now yields
the spirit of mastery,
and the boy-god wields
the power to make all happy.

All these fresh-born things
in Spring's festival
and the power of Spring
for joy in us they call.
Customary rites they bring,
its honest and its loyal
that you in your own spring
make your love your all.

Love me faithfully!
Of my faith take note:
in the very heart of me,
with all my mind also,
I am with you utterly
though on far paths I go.
He who loves differently
with the wind does blow.

'Ecce gratum' – CB143

Now, the pleasing
longed-for Spring
returns and brings delight;
violets brimming
meadows filling,
sun makes all things bright.
Now sadness yields to light!
Summer nears,
Winter's fears
fade into the night.

Now the melting
swiftly thawing
snow, and ice and all the rest:
Winter going
Spring's now sucking
at the Summer's flowing breast:
that mind indeed lacks zest
that fails to live,
and fails to love,
when Summer's manifest!

Now glorying
now rejoicing,
in the sweetest harmony,
are those straining
at the gaining
of bold Cupid's victory:
at Venus' command shall we
all glory so
rejoice also
with Sir Paris we compete.

'Floret silva nobilis' – CB149

(Mixed Latin and German text)

The lordly woods are all ablaze
with flowers and with foliage,

Where's my former
handsome lover!
He's left me all allow,
alas, who'll love me now?

*Everywhere the woods ablaze,
I'm pining for my love always.*

The woods to leaf are gone,
why is my love away so long?
He's left me all allow,
alas, who'll love me now?

'Chramer, gip die varwe mier' - From CB16*

(German Text)

Pedlar, give to me some rouge
my cheeks to redden, till
I make all these handsome men
love me against their will.

*Gaze at me,
young man, see:
let me pleasure you!*

Love then, you likely lad,
ladies worth the loving,
true love elevates the heart,
and honours it in serving.

*Gaze at me,
young man, see:
let me pleasure you!*

Hail to you, world, that are so
rich in sweetest joy!
I'll obey your commands,
for the pleasures you employ.

*Gaze at me,
young man, see:
let me pleasure you!*

'Swaz hie gat umbe' - CB167a

(German Text)

Those who are dancing
are all of them maidens:
they'll shun every man
the whole summer long!

'Chume, chume, geselle min' - CB 174a

(The German addition to CB174)

Come, come, oh love of mine,
long, long for you I pine,
long, long for you I pine,
come, come, oh love of mine.

Sweet lips red as the rose
come, cure now all my woes,
come, cure now all my woes,
sweet lips red as the rose.

'Uvere div werlt alle min' – CB145a

Were the whole world mine
from the ocean to the Rhine,
I'd yet forgo its charms
if Eleanor England's queen
might lie here in my arms.

'Estuans intrinsicus' – CB191

(The Archpoet's Confession – ca. 1161/7)

Burning, here inside,
with a violent anger,
from a deep bitterness
in my mind, I utter:
from elemental ashes
formed, mere matter,
as the wind lashes,
like a leaf I flutter.

If it's the proper mark
of the man of wisdom
on the rock to create
a secure foundation,
I am the fool, compared
to the stream's motion,
never a single course
nor a settled notion.

I am always borne along
helpless through the sea,
cutting the paths of air
a wild bird flying free,
no chains here to bind,
no locks confine me,
I seek those similar,
and keep them beside me.

An over-heavy heart
seems to me hard labour:
having fun is pleasanter,
than the honey sweeter,
Venus, what she decrees,
such tasks joys are ever,
that to the duller heart
stay unknown forever.

I go the broad path
young in my fashion,
vices entangle me,
virtues are forgotten,
greedy for all delights,
more than my salvation,
moribund in the soul,
flesh instead my passion.

Honoured Archbishop,
to you I do confess,
it's a goodly death I die,
self-murder by excess:
stricken to the heart
by female loveliness,
those that I cannot touch,
I mentally possess.

It's a thing most difficult
to overcome our nature,
seeing some maiden fair,
keeping our minds pure;
being young how can we
obey so harsh a law,
for the body's lightness,
there is no known cure.

Who in the fire's depths
feels not the flame?
Who detained in Pavia,
lives there without blame,
where Venus beckoning
youths to the game,
seduces with her eyes,
her quarry for to tame?

Set down Hippolytus
in Pavia today,
there'd be no Hippolytus
the succeeding day.
To love, beneath the sheets,
leads every single way,
among all these spires,
Truth's nowhere to stay.

Secondly I confess
addiction to gaming,
such that my body's bare
from the wretched dicing,
yet cold on the outside
in my mind I'm sweating;
verses and songs I'm
more readily begetting.

The third charge, of all
I think of, is the tavern:
I've never passed one by,
I shall never spurn them,
until the holy choir
of angels I discern them,
singing for the dead:
'*Requiem eternam.*'

Myself I propose
tavern-bound to die,
so my fading lips can
sense the wine near-by;
then let angelic voices
sing this song on high:
*'God show his mercy to
a tippler such as I.'*

May the light of my soul
in the wine-cup burn,
heart steeped in nectar,
sight of heaven earn.
I am wiser from the wine
of the nearest tavern,
than from what your butler
waters in his turn.

All the poets that spurn
populated spaces,
and seek out privately
quiet hiding places,
study, toil, burn the oil
never show their faces,
scraping work together
so muddled it disgraces.

Let them fast and abstain
all that poetic choir,
from the public brawl,
and clamour, lifted higher,
creating works that
fresh ages will inspire,
dying of their zeal
slaving for their hire.

To each one Nature gives
their unique endowment:
when I'm making verses I
drink for my enjoyment,
with the very innkeeper
who the purest cask blent;
such wine creates the best
written entertainment.

Such is the verse I write,
such the wine I drink,
not a word can I indite
unless I eat and think;
nothing has inner power
when I fast above the ink,
the nearer Ovid in my verse
the more the wine I sink.

Never does the spirit
of poetry visit me
if there aren't enough
rations in my belly;
when in my arching brain
Bacchus controls me,
Phoebus erupts again
uttering marvellously.

Behold me the worker
of depravity and worse,
all that your servants
so eagerly rehearse.
Yet no one condemns
their souls, with a curse,
though in every secular
enjoyment they immerse.

Now I am before you,
in your sacred presence,
follow the law laid down
by Our Lord, its essence:
let those cast stones at me,
I offer no defence,
if in their hearts they
are wholly innocents.

I confess to everything
that is said against me,
and eschew the poison,
that fomented in me.
I despise my former life,
now new morals guide me;
men may see my face,
God looks deep inside me.

Angered by all vice,
I prize every virtue,
cleansed within the mind,
now my spirit does renew;
like a babe in arms
in milky pastures new,
falsehood no longer
in my heart shall brew.

My lord of Cologne,
spare the penitent,
let showing mercy
be your sole intent,
grant now a penance
to one not innocent,
I'll do as you command,
with my free consent.

Since the lion, king of beasts,
pardons those below,
as regards his subjects
stemming anger's flow;
princes of the earth
do you likewise, also:
one who lacks sweetness
all bitterness shall know.

'Olim lacus colueram' – CB 130

Once the lakes I swam upon,
once in beauty sailed along,
while I was yet a swan.
Woe's me! Woe's me!

*Black misery,
now roasting fiercely!*

Than the snow was, whiter,
than every bird was, finer;
now the crow is brighter.
Woe's me! Woe's me!

The fire burns me fiercely,
the cook's boy turns and turns me,
now the steward toasts me.
Woe's me! Woe's me!

I'd rather sail the water,
the wide sky, forever,
than be a peppered diver.
Woe's me! Woe's me!

Now in the dish I lie
without the power to fly,
bared teeth before my eye –
Woe's me! Woe's me!

*Black misery,
now roasting fiercely!*

'Ego sum abbas Cucaniensis' – CB222

The Abbot of Cockaigne I am, and this
my council's all furnished with drinkers, it is,
to be one of the gamblers is my dearest wish,
and whoever at dawn seeks me in the tavern
come vespers, he'll be stripped naked as Adam,
and thus relieved of his shirt he'll cry:

'Oh woe! Oh woe!

Lady Luck, oh what have you done!
The joys of my life are all gone,
you've stolen them all every one!

'In taberna quando sumus' – CB196

When we're in the tavern there,
that we're dust, we cease to care,
to the dice we swiftly get,
that forever make us sweat.
What goes on inside the inn,
where money is the host within,
here's the answer to that question,
so to what I say, now listen.

Some are gambling, some are drinking,
some to indiscretion sinking.
But some of those who simply game,
end stripped naked all the same;
some emerge newly-dressed
others wearing sacks at best.
Here no one's afraid of death,
Bacchus' name is on their breath.

First to those who pay for wine;
the libertines drink every time.
next they drink for those in prison,
thirdly all those still in action,
fourthly to the Christian crew,
fifthly to the dead and true,
sixthly to our frail sisters,
next the greenwood enlists.

Eighth then to the errant friars,
ninth the monks chased from their choirs,
tenth to all upon the ocean,
eleventh those who cause commotion,
twelfth to every penitent,
thirteenth those on journeys bent,
to the Pope and to the King,
unrestrained the tankards ring.

Drinks the master, drinks the mistress,
drinks the soldier, drinks the priestess,
drinks the woman, drinks the man,
drinks the maid and serving-hand,
drinks the hare, and drinks the snail,
drinks the dark, and drinks the pale,
drinks the settled, drinks the restless,
drinks the wise man, drinks the senseless.

Drinks the pauper and the sufferer,
drinks the exile and the stranger,
drinks the young 'un, and the old 'un,
drinks the bishop and the deacon,
drinks the sister, drinks the brother,
drinks the old girl, drinks the mother,
drink for this man, drink for that man,
drink a hundred, drink a thousand.

Six hundred pence might barely
last, when so immoderately
all are drinking without measure,
yet whate'er they drink for pleasure,
we're the ones that all men blame,
with not a penny to our name.
May they be cursed, all who blame us,
and set them not among the righteous.

'Amor volat undique' – CB87

Love rules all things,
sways the heart-strings,
solitary Love sings.
Love than honey sweeter,
makes the sour more bitter.
Blind Love, scorns modesty;
ice cold, burning
tepid turning,
Love is fearful, daring,
a faithful faithless thing.

Now is the perfect time,
Love sings its love in rhyme;
now all the birds chime.
Love rules young men,
Love seizes girls again.
Age depart! You've no place here.
Off with you! My dear
Theoclea,
my darling I revere;
you pest, Age, disappear.

Whether hot or cold,
none desire the old!
Nodding grief untold,
by nature growing cold;
now your tale is told.
Venus guarding youth's delight;
health glowing bright,
how I love your light,
yours is the right.
Nothing better, to my sight.

Love hovers everywhere
seized by passions there:
men and women pair
joined now worthily,
no girl shall be free;
or she'll lose her glory;
spend the nights darkly,
in deep custody
of some lock and key.
She'll feel it bitterly.

Childish Love, burning;
red-cheeked, paling;
always proves troubling,
Love, pleased easily,
shows constant instability.
Love can be ruled, with care.
In bed toying there
secretly to share
night's silence, fair:
Love's caught in the snare.

'Doleo, quod nimium' – CB118

(Latin text interspersed with French – italics)

I mourn the vast extent
of my pain, in banishment,
from all study I'll absent
myself, if she remove,
if all joy is spent,
whom I so love!

Her face, its loveliness,
makes me weep to excess;
a heart of ice she must possess.
The remedy,
to renew me readily,
a kiss, now, swiftly!

Such misery, what to do?
Leave La France anew?
And shall I lose
sweet amity?
Heart-sick choose
some fresh country?

If I should go away,
she'll have another by next day.
lightly loose me, anyway.
Ah, misery!
For love of her I suffer pain,
oh, endlessly.

Day, night, every thing
against me are working.
All the girls chattering
they make me weep.
the more I sigh
the deeper fear will seep.

O my friends, go play!
You the wise, I say,
spare my wretchedness today:
I'm deep in tears!
Counsel me I pray
by honour here!

Sweet, *for your honour*
I grieve, *weep and suffer;*
through you comes such dolour,
bitter plight.
Now, I go; my friends,
let me take flight!

'Stetit Puella' – CB177

And there the girl stood,
in red dress and hood;
if anyone touched her,
her dress was a-flutter.
Ah!

And there the girl stood
like a little rose-bud:
her face was all shining
her lips they were flowering.
Ah!

And there the girl stood
beside a tree bole,
and wrote to her lover
a love-note all told.

There Venus passed by:
sweet child of my eye,
great love for you
be your lover's due.

'O mi dilectissima!' – CB180

Oh, all my supreme delight!
With glance ever sweet and bright
now read these verses carefully
to whom are they writ? Tell me.

Mandaliet! Mandaliet!
To me my lover comes not yet!

'Who is she, this lovely girl,'
I said, 'as white as is the pearl,
in whose face so fair and bright
glows the red and gleams the white?'

It sweetly indicates, your face,
how great the nobleness and grace,
that within your modest breast
mix blood and milk in its depths.

Who is she, this lovely girl,
of the sweet the sweetest pearl?
I burn for her with such deep love,
I've scarce the strength to live and move.'

From my poor heart there rise,
about it and about, such sighs
for all your fair reality,
that leads me on to misery.

Your two eyes they shine on me,
like the sun's rays furiously,
like the lighting-flash's splendour
that splits all the night asunder.

‘May God, may the gods all, grant,
what deep in my mind I plan:
that the chains I may free
of her sweet virginity!’

Mandaliet! Mandaliet!
To me my lover comes not yet!

'Si puer cum puellula' – CB183

If a lad and his sweet lover
in a room together linger –

*Happy their conjunction!
Love of itself increasing, a way they'll come upon
to drive away every tedium!*

An ineffable game begins
in their abandoned lips and limbs.

*Happy their conjunction!
Love of itself increasing, a way they'll come upon
to drive away every tedium!*

'Veni, veni, venias' – CB174

Come now, come now, come now nigh,
do not leave me here to die!

*Hyria, hyrie,
nazaza, trillirivos!*

Lovely your face to the eye,
and the keen glance flashing high,
and the hair wound ply on ply –
oh, bright vision passing by!

Than the red roses, redder,
that the lily's white, whiter,
sweeter than every other,
I'll worship you forever!

*Hyria, hyrie,
nazaza, trillirivos!*

'Estatís florigero tempore' – CB70

At the height of summer's flowering
in the woodland shade reclining,
through the trees the sweet birds singing,
down the cool of evening warbling,
I enjoyed choice speech with Thisbe,
talked of Venus' commerce sweetly.

In her face,
and form and grace,
beyond all others
as sun in summer
the bright stars exceeds.
Oh, how to lead
that speech precisely
to a point where I am worthy
to enjoy her company?

Nothing makes it flow more sweetly,
than to bare love's hidden flame completely.
Fortune delights in inner daring.
So I uttered this beginning:

'A hidden fire in my heart
long I've nurtured here, apart,
whose intense power strangely
overwhelms all my body.

And you alone, could you but see,
might quench the fierce flames in me,
and bring me back to life, no less
bound by a happy faithfulness.'

'Love's hopes are always dubious,
now truth-filled, now fallacious.
To loving, constancy's the thing
virtue essentially must bring.

Before all other virtues patience
in true love asserts its presence.

And if its fire that burns your heart,
quench it with some new fire's art!

Our love's not furtive, nor fleeting,
it embraces joy in meeting.'

'The fire, that torments me,
or rather, glorifies me,
that fire remains invisible.

If it is un-extinguished still
by she who lit the flame it will
remain yet inextinguishable.

Thus it lies in your gift I say
to let me live, or swiftly slay.'

'Why should I risk my all,
on so precarious a call?

For four days now my mother,
my father, and my brother,
reproach me concerning you,

old women in the shadows,
and young lads at windows
are keeping a discreet watch too:

Argus' hundred eyes I dread,
oh, rather the pillory instead.

So the right line
for a noble mind's
to conceal all sign,
when the malign,
to false rumours incline.'

'Love, fear naught yet!
For such is our secret,
not Vulcan, his net,
nor its cunning, I'd dread.

Bright Mercury's trick,
Lethe's dew thick,
on Argus' eyes quick,
I'll sprinkle, close his hundred lids.'

'In the heart's scale trembling,
there, opposed, are hovering
modesty and deepest longing.

But I choose now, as I see now:
to the yoke my neck I bow,
the sweetest yoke, yet, I allow.'

'Oh, speak nothing ill
of Venus' secret yoke, for still
there is nothing freer,
naught better, nothing sweeter.

Oh, the pure light
of love's delight,
Venus' intrigues are holy rite!

So be swift
to claim her gift!
To gifts delayed we give short shrift.'

'Sweetest, thus, in thrall,
I grant you now my all.'

'Tempus est iocundum' – CB179

It's time to sport again, o you maidens!
Come play with them, o young gentlemen!

O! O!
All find pleasure so!
Now, for a new virgin lover, I am all aglow;
A fresh, it is a fresh love that has struck the blow!

The nightingale she sings, and all so sweetly,
hearing her melody now, I am all aglow.

The flower of girls it is, that delights me so,
and the rose of roses, she who burns me so.

You comfort me, to promises you go,
banish me, deny me your kisses so.

You toy with me all so innocently,
and push me away and all so simply.

Nightingale, fall silent for a moment!
Rise, song, from the heart then in an instant!

With the wintry season fine patience show,
with the springtime spirit lascivious grow.

Come, you lovely damsel, with joy now, lo!
Come, come, my beauty! I am all aglow!

O! O!
All find pleasure so!
Now, for a sweet virgin lover, I am all aglow;
A fresh, it is a fresh love that has struck the blow!

'Si linguis angelicus' – CB77

If I spoke with the tongues of angels and of men,
how might I tell the glory of, or for the ages pen,
that which I now reveal to Christians again,
despite every jealousy, envious and profane?

And yet take up, my tongue, the causes and effect!
Though the lady's name cloak now with due respect,
do not disclose to any man, keep all things indirect,
what must remain secret, and hidden, and correct.

In a formal flowering garden once I wandered,
in my mind what I should do duly there I pondered,
fearing lest in the sand the seed might be squandered;
I prized the flower of the world, and lo, I desponded.

Yet if I despondent proved, it merits no surprise.
'Some old woman guards my rose from all prying eyes,'
I said, 'so she may not be loved, nor love, in any guise.
May Pluto carry off that crone, eradicate all spies!'

As I turned over, in my thoughts, all that I now say,
trusting some lightning bolt might snatch the crone away,
behold, looking back I saw, before I took my way,
hear now what I beheld, lingering there that day:

I saw the flower of flowers, saw the flower fairest,
I saw of every rose of May the very rarest,
I saw the shining star of all the stars the clearest,
so my heart was stolen by one I love the dearest.

When I saw the very one I've longed for forever,
then my heart ineffably exulted but to be there,
and I sped as swiftly to present myself before her,
and bend the knee directly this sweet salute to offer:

‘Hail, the loveliest of all, of jewels most of worth,
hail, pride of maidenhood, most glorious of birth,
hail, light of all the lights, the rose of all the earth,
of Blanche fleur and Helen, and Venus the re-birth!’

Thus my Morning Star replied, with some anxiety:
‘May He, who rules the sky above, all things that are earthly,
plants the grass with violets, the rose with thorns so thickly,
grant you some swift remedy, bring you health and glory!’

‘Sweetest one’, I answered, ‘my heart to me revealed,
my soul was made so you alone might pronounce it healed.
For the saying goes, these words the ancient teachings yield:
whoever strikes a blow, by them the wound’s best sealed.’

‘Do you claim that I then was the dealer of the wound?
If that’s your tale, I deny it, but if you still must sound
your cry of woe, reveal the hurt and its cause profound,
so that some slight cure might be immediately found!’

‘Where’s the need to bare the hurt when it’s obvious?
Five summers have gone by the sixth is speeding past,
since I saw you dancing when life one day was joyous:
and you the image found in each window, every glass.

When I saw you dancing so, my mind was filled with wonder,
saying: “There’s a girl worth every signal mark of honour!
She’s the one without compare, exceeding every other,
hers the brightest face of all, her features bright as summer!”

Splendid your features all, your visage so delightful,
like the air shining clear, as the heavens cheerful;
thus I cried out frequently: ‘Lord, my Lord so noble!
Is this the lovely Helena, or Venus the eternal?’

Your golden hair it flowed on down, ah, so wonderfully,
your throat like a mass of snow in some mountain gully,
your waist so slender, too; every person must agree,
that beyond all perfumes your fragrance rises free.

In your smiling face, there glowed a starry brightness
in your sparkling teeth, shone ivory's clear whiteness,
your limbs of such a form, more than I could express:
whose mind would not be bound by such loveliness?

Your shining figure thus all my thoughts enchained,
mind and heart and soul were irrevocably changed.
Merely to converse with you, all my spirit strained;
but for many years, alas, a mere hope it remained.

Therefore my spirit was wounded by you truly.
Behold my life has followed the sad path before me.
Who in any place, or time, was ever hurt so deeply?
Who hoped for anything, and failed so completely?

This the arrow that I bear forever in my breast,
a thousand times and more, sighing with the rest,
saying: "Maker of all things, how have I transgressed?
With every lover's burden my poor back is blessed.

Of food and drink and sleep I am now bereft,
there is no medicine to cure my illnesses.
Christ, do not abandon me to misery and death,
but deign to succour me in all my wretchedness!"

These and many other blows on my heart alight,
nor is there any balm, to strengthen me, in sight,
save that, time and time again, in the dark of night,
in dreams I am with you, in imagination bright.

Rose, now you see how I am wounded to the core,
how fierce the sufferings, your torment I endure,
crying: "Please!", do whatever might relieve the sore,
let me be in health again, and my life restore!

If you might do this thing, then I would glorify you,
like cedar of Lebanon, or higher, would exalt you.
But if naught can aid me, though how can that be true,
I must sink down deeper even than I have hereto.'

My shining rose replied: 'Your great misery,
the torment you endure, is not unknown to me.
What I have borne for you, though, you may never see;
worse the pain I have endured than I can e'er repeat.

But of my sufferings I'll give no recitation,
wishing rather to provide some poor compensation,
that might restore your joy, bringing you salvation,
offering a sweeter balm than honeyed embrocation.

So tell me, noble youth, what you have in mind!
Is it silver now the prize, in your words enshrined,
or a precious jewel that dazzled eyes may blind?
If I can I'll give to you whate'er you seek to find.'

'No not those, I claim, not jewellery nor silver,
rather what I need is considerably greater,
make of the impossible the simplest gift ever
offer me the brightest joy, erasing all I suffer.'

'What on earth you're wishing for, that I can't divine;
yet for me to grant it you, it is a wish of mine.
So if in whate'er I possess, you readily can find
what you desire, then take it, such is my design!'

What more was needed? I threw my arms around her,
gave a thousand kisses, a thousand were on offer,
again and again indeed declaring to my lover:
'Surely this is the thing that I have longed for ever!'

Who pretends they do not know what followed her assent?
Grief and sighing far away now from us are sent,
all the joys of paradise in hearts with one intent,
and in an instant every fresh delight together blent.

There the joys of love multiply a hundredfold,
there what was longed for in my girl and I unfold,
there the prize for loving is given to me to hold,
there my name's exalted among the blessed of old.

All you who love, then, my sad case remember,
do not despair of love, it's fine to be a lover!
Surely, that day of days will not delay forever,
where, beyond all torment, glory follows after.

Out of all bitterness, pleasure will yet prove sure,
though not till the greatest labours have gone before,
who yearns for honey sweet, sad troubles must endure;
so hope for better days, though bitter are in store!

'Dum Diane vitrea' – CB62

When Diana's crystal light
rises in the evening
from her brother rosy bright
her own lamp re-kindling,
Zephyr breathing sweet breezes
through the ether as he pleases
dissolves the cloud;
so feeling's bowed
to all the powers of harmony
and thus the heart
is soothed by art
that's swayed by love's witchery.

Bright Hesperus grants anew
than death sweeter
the sweet moisture
of pure soporific dew
to all that is mortal too.

O how happy is that antidote of slumber
that allays the storms of cares and troubles without number!
Beneath the half-closed eyelids sleep gently stealing,
equals the deepest joy itself of love's sweetest feeling.

Morpheus, in dreaming,
brings us, gently streaming
lightest breezes blowing soft from the wheat-filled land,
river-murmurs rising from beds of purest sand,
mill-wheels circling, turning slowly round and round,
from our sleeping eyes stealing light, our ears sound.

After Venus's sweet loving commerce
in sleep the wearied brain must immerse.
The eyes dimmed by looking on fresh wonders
sail on the raft of eyelids where sight wanders.
Ah, what a happy crossing from love to pleasant sleep,
yet the return to love is still more sweet!

From the fulfilled depths the perfumes rise again,
now drenching the triple chambers of the brain;
here veiling with mist the eyes
drooping in slumber's guise
and with those mists the eyelids overflowing
preventing the sight the far distance showing.
Thus the consenting eyes are by natural spirits bound,
those ministering powers of vision in the body found.

Under the pleasant greenwood bower,
where the nightingale laments the hour,
sweet is the rest enjoying,
sweeter is the toying
all in the grass
with a fresh lass
of rare beauty.
And where the vagrant
scents of the fragrant,
herbs have risen,
and we're given,
a rose-filled bed,
where in sweet nurturing sleep we may rest our head
wearied by Venus' commerce, caught instead
by tiredness,
where lassitude brings rest.

Oh, how swiftly
these lovers' hearts vary
altering, wavering endlessly!
Like boats wandering on the water,
lacking means to anchor,
drifting between doubt and hope they sadly hover,
thus, in Venus' ranks, every lover.

'Exiit diluculo' - CB90

At daybreak her way she took
the little shepherd girl
with her flock and her crook
and skein of un-spun wool.

In among her little flock,
a young ass and a ewe,
a heifer and a bullock,
he-goat, and she-goat too.

Sitting silent on the turf
a scholar she did see:
'What are you doing there, sir?
Oh, come and play with me!'