

# **Guillaume de Machaut**

## **Rondeaux and Ballades**

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## Introduction

Guillaume de Machaut (c1300-1377) is regarded as the last and greatest of the French 14th century poet-composers. A member of the *ars nova* movement in music, he developed the motet, and various secular forms including the rondel and the ballade. Educated in Reims, he became a secretary to John I, Count of Luxembourg and King of Bohemia, who died at Crécy in 1346, and was later employed by members of the family, including Jean, Duc de Berry. Machaut also became a canon, ultimately of Reims (in 1337) where he spent the latter part of his life, writing and composing, and supervising the compilation of his manuscripts and scores. A prolific, disciplined and talented poet and composer, he also penned several prose works and narrative poems, including a treatise on poetry (the *Prologue*). His work influenced many other musicians, and major poets including Christine de Pisan and Chaucer. The selection translated here illustrates his pre-occupation with the lyric conventions of courtly love. The music for all but a few of the selected poems is extant, and available in many fine recordings. The ballads whose first lines, in Old French, are followed below by high numbers are some of the very many for which no music exists. Rhyme schemes have been variously altered to achieve a workable verse translation, while hopefully not losing the flavour of the original.

## Rondeaux

### I: Sweet face and gracious (Dous viaire gracieus)

Sweet face and gracious,  
With true heart I've served you.

Would'st render me piteous,  
Sweet face and gracious?

If I'm somewhat inglorious,  
Do not you forget me too:  
Sweet face and gracious,  
With true heart I've served you.

### II: Alas! Why such lament and such complaint (Helas! Pour quoy se demente et complaint)

Alas! Why such lament, and such complaint  
Yields my grieving heart, of its deep sadness,

When my lady can no way hear its plaint?  
Alas! Why such lament, and such complaint?

Naught can aid it, if it yields forth its plaint,  
Since Love for it displays scant tenderness.  
Alas! Why such lament, and such complaint  
Yields my grieving heart, of its deep sadness?

### III: Mercy I beg of you, my dear sweet lady (Merci vous pri, ma douce dame chiere)

Mercy I beg of you, my dear sweet lady,  
Let the price of joy not be raised for me,

For I have paid for that joy most dearly,

Mercy I beg of you, my dear sweet lady.

And if Love would bind me to him nearly,  
Since I hold you, above all, dear, surely,  
Mercy I beg of you, my dear sweet lady,  
That the price of joy be not raised for me.

**IV: Without my heart, mournfully, I leave you (Sans cuer, dolens de  
vous departiray)**

Without my heart, mournfully, I leave you,  
And scant joy shall I have till I return.

Since my body from yours departs anew,  
Without my heart, mournfully, I leave you,

Yet know not where to go, or what to do,  
Since, full of tears and misery, I yearn.  
Without my heart, mournfully, I leave you,  
And scant joy shall I have till I return.

**V: When doth alight (Quant j'ay l'espart)**

When I have sight  
Of your glance so bright,  
Most honoured lady,  
Why then, outright  
All sweetness, quite  
Spreads within me.

For, morn and night,  
Will its arrow smite,  
And burn me, surely –  
When I have sight  
Of your glance so bright,  
Most honoured lady –

Then I'm set alight,  
With a smile ignite,  
Yet its ardour, fiery,  
With its sweet might  
Drives from me quite  
All grief and worry.

When I have sight  
Of your glance so bright,  
Most honoured lady,  
Why then, outright  
All sweetness, quite  
Spreads within me.

**VI: Five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love (Cinc, un, trese, huit,  
neuf d'amour fine)**

Five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love  
Have set me to burning endlessly,

For Hope seeks of love no end to prove –  
Five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love –

So, true love doth all the dross remove  
From my heart, for loving perfectly.

Five, one, thirteen, eight, nine of true love  
Have set me to burning endlessly.

*(Note: In alphanumeric cypher, five is the letter E, etc, letters which re-ordered, doubling the E, spell Jehane.)*

**VII: If you were not born to gratify me (Se vous n'estes pour mon  
guerredon née)**

If you were not born to gratify me,

Lady, twas ill I saw your smiling glance.

Never may joy be bestowed upon me,  
If you were not born to gratify me.

For, through you, this grievous strife I see,  
That, in so warring, must my death advance.  
If you were not born to gratify me,  
Lady, twas ill I saw your smiling glance.

**VIII: I find myself imprisoned here so sweetly (Tant doucement me  
sens emprisonnés)**

I find myself imprisoned here so sweetly,  
Ne'er did lover have so sweet a prison.

I ne'er seek to be released completely,  
I find myself imprisoned here so sweetly.

For all good things this prison bears me,  
A lady may grant, without ill action.  
I find myself imprisoned here so sweetly,  
Ne'er did lover have so sweet a prison.

**IX: Rose, lily, springtime, verdure (Rose, lis, printemps, verdure)**

Rose, lily, springtime, verdure,  
Flower, balm, and sweet odour,

Fair one, you are the sweeter;  
And all that's good in Nature,  
Is yours, and you I thus adore.  
Rose, lily, springtime, verdure,  
Flower, balm, and sweet odour.

And since every creature  
You surpass in worth, forever,

I may truly say, with honour:  
Rose, lily, springtime, verdure,  
Flower, balm, and sweet odour,  
Fair one, you are the sweeter.

**X: Your sweet glance, gentle lady, slays me (Vos dous regars, douce  
dame, m'a mort)**

Your sweet glance, gentle lady, slays me,  
If Love grant not your noble heart bring aid,

Since it drew me to love you, smilingly –  
Your sweet glance, gentle lady, slays me –

For my death, in its sweetness, I foresee,  
Of the perfect love that doth me pervade.  
Your sweet glance, gentle lady, slays me,  
If Love grant not your noble heart bring aid.

**XI: How better can one speak one's woe (Comment puet on miex ses  
maus dire)**

How better can one speak one's woe,  
To a lady well-versed in honour  
Whom one loves, as a true lover,

When her refusal one fears so,  
And thus, one dreads her anger?  
How better can one speak one's woe,  
To a lady well versed in honour?

If she sees one trembling so,  
Altered, in colour and manner,  
And mute too, and tearful ever,  
How better can one speak one's woe,  
To a lady well versed in honour  
Whom one loves, as a true lover?

**XII: That which sustains me, my life and honour (Ce que soustient moy, m'onneur et ma vie)**

That which sustains me, my life and honour,  
With Love, that is you, my sweet lady.

Far, near, whate'er is said, you are ever  
That which sustains me, my life and honour.

Since I live through you, whom I love better  
I swear than myself, my sweet enemy,  
That which sustains me, my life and honour,  
With Love, that is you, my sweet lady.

**XIII: Lady if you have not perceived (Dame se vous n'avez aparceü)**

Lady if you have not perceived  
My heart loves you, without deceit,  
Try me; if honest truth you'd greet.

Your great beauty will have deceived  
Me quite; hurt me with all that's sweet,  
Lady if you have not perceived  
My heart loves you, without deceit.

For so has my heart all such received,  
Urging my love, that I lack conceit  
To think with joy or reward I'll meet,  
Lady if you have not perceived  
My heart loves you, without deceit,  
Try me; if honest truth you'd greet.

**XIV: Ten and seven, five, three, fourteen, fifteen (Dix et sept, cinq, trese, quatorse et quinse)**

Ten and seven, five, three, fourteen, fifteen,

Has, with the purest love, seized me sweetly.

And, in loving embrace, she's captured me –  
Ten and seven, five, three, fourteen, fifteen –

Through what all praise and love, her quality,  
And peerless beauty, that they prize highly.

Ten and seven, five, three, fourteen, fifteen,  
Has, with the purest love, seized me sweetly.

*(Note: In alphanumeric cypher, seventeen is the letter P, etc, letters which re-ordered, doubling the E, spell Perone, for Péronelle, or Péronelle, d'Armentières who corresponded with Guillaume, see his 'Voir Dit')*

**XV: My end is my beginning (Ma fin est mon commencement)**

My end is my beginning  
My beginning is my end,

True to its tenor keeping,  
My end is my beginning.

My third, but three times singing,  
Returns to reach its end.  
My end is my beginning,  
My beginning is my end.

*(Note: Guillaume's music for this rondel uses reversal of roles, and retrogression, in a variety of ways. As an example, at the end of the first line the Tenor (third voice) begins to sing his part backwards. Meanwhile, the Triplum (first voice) and Cantus (second voice) exchange parts. The Triplum sings the Cantus in reverse, while the Cantus sings the Triplum in reverse. The end and the beginning of the musical flow are therefore identical.)*

**XVI: Surely, my eye gazed on beauty richly (Certes, mon oueil  
richement visa bel)**

Surely, my eye gazed on beauty richly,  
When it spied my good and lovely lady,

A kind manner and face she has, truly,  
Surely, my eye gazed on beauty richly.

Since Abel no such flower was, believe me,  
The flower of flowers all call her, gladly.  
Surely, my eye gazed on beauty richly,  
When it spied my good and lovely lady.

**XVII: Lady, who would, indeed, your true name know (Dame, qui vuet  
vostre droit nom savoir)**

Lady, who would, indeed, your true name know,  
See this verse, which when sung, gives it herein.

Five from eight they must take, the thing to show,  
Lady, who would, indeed, your true name know.

To receive this verse with grace, be not slow,  
For I have made it to hold your name within.  
Lady, who would, indeed, your true name know,  
See this verse, which when sung, shows it herein.

*(Note: the name intended is enigmatic.)*

**XVIII: Since I am now forgot by you, sweetheart (Puis qu'en oubli sui  
de vous, dous amis)**

Since I am now forgot by you, sweetheart,  
To the amorous life and joy, I bid farewell.

Ill was the day when I gave you my heart,

Since I am now forgot by you, sweetheart.

And yet I'll keep this promise, on my part,  
That no other love in my heart shall dwell.  
Since I am now forgot by you, sweetheart,  
To the amorous life and joy, I bid farewell.

**XIX: When my lady tells me of love's sorrows (Quant ma dame les  
maus d'amer m'aprent)**

When my lady tells me of love's sorrows,  
She could speak to me of its blessings too.

For with sweetness my heart she does enclose,  
When my lady tells me of love's sorrows.

To any who those blessings rightly knows,  
Naught is sweeter; tis easy to see tis true.  
When my lady tells me of love's sorrows,  
She could speak to me of its blessings too.

**XX: Sweet lady, while I do live (Douce dame, tant com vivray)**

Sweet lady, while I live and breathe,  
My poor body will serve your wish;

My life's devotion now, receive,  
Sweet lady, while I live and breathe.

Of a true, sweet glance, I believe,  
Born of your noble face, came this.  
Sweet lady, while I live and breathe,  
My poor self will serve your wish.

**XXI: If I see nor hear, my lady, so (Quant je ne voy ma dame n'oy)**

If I see nor hear my lady, so,

I see naught but it annoys me.

My heart melts in me like snow,  
When I see nor hear my lady, so.

Ne'er such ill, I swear, did I know,  
Through my eyes that, weeping, drown me.  
If I see nor hear my lady, so,  
I see naught but it annoys me.

### Ballades

#### I: If Love does not now of his grace soften (S'amours ne fait par sa grace adoucir)

If Love does not now, of his grace, soften  
Your generous heart, lady, which I adore,  
I must die, of that I feel most certain;  
Of grief, or your refusal, I am sure.  
And I think twere best for me, what is more,  
Refused by you, to die, at my next breath,  
Than, in my sorrow, languish until death.

For if, to you, my sorrow I reveal,  
Perchance pity in your heart will grow,  
While, if Refusal slays me, joy I'll feel,  
And at my death I'll be solaced so,  
For loving you, since of it you'll know.  
Tis better to seek solace, in a breath,  
Than, in my sorrow, languish until death.

Tis no life to go on languishing thus,  
As I now languish, for I'm set on fire,  
Filled secretly with longings amorous  
Long hid in my heart, by pure desire.  
Alas! My heart is so consumed, entire,

I'd rather tell my ills now, in a breath,  
Than in my sorrow, languish until death.

**II: Alas, so great my woe and pain (Helas! tant ay douleur et peine)**

Alas, so great my woe and pain,  
Lady, when I take leave of you,  
Joyless you should be, tis plain;  
My heart from me doth near issue.  
Then the sorrow that doth ensue  
Is so great too cruel would be  
The heart that for it lacked pity.

For my future is full of woe,  
Devoid of joy, it doth advance,  
Far from me is the sweet flow  
Of your gentle smiling glance,  
That struck, with amorous lance,  
Such a wound, too cruel twould be  
The heart that for it lacked pity.

And when your sovereign beauty  
I see not, Deep Desire, by his art  
Strives hard to slay me, swiftly;  
He sets my heart afire, his dart,  
Scorching, such grief doth impart  
That all too cruel it would be  
The heart that for it lacked pity.

**III: Naught could one think of better or wish for (On ne porroit penser  
ne souhaidier)**

Naught could one better think of nor wish for  
Than she whom I love with *fin amour*; see,  
There is naught in her to reproach her for,  
Rather the perfect sovereign flower is she  
Of all that makes a woman true and worthy,

So, I praise Love, with humble will and pure,  
Since the flower of all creatures I adore.

Naught can I do but love and hold her dear,  
For there's no sorrow, no ill, no sadness,  
That can dwell within my heart, tis clear,  
Rather I'm ever filled with joy and gladness;  
Even in thinking on her perfect sweetness,  
I find sustenance and sweet nurture, more  
Since the flower of all creatures I adore.

And since I live in such pleasant bondage,  
That holds my heart in such a noble sway,  
And serve her, without change of usage,  
Faithfully, with all my strength, always,  
Truly, I love and praise the hour and day  
When I felt Love wound my heart so sore,  
Since the flower of all creatures I adore.

#### **IV: Beauty that doth all others grace (Biauté qui toutes autres pere)**

Beauty, that doth all others grace,  
Yet fickle and distant towards me,  
Pure sweetness, bitter to my taste,  
Form, of every praise right worthy,  
Modest face, with heart of steel,  
Glances, a lover's life may steal,  
Seeming both joyful and reserved, say I,  
Have brought me to this, that of love I'll die.

Delay in yielding, from which I suffer,  
Fair welcome, that doth hate employ,  
Hurtful love, with no reward on offer,  
Hope that deprives me of all joy,  
Little help, and burning desire,  
Sad thought, a heart that sighs do tire,  
Harshness, disdain, and power to deny,

Have brought me to this, that of love I'll die.

I wish, to my lady, it were clear,  
That she turns all my joy to pain,  
And that her lovely face, so near,  
Destroys me, so great the ill I gain,  
No mirth, revel, song, do I pursue,  
I sing no more, as I used to do,  
Since Love, her sweet form, and my eye,  
Have brought me to this, that of love I'll die.

**V: Rich in love yet begging for a lover (Riches d'amour et mendians  
d'amie)**

Rich in love, yet begging for a lover,  
Poor in hope, yet graced with true desire,  
Full of woe, and yet deprived of succour,  
Far from mercy, and longing for my hire,  
Naked of all the joy that I require,  
Am I through love, fearful of death ever,  
Since my lady hates me, and I adore her.

There's no comfort for my great malady  
Can come to me, from anywhere at all,  
For in my heart such love is fed in me,  
Nor on regret nor pleasure can I call,  
Nor live in joy, nor die, nor heal withal,  
Own no good but languishing in dolour,  
Since my lady hates me, and I adore her.

But the wishes of so sweet an enemy  
I would joyfully and humbly suffer,  
Since through her high honour I now see,  
Against her wish, for I want and love her.  
Yet if Love would have me die forever,  
For love of her, twould be for the better,  
Since my lady hates me, and I adore her.

**VI: Sweet lover, hear my sad plea (Dous amis, oy mon complaint)**

Sweet lover, hear my sad plea,  
In agony  
And misery,  
Lacking any aid from you  
My heart speaks, in love's constraint,  
Held by you, in restraint;  
Ill and faint,  
Ay, when you neglect me too,  
In my despair,  
For elsewhere  
Naught can cure my misery,  
In tears I fare,  
Everywhere,  
For your heart's no longer with me.

Lover, love of you wounds me,  
Stained, my face you see,  
Mottled utterly,  
With many a varied colour;  
It strains my heart, painfully,  
Authority  
It has to smother me,  
Finding in you no succour.  
Its span is over,  
Should you never  
Come healing the heart within me,  
That fears, from Amor,  
Death swift and sure,  
For your heart's no longer with me.

Love for you binds so tightly,  
I can never loose me  
From your love, truly,  
Held by your perfect sweetness,

And by your peerless beauty,  
Pictured within me,  
Stamping me surely,  
With your great worthiness.  
Thus, I feel to excess  
All my wretchedness,  
And I moan more loudly,  
In sad weakness,  
My powers less,  
For your heart's no longer with me.

**VII: I would rather languish in harsh dolour (J'aim miex languir en  
ma dure dolour)**

I would rather languish in harsh dolour  
And then die, if such to Love is pleasing,  
Than have mercy that does you no honour  
Lady, whom I love, and no deceiving;  
For ne'er have I willed any other thing,  
Nor should, despite the pain that I endure,  
Were you a thousand times as harsh, and more.

Though I've languished in tears and sadness  
For many a day, through your cruelty,  
And though I'm more distant, nonetheless,  
Day by day from what I seek, your mercy,  
Yet I would never cease, through loyalty,  
You, above every creature, to adore,  
Were you a thousand times as harsh, and more.

So I beg you lady, who are the flower  
Of every virtue, and of every beauty,  
And have, in grace and worth, each hour,  
And in manner, so surmounted every  
Other, that you might yet show me pity,  
For I would ne'er think ill of you, tis sure,  
Were you a thousand times as harsh, and more.

**VIII: With discomfort, with amorous torment (De desconfort, de martyre amourens)**

With discomfort, with amorous torment  
With grievous sighs, with cruel longing,  
With plaints and tears, with sad discontent,  
Filled full, and in a sorry pasture feeding,  
Empty, and for love's nurture hungering,  
Lives this heart of mine, while dying, lady,  
Desirous of winning your sweet mercy.

But what makes it feel the anguish more,  
And makes the sadness greater I suffer,  
Is that your kind heart doth on pity draw,  
And, carelessly, will welcome another,  
Yet feels no pity for the pain I smother,  
Well knowing how I languish, endlessly,  
Desirous of winning your sweet mercy.

And since it thus, enjoys my misery,  
And takes delight in my discomfort, lo,  
No lover has ever been more happy  
Than I shall be, if all this pain and woe  
Slays me, for you; nor would dying so  
Prove harsh, if tis your wish I die, to me,  
Desirous of winning your sweet mercy.

**IX: Without my heart I go, sad and weeping (Sans cuer m'en vois, dolens et esplourez)**

Without my heart, I go, sad and weeping,  
Full of sighs, deprived of happiness,  
Stricken, ablaze with a fierce longing,  
Sweet lady, that my sight you'll swiftly bless,  
Such that heart-less I endure,

Nor could I such great ills suffer more,  
If Hope did not dwell within me too,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you,

And Memory, that knows all things concealed,  
Which Sweet Thought displays to me ever  
Such that imprinted in me, and revealed,  
Is your lovely form and tranquil manner,  
Your gentle smiling glance,  
And your sweetness, that doth my love enhance,  
You whom at all times, everywhere, I view,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

Thus, I've more joy, and sweetness well enow,  
When I have these, that in my heart appear;  
For I have Hope, ever my comfort, now,  
And Memory can show me, far or near,  
Your pleasant visage shining,  
And if grief should come to me through longing,  
Sweetest Thought destroys, consumes, it too,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

**X: Lover, grieving, dazed, disconsolately (Amis, dolens, maz et  
desconfortez)**

Lover, grieving, dazed, disconsolately,  
You part from me, and wish me to believe  
That your heart yet wholly dwells with me.  
I know that well; nor for you can conceive  
Of any gift as lovely,  
Yet, in time, could grant to you, from me,  
All that love savours in this world, anew,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

For it is fine, pure, discreet, faithfully  
Generous, true; scarce can I perceive  
The rich honour, and high nobility

That crowns it; nor know how to achieve,  
Or grant, aught as worthy,  
In recompense. Yet I desire, greatly,  
To comfort you, wholly, and assuage you,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

Thus, I promise you'll be loved, most truly,  
Beyond all, and without my wearying,  
So, with that, leave with my heart, entirely,  
That for you alone, quits me, renegading;  
Guard it well for me,  
Like a lover, love and greet it gladly;  
No dearer gift have I to honour you,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

**XI: Lady, through you, I now feel comforted (Dame, par vous me sens reconfortez)**

Lady, through you, I now feel comforted,  
For all the grief I'm used to receiving;  
Through you, all my miseries have fled,  
Through you, I feel naught that is annoying,  
Through you, I hope, entire,  
For that which the true lover can desire,  
The gift of mercy, that may prove my due,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

Lady, through you, now I'm resurrected  
Brought from my past hell to paradise,  
From all mortal fears once more defended,  
Healed of the mighty woes love can devise,  
Through you, the sour grows sweet,  
When I, as your lover, you deign to greet,  
And, if you wish, joy may be mine, anew,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

Thus, I a false traitor would prove to be,

Sweet lady, if I did not love you so  
Very truly, for all my blessings, surely,  
Flow from your great goodness, and joy I know,  
When fine, peerless, lovely,  
You as the flower of ladies, they decree,  
So joyful tears I weep, tender and true,  
In place of my heart that dwells with you.

**XII Lady, come look not now (Dame, ne regardés pas)**

Lady, come look not now  
To your own worth so,  
Nor to me, base I avow,  
But come look, also,  
To loyal Love whose bow  
Has sweetly sent its dart my way,  
Through your sweet pleasant glance this day.

So fast in your net, am I,  
That I with pleasure,  
And humbly, without a sigh,  
My grief will suffer.  
Alas, your heart will never  
Know the ardour that doth me slay,  
Through your sweet pleasant glance this day.

My lady, so sweetly made,  
None I'll love, ever,  
Or adore but you; my aid,  
My tears and laughter,  
My good, my ill, my vigour,  
God keep me, all do come my way  
Through your sweet pleasant glance this day.

**XIII: Think not lady I renounce your love (Ne pensez pas, dame, que je  
recroie)**

Think not lady that I renounce your love,  
If tis not often now that I see you,  
For I do not so, nor could such approve,  
So my heart loves you, right well and true;  
Rather I, with heart, body, life, pursue  
Naught that from you would ever make me stray,  
Nor forget you, where'er I turn, alway.

*(Note: this single verse is given in the manuscripts)*

**XIV: None in deed or word or thought (N'en fait n'en dit n'en pensée)**

None in deed, or word, or thought  
Should betray in aught  
My beloved lady.  
Nor will I, truly,  
Rather love I'll give  
Serve with true heart, surely,  
As long as I shall live.

For her face, bright and gay,  
More than the rose in May,  
Matching every beauty,  
And her manner sweetly  
Seized me; so, forgive,  
If I praise her highly,  
As long as I shall live.

Truly, I must love the day  
I fell for her, I say,  
And, not deceiving her,  
Heart and body gave her,  
From the hope she did give  
My joy shall double, ever,  
As long as I shall live.

**XV: Since all my songs I create (Pour ce que tous mes chans fais)**

Since all my songs I create  
From dolorous sentiment,  
And sing no more of late,  
I'm blamed for my intent.  
One who could truly know  
What my heart suffers so,  
Through my welcoming lady,  
Would not blame me though,  
If I sing less frequently.

Through such love, none other  
Has so very dolorously  
Been treated thus, however,  
As I, for assuredly,  
No tongue could tell it truly,  
Nor heart conceive it surely,  
The dolour that seizes me,  
And so, I am right, I see,  
If I sing less frequently.

Yet my fair lady makes me  
Suffer this grievous fate,  
Since word or deed can't please  
Her noble self of late.  
That grips my heart, so tightly,  
In two twould break, entirely,  
Rather than live so sadly,  
So that none ought to blame me  
If I sing less frequently.

**XVI: Tis hope that doth assure me (Esperance qui m'asseüre)**

Tis hope that doth assure me  
Of peerless joy, the life I wish,  
Sweet thought, to nurture me,

Fair welcome, days to relish,  
And doth all good replenish,  
Since Love has so enriched me  
That I love, and wait for mercy.

And if tis a harsh wait for me,  
In my desire, I feel no woe,  
For I would please my lady,  
And Love, each day, e'en so.  
So, peerless reward I know,  
Since tis thus, it seems to me,  
That I love, and wait for mercy.

Memory within doth picture  
Her pure beauty, free of pride,  
Her goodness, her noble figure,  
Fine ways, fair welcome allied,  
And how smilingly I'm eyed;  
For her gaze charms so sweetly,  
That I love, and wait for mercy.

**XVII: I think that never to any creature (Je ne cuit pas qu'oncques à creature)**

I think that never to any creature  
Did Love grant his blessings as largely  
As to me alone, of his grace so pure;  
Not that I have deserved, assuredly,  
The sweetness that he has brought me,  
For of all ills and blame he healed me,  
Since he gave me, and he gave entire,  
My heart, my love, and all that I desire.

And, therefore, I am full of joyfulness,  
Happy at heart, and live delightfully,  
And render to Love in true faithfulness,  
All I owe him, which is to love loyally,

I'faith, within the heart, in every deed.  
For such love leaves me no thought indeed,  
That would not be right joyful to inspire  
My heart, my love, and all that I desire.

Thus there is naught to which I give my care  
Except to love and praise, with humility,  
Love, who nourishes me with such fare  
As love, of mercy, grants ever sweetly,  
From an amorous and a perfect heart,  
Yet the mercy that aids me with its art,  
Is simply to see and hear, as I require,  
My heart, my love, and all that I desire.

**XVIII: If I lament, well, I can do no other (Si je me pleing, je n'en plus  
mais)**

If I lament, well, I can do no other,  
For no man could be so little joyous,  
Nor was before this, nor will be ever,  
As I am now, nor e'er so dolorous;  
For when I think that true aid and succour,  
I might have, of my lady and Amour,  
For all the time I've spent upon her so,  
My lady she but grants me leave to go.

Yet, in granting it, she told me rather  
That I was faithful, true and loving,  
And that in nothing had I wronged her,  
A fact which set me then to wondering;  
For I've no recourse or hope without her,  
Nor heart, nor a thought, for any other,  
And yet solely of her own will, I know,  
My lady she but grants me leave to go.

So, I'll have neither peace nor good always,  
Not one thing to render my heart joyous,

No longer shall I make or songs or lays,  
Since Love toward me proves ungenerous,  
Rather towards my own end all now flows,  
And that of my songs too, with all my woes,  
Since, deigning thus her loyalty to show,  
My lady she but grants me leave to go.

**XIX: Lady though I am not loved by you (Dame, comment qu'amez de  
vous ne soie)**

Lady, though I am not loved by you,  
There is nothing that could so grieve me,  
Or yet my heart, than if I found it true  
That you loved some other man than me,  
No comfort would there be,  
Naught that could ever set me rejoicing,  
Should that transpire, other than my dying.

For Sweet Hope, that nourishes me still,  
Sustaining my heart with Sweet Thought also,  
Against Desire that seeks to do me ill,  
You'd have desert me, without cause, so,  
Such that, Desire, my foe,  
I'd find no means, indeed, of countering,  
Should that transpire, other than my dying.

And truly, lady, should it prove my fate  
To lose all hope of my regaining favour,  
Due to such love, I'd be quite desperate;  
Far too weak am I such blows to endure,  
Nor is there any cure,  
I think, that you or Love could ever bring  
Should that transpire, other than my dying.

**XX: Very little, and nothing willingly (De petit po, de niant volonté)**

Very little, and nothing willingly,

Of what suffices, doth each lover gain  
Of their love, of good grace, it seems to me.  
Alas! Lamenting, my love, I see plain,  
Wishes no joy of me  
Willingly, nor doth my capacity  
Credit, rather abandons me to pain.  
None loved I, yet won so little, truly.

Amor knows well that I've loved her so,  
And love still, and will do so forever,  
More than any; but slanderers, I know,  
Have harmed me with her, who much honour  
And great good and knowledge  
Win with her, such as I can scarcely pledge.  
And so, I say, if thus I lose my lover,  
None loved I, yet won so little, truly.

And if any have spoken villainously  
Of me to her, I set them at defiance,  
And any that do deal with her falsely,  
May she upon them place no reliance,  
Nor by ill words be moved,  
Since she should long ago the truth have proved;  
For if she believes them, and so leaves me,  
None loved I, yet won so little, truly.

**XXI: Amor makes me desirous (Amours me fait desirer)**

Amor makes me desirous  
Amorous,  
But yet so foolishly,  
That I hope not thereby  
Nor think, say I,  
Nor imagine fondly,

That the sweet and noble face  
Full of grace

I love may give me joy,  
Unless, by Amor granting  
My employ,  
I'll win it without asking.

I've such hardship to endure  
I can no more  
Bear it, nor last longer,  
For in my heart I would hide  
Here inside  
This love in secret ever,

Nor request that it relent;  
In torment,  
I wish to make my ending.  
Indeed, I think not truly,  
Believe me,  
I'll win it without asking.

Yet desire inflames me  
And doubly,  
With love, so violently  
That I lack all memory,  
Naught in me,  
But thought of loving only.

And so, all amorously,  
And humbly,  
Joylessly languishing,  
I'll die unless, soon indeed,  
Tis agreed  
I'll win it without asking.

**XXII: I too am like one smitten, I also (Je sui aussi com cils qui est  
ravis)**

I too am like one smitten, I also

Lack strength, and sense, and understanding;  
At each season, day, hour, moment, no  
Thought of aught is in my mind working,  
Except that of my lady,  
And on that thought I dwell, completely.  
All is forgotten, save her I love more  
Than myself, a hundred thousand times more.

Such is my heart taken when I see her,  
And it burns and flames so amorously  
That tis shown in my whole face and manner.  
And when I'm far from her face wholly,  
I languish in great dolour:  
So great my wish to view the worth of her,  
Naught charms, I flee all; save her I love more  
Than myself, a hundred thousand times more.

Whereby, near and far, I languish ever,  
And I am changed, and am altered so,  
That I am loathed by many another,  
And by my lady too, and rightly so.  
Such is the whole of my fear  
For I can see no way, means, no path clear  
To worth and aid, save her I love more,  
Than myself, a hundred thousand times more.

**XXIII: If whatever love might grant a lover (Se quanque amours puet  
donner à amy)**

If whate'er love might grant to a lover,  
And whate'er a lover's heart desires,  
And whate'er a lady might add ever,  
Of peace and light, by loving loyally,  
Were to be found wholly  
Within one heart, I say, assuredly,  
It would feel grief and sadness and dismay

Next to the joy and light I know today.

For never is there aught that frightens me,  
And nothing can bring my heart discomfort  
Rather my days go so well and smoothly,  
That my thoughts can never dwell on aught  
Except on joy solely,  
And that makes me to live so happily,  
That Pleasure's heart's not joyful, I say,  
Next to the joy and light I know today.

And all because I have here, within me,  
The picture of my lady without peer,  
Who is imprinted and figured, wholly,  
In my loyal heart whose love is clear,  
So strongly, and so firmly,  
That now I see her, face to face truly;  
Nor can aught own more worth, nor ever may,  
Next to the joy and light I know today.

**XXIV: It seems to me there is no gift of Nature (Il m'est avis qu'il n'est  
dons de Nature)**

It seems to me there is no gift of Nature,  
However good, that any now doth prize  
Unless the brightness, clouded and obscure,  
Of Fortune grants it colour to their eyes,  
In whom there's no surety,  
No love, affection, nor loyalty,  
Yet none's loved or cherished in the end  
If Fortune does not take him for a friend.

Her goods are naught but airy venture,  
Wrongly given, and withdrawn in error,  
One must assume her fickleness, ever,  
Since in lying lies her greatest honour,

She's a monster hid you see  
In good luck, filled with dishonesty,  
For no true good to any doth she send,  
If Fortune does not take him for a friend.

And I marvel how Reason can so bear  
To suffer such an error, for so long,  
For the virtues meet discomfort there,  
From the vices, whose lordship is so strong,  
And who would the favour see  
Of those who are declared of high degree,  
Wastes his time, crying 'ah, me' in the end,  
If Fortune does not take him for a friend.

**XXV: I should complain of Fortune, and praise her (De Fortune me  
doi plaindre et loer)**

I should complain of Fortune and praise her,  
It seems, more than any other creature,  
For when I first began to prove a lover,  
Heart, thought, love, and care, on pleasure  
She did set most ably,  
More than I could ever have wished, truly,  
Nor in this world was there, I'm sure,  
A lady who's so well provided for.

For I could never think nor yet perceive,  
Nor have it set before me, that Nature,  
From whate'er good and fine one might conceive,  
Could thus create a more perfect figure,  
Than in him, who my desire  
Is now, and will be always and entire,  
And that is why there ne'er was born before,  
A lady who's so well provided for.

Alas, that in this joy I cannot dwell!  
For Fortune whose state is never sure,

Will turn her wheel against me, I foretell,  
And bring about my heart's discomfiture.  
Yet, till my love is over,  
I shall love and cherish my dear lover,  
For never a false thought should she have more,  
A lady who's so well provided for.

**XXVI: Sweetest lady, I adore (Tres douce dame que j'aour)**

Sweetest lady, I adore,  
All my time I would spend with you,  
Night and day, and depart no more,  
And would love loyally and true,  
Like one who knows not what to do  
Except to serve you most sweetly,  
While I shall live, and faultlessly.

For I've granted you my love  
Faithfull I'll do you honour,  
With heart body vigour prove  
Guardian of your honour ever;  
To serve you, I'd gladly suffer  
With true heart, kindly, humbly,  
While I shall live, and faultlessly.

When I see your great sweetness,  
An ardour rises, through longing,  
In my heart, that brings tearfulness,  
From, within, a deepest sighing,  
For I am fearful of revealing  
The grief I would bear, most humbly,  
While I shall live, and faultlessly.

**XXVII: Shame, concern, fearfulness of error (Honte, paour, doubtance  
de meffaire)**

Shame, concern, fearfulness of error,

Temperance in asserting her decree,  
Quick to refuse, slow to grant a favour,  
Reason, measure, honour, honesty,  
She should wholly take to heart,  
Above all, loathe slanderers and their art,  
And in all things amorous prove a coward,  
Who would her honour most securely guard.

Wise in manner, virtue her example,  
Hiding all her secrets, and her liking,  
Simple in demeanour, proving little  
Eager to attract by friendly-seeming,  
For such doth slay a lover,  
Faith, peace and loyalty seeking ever,  
To all this should a lady show regard,  
Who would her honour most securely guard.

For when love dwells in a noble heart,  
Young, and courteous, and graced with frankness,  
Trustful and joyful, schooled in kindly art,  
Its wishes born of a sweet openness,  
Tis hard to resist pleasure,  
For these oft overcome sense and measure;  
So let her think, nor good advice discard,  
Who would her honour most securely guard.

**XXVIII: Give, my lords, give freely with both hands (Donnez, signeurs,  
donnez à toutes mains)**

Give, my lords, give freely, with both hands,  
Keep naught back, indeed, except your honour.  
If honour you possess, more than wide lands,  
The greater will prove yours, and the lesser:  
All men will cry: 'We have a valiant master!'  
Moreover, a fair realm that's well-employed,  
Is better by far than a realm destroyed.

Give to your subjects and those far away,  
For it better suits the king or emperor  
To give a thousand livres, on his own say,  
Than a denier be seized from him, tis sure.  
If you've true heart, never court dishonour.  
Moreover, a fair realm that's well-employed,  
Is better by far than a realm destroyed.

When a prince is generous, true, humane,  
His gifts are made with such kindness ever,  
That by his deeds, men far and near, tis plain,  
Fear not death, nor poverty, nor hard labour,  
Rather each would emulate their better.  
Moreover, a fair realm that's well-employed,  
Is better by far than a realm destroyed.

**XXIX: A viper in her heart my lady has (Une vipere en cuer ma dame  
maint)**

A viper in her heart my lady has,  
That shuts up both her ears with its tail,  
Such that she hears not my complaint, alas.  
It lies there, quiet, listening without fail.  
And in her mouth, unsleeping,  
A scorpion, my heart nigh on killing;  
A basilisk she has in her gaze, ever  
These three slay me – and her, God save her!

When I beg for her love, while weeping,  
Disdain will suffer her not to hear me,  
And, if she does hear my heart grieving,  
Refusal never sleeps in her mouth, truly,  
Rather strikes my heart, fiercely.  
And her Glance takes pleasure, joyfully,  
In seeing my heart, melt and burn and suffer,  
These three slay me – and her, God save her!

Love, she's done me many a wrong, you know,  
Though, desired or not, I'm hers forever,  
But when you flee, and faith weakens so,  
And Pity shows no urge to e'er recover,  
No more comfort do I see  
Than present death, for here, tormenting me,  
Disdain, Refusal, Glance, that my heart sever,  
These three slay me – and her, God save her!

**XXX: I might very well compare my lady (Je puis trop bien ma dame  
comparer)**

I might very well compare my lady  
To that statue Pygmalion held dear;  
Of ivory he wrought her peerless beauty,  
And loved her more than Jason Medea.  
Fools made request of her,  
Yet the statue would answer never,  
So, she does to me, who stirs my heart,  
For I ask always, yet silence is her part.

Pygmalion, who died of his longing,  
Prayed to the gods for such affection  
As might melt the sorry chill belonging  
To her image, and her cold dispassion  
Soften, that she might live,  
Have human flesh, and speech might sweetly give.  
Yet my love keeps us, ever, far apart,  
For I ask always, yet silence is her part.

Would that Love might turn the harsh to softness,  
In her, to whom my heart I have given,  
And in her heart revive loving kindness,  
So that of her I might have my guerdon.  
But Love, in fierce Disdain,  
Conjoins with her, yet sees in me how Pain  
Slays me; these three I know work their art,

For I ask always, yet silence is her part.

**XXXI: Of all the fruits and all the flowers (De toutes flours n'avoit et  
de tous fruits)**

Of all the fruits and all the flowers  
My garden holds a solitary rose:  
The rest lies ruined, all its bowers,  
Fortune, for you yourself oppose  
This, the sweetest, too,  
Spoiling its fragrance and its hue.  
Though it be culled, crushed in the mire,  
After this flower no other I desire.

But I could ne'er imagine how  
The virtues that my rose enclose  
Derive from your lies even now,  
Rather they're Nature's gift: I know  
You have not the power  
To destroy such worth, or sour:  
Leave me it, then, to naught else I aspire,  
After this flower no other I desire.

Ah! Fortune, you gulf, you pit of hours,  
That swallows any man who'd suppose  
Your false doctrines true, where lours  
Nothing good or sure in liar's clothes:  
Your smiles, joy, and honour  
Are only tears, sadness and dishonour.  
If your deceits leave but the naked briar,  
After this flower no other I desire.

**XXXII: Sad-hearted, to create with joyful bent (De triste cuer faire  
joyusement)**

Sad-hearted, to create with joyful bent,  
Would seem to me a thing most contrary;

He who creates from joyous sentiment,  
Should, I would say, create more joyously.  
And so, my songs can sound but coarsely,  
For blacker than a mulberry is my heart,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

So, I'm reproached and blamed, with harsh intent,  
Yet cannot falsify my work perversely,  
Rather I reveal my heart's discontent,  
The ills it feels and knows, which are many.  
More than a hundred; my face shows clearly,  
I own a spirit, where life dwells, for its part,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

And so, I beg all those prove reticent,  
Who'd blame my songs, seeking humbly;  
For I cannot work otherwise, at present,  
Since Fortune is bent upon destroying  
That which I love best, and I am pleasing  
Only to those whose spirits do ever smart,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

**XXXIII: When a true lover loves amorously (Quant vrais amans  
aimme amoureuement)**

When a true lover loves amorously,  
With so true a heart he can do no ill,  
And yet from his lover's heart no mercy  
Can have, nor grace nor sweetness, still,  
He could ne'er own a heart of such firm will,  
That water to his eyes twould not impart,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

For Ardent Desire would gnaw secretly  
At his sad heart, in pain and suffering,  
Thus, he cannot create as happily  
As he who joys, whom joy makes its dwelling;

While if Memory seeks, at its coming  
To live in him, it renders him, by its art,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

For he dreams, and thinks on the misery,  
That his lady makes him feel, and know,  
For serving and loving her faithfully,  
Alas! Scant reward has he, in his woe;  
Better to go waste his life in Cairo,  
Than such service, that eats body and heart,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

**XXXIV: Truly, I declare, in seeking judgement (Certes, je di et s'en  
quier judgement)**

Truly, I declare, while seeking judgment,  
When Love a heart doth constrain and master,  
Because a man can reach no fair agreement  
With his lady, well-bred, generous ever,  
The mischief Darius had, of Alexander,  
Was not so great as falls upon his heart,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

Yet he creates better, and rightly so,  
Than him Love doth, of mercy, satisfy,  
For Great Desire grants to him, also,  
Material, example, and brings them nigh,  
And sets him to perfect his work thereby,  
With colour in his sound, and sweetest art,  
Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

For he has what he sought, who finds mercy,  
So that Desire no longer presses sore,  
Neither so ardently nor longingly,  
Rather it lessens, seeking to withdraw.  
No matter who is displeased, I am sure  
He works better whose love's savour's tart,

Grieving, sad, whence blood-wet tears start.

**XXXV: No tower are you in Germany (Pas de tor en thiès païs)**

No tower are you in Germany,  
You, who bear beauty and sweetness,  
White and crimson, like rose or lily,  
On a shield of true faithfulness,  
For the lustre of your goodness  
Shines bright as the Pole Star ever,  
Above every human creature.

Noble form, free, elegant, comely,  
A manner full of honest kindness,  
If I love, serve, prize, praise, surely  
Tis no wonder for, I confess,  
You've so surpassed all, to excess,  
That you are the sovereign flower,  
Above every human creature.

Thus, I would be healed completely,  
Never would suffer woefulness,  
If your heart, noble and courtly,  
Courteous, frank, full of kindness,  
Knew that, of humble willingness,  
Mine would serve you, and forever  
Above every human creature.

*(Note: The apparently enigmatic first line, equates 'a tower in Germany' with 'a castle in Spain', in accord with the common metaphor for an unrealistic object, or fantasy, where the country or place was frequently varied to a region and fortress nearer home, but beyond the border and therefore a possible object of conquest. So, an alternative rendering of the first line would simply be: 'No fantasy are you'. The following lines may or may not refer to a coat of arms, since they are*

*also a perfectly good description of the lady's face, a blush of red on the white surface of her 'shield' or face)*

**XXXVI: Weep ladies, weep for your underling (Plourez, dame, plourez  
votre servant)**

Weep ladies, weep for your underling,  
I who have set my heart, and my intent,  
Body, and desire, and thought, on serving  
Your honour, which may God guard and augment.  
Dress yourselves in black for me,  
My heart's sore, my face pales visibly,  
And I find myself indeed at death's door,  
If God and yourselves bring me no cure.

My heart I leave with you, at your command,  
And offer my soul to God, devoutly,  
And may the rest of me go where tis planned,  
Flesh for the worms, tis their right most truly.  
Let my possessions be  
Given to the poor. Alas! In leaving, see  
How on my deathbed here I ache, full sore,  
If God and yourselves bring me no cure.

Yet I am sure there is such good in you,  
You'll save me from this peril where I lie,  
Devoid of hope, if, from the heart and true  
You but pray to God to heal me thereby,  
So, I beg, most humbly,  
That you will raise a prayer to God for me,  
For I must pay Nature's debt, such is sure,  
If God and yourselves bring me no cure.

**XXXVII: No more could the stars be counted anew (Ne qu'on porroit  
les estoiles nombrer)**

No more could the stars be counted anew,  
When they all are shining at their brightest,  
Nor the ocean's drops, nor the falling dew,  
Nor grains of sand with which the ocean's blessed,  
Nor the firmament be in some map expressed,  
Than any could conceive, or render true  
The great desire I have to gaze on you.

And if there's no way I can come to you,  
Since Fortune will not let me be your guest,  
Then I must stifle all my sighing too,  
When I think of you, here among the rest:  
And when I am alone, in silence dressed,  
It pains me with torments, sufferings new,  
The great desire I have to gaze on you.

It makes me lament and long to view  
Your noble face, and, above all the rest,  
Your sovereign beauty, none exceeds you,  
And what flows therefrom, your great sweetness.  
Thus, it has me languish in wretchedness,  
Kindling my hope, and quenching it too,  
The great desire I have to gaze on you.

**XXXVIII: I seek not the beauty of Absalom (Ne quier voir la biauté  
d'Absalon)**

I seek not the beauty of Absalom,  
Nor Ulysses' great strength and eloquence,  
Nor to try the power of mighty Samson  
Whose hair Delilah trimmed, his true defence,  
Nor would care to own  
To Argus' eyes, nor greater joy be shown,  
Since for pleasure, without help from any,

I see enough, since I see my lady.

To the statue wrought by Pygmalion  
There was neither equal nor second,  
Yet the beauty who holds me in prison  
Is a thousand times lovelier reckoned:  
She is the true source of all sweetness,  
With a skill that heals all sadness;  
Who then can blame me, if I decree:  
I see enough, since I see my lady.

So, I ask not the wisdom of Solomon,  
Nor that Phoebus prophesy and respond,  
Nor meddle with Venus, or that Memnon  
Whom Jove turned to a flock of birds anon,  
For I say, since I adore,  
Love, and desire, fear, and honour more,  
She whose love inflames me, utterly,  
I see enough, since I see my lady.

**XXXIX: When Theseus, Hercules and Jason (Quant Theseus, Herculès  
et Jason)**

When Theseus, Hercules and Jason  
Traversed the whole Earth and the deep sea,  
To add to all the worth and fame they'd won,  
And view the world in its entirety,  
They deserved great honour,  
Yet when I see beauty's humble flower  
I am so satisfied withal, believe me,  
I see enough, when I see my lady.

For, when sight of her beauty I attain,  
Her form, her manner full of sweetness,  
Such goodness as to win the good, I gain,  
Since the great good in her doth progress  
Through me, by true love's grace,

Binding me thus to loathe shame and disgrace,  
All vice, such that I can say, blamelessly,  
I see enough, when I see my lady.

I seek not the Golden Fleece to view, nor  
The Indies, nor the waves of the Red Sea,  
Nor on the infernal regions make war,  
And so, part myself from the fair lady  
Who brings joy, lightness ever,  
And sweet thoughts too, for I hold it better  
To count all else as a trifle merely.  
I see enough, when I see my lady.

(Note: in *Le Livre du Voir Dit* this ballad, to which the previous ballad XXXVIII is a response, is ascribed to a possibly fictitious Thomas Paien)

**XL: Lady, though you're far from me (Dame, se vous m'estes  
lonteinne)**

Lady, though you're far from me,  
My heart is not far from you,  
For tis, by present memory,  
By night and day, full close to you;  
And, in place of it, course, anew,  
Amorous ills, through my body,  
However distant you may be.

Yet these ills bring no misery,  
For while I'm so, there appear  
Goodness, valour, sovereign beauty,  
Which your noble self holds dear,  
So that I sing right joyfully,  
Of you, who are my all, lady,  
However distant you may be.

So, I beg you, lady full of honour,  
That if your true heart, already,

Knows that my own must suffer  
Through love, that dwells with you lady,  
You'll let it serve you, loyally,  
True sweet heart, as twere me,  
However distant you may be.

**XLII: Happy, gay, delighted, singing joyously (Gais et jolis, liés,  
chantans et joieus)**

Happy, gay, delighted, singing joyously,  
I find myself, for graciously she returns,  
As my heart, filled with desire, eagerly,  
To view again my worthy lady, yearns.  
So, there's no ill, sadness, dolour burns  
In me, that can my heart from joy deter,  
All through the hope I have of seeing her.

For my heart is so deeply desirous  
Of admiring all her pleasant manner,  
Her noble form, face kind and gracious,  
All her sweet glances, and her fresh colour,  
Which make of me a most faithful lover,  
That morn or eve I think of none other,  
All through the hope I have of seeing her.

And since God renders me so fortunate,  
That I may gaze on the perfect sweetness  
Of my lady whom I love, and am elate,  
Obeying her eagerly, in my faithfulness,  
So, I should honour her, sans foolishness,  
For nothing can make my heart to suffer,  
All through the hope I have of seeing her.

**XLIII: If for this I die, that I've served Love well (Se pour ce muir  
qu'Amours ay bien servi)**

If for this I die, that I've served Love well,

Ill would it be to have served that lord so,  
Since I've not deserved the parting knell  
For loving, thus, with a faithful love also;  
I recognise my days are numbered though,  
When I perceive, and openly tis seen,  
That in place of blue, lady, you wear green.

Alas, lady, I have cherished you so,  
In desiring the sweetness of mercy,  
That from me all my sense and strength do go,  
So, do these my tears and sighs oppress me,  
While hope is dead, beyond recovery,  
Since Memory shows me; tis clearly seen,  
That in place of blue, lady, you wear green.

And so, I curse these eyes that first saw you,  
The hour, the day, and your charming address,  
The rare beauty that struck my heart anew,  
And their delight, enraptured foolishness.  
And I curse Fortune, and her fickleness,  
And Loyalty, that suffers it to be seen,  
That in place of blue, lady, you wear green.

*(Note: While the significance of medieval colours varied, green was often associated with ill-luck, death and decay. Blue was associated with good-luck, mercy and hope, analogues as it were for Earth and Heaven)*

### **XLIII: Python, the marvellous serpent (Phyton, le merveilleus serpent)**

Python, the marvellous serpent  
Whom Phoebus slew with his bow,  
Stretched full six yards in extent,  
Ovid, indeed, described him so,  
But none did such a serpent know,  
So fell, so cruel, so fierce to see,  
As the serpent that denies me so,

When of my lady I seek mercy.

It has seven heads, and truly,  
Each one doth deny me, in turn,  
The grace my true desire would see,  
Thus, doth my heart in sorrow yearn:  
Denial, Disdain, Contempt, I earn,  
Shame, Fear, Harshness, Obduracy,  
Each doth my spirit wound and spurn,  
When of my lady I seek mercy.

And, thus, I cannot long endure,  
For my sweet lady doth ever smile  
And take delight in my torment sore,  
Pains my heart where it dwells the while.  
It destroys me, it gnaws with guile,  
Makes me to grieve, and weep freely,  
Divides, discomforts, its aims hostile,  
When of my lady I seek mercy.

**XLIV: My hopes are at war, by course of Nature (Mes esperis se  
combat à Nature)**

My hopes are at war, by course of Nature,  
Within me, and I am thus dumbfounded,  
For my fond hopes cannot long endure,  
When Nature herself is so confounded.  
Thus, without cause, my life is bounded,  
By smiling disdain, that must death afford,  
Should I and my lady lack swift accord.

Their battle is now so fierce and bloody,  
And has seized me so with pain and woe,  
There's no joy or pleasure living in me,  
Hope and sense, manners and courtesy, go,  
Alas, and, shortly, I must die, I know,  
All through the lack of joy and reward,

Should I and my lady lack swift accord.

And since she has so little care for me,  
And if there can be no cure without her,  
Of my madness, of her nobility,  
Of her sweet eyes, of her gracious manner,  
Of her hard heart than marble twice harder,  
And of Love, I ask they my death record,  
Should I and my lady lack swift accord.

**XLV: My dear lady, to you my heart must go (Ma chiere dame, à vous  
mon cuer envoy)**

My dear lady, to you my heart must go,  
That it may tell you of the ills I know,  
The great grief, and the sadness, and the woe,  
And misery,  
That happily, humbly I undergo,  
For your own sweet self, that fair doth show,  
That more than myself, or aught, I love so,  
Right loyally.  
So, I ask, of you, most humbly, lady,  
That you would but hear me courteously,  
And set your heart upon relieving me;  
For, this I know,  
Unless you take back your own heart, wholly,  
Then, since I love you so profoundly,  
I can endure my ills but momentarily,  
Lacking you so.

My sweet lady, if but that sweetest light  
I might receive yet, from your glance so bright,  
I shall be healed, if God guard me aright,  
Of my sadness.  
But that may not occur through my own might,  
Not one third or quarter have I, tis slight,  
I am so far from you, nor e'er have sight

Of your sweetness;  
Your noble form, and all your loveliness,  
Your beauty, your fresh colour, I confess,  
I neither see nor know, in my duress,  
Not day or night,  
Nor, what does you honour, your true kindness,  
Such that you are the sovereign flower, no less,  
Of all with which the Lord doth his own bless,  
To our delight.

But, truly, a great comfort it doth bring,  
To love and serve you thus, in everything,  
I, in my hope, delight, and sport, and sing,  
Through Memory,  
That shows all your gracious and sweet being,  
The virtues of which none go denying.  
From it comes vigour, strength, in opposing  
Desire, strongly;  
For if it should, indeed, come to assail me,  
There lies my recourse: I fail not, wholly.  
Hope, that shall ne'er desert me entirely,  
Is not sleeping,  
Nor Sweet Thought that comes, revealing, nobly,  
Your gentle form, I gaze on joyfully;  
There's all my delight, it seems to me,  
There, my easing.

**I'd rather languish in a strange country (J'aim mieux languir en  
estrange contrée: CCXLVI)**

I'd rather languish in a strange country,  
Lament and cry for my sadness there,  
Than, by your side, sweet noble lady,  
Among those joy grants a life of care.  
If I sigh and weep far away,  
None will know, then, why I weep today:  
But here they may readily see me prove

That I do languish faithfully for love.

And if my face reveals what men pity  
That's a fault that I cannot repair,  
Great grief cannot hide in secrecy,  
Nor give rise to joy, if truth is there.  
How can heart joy again,  
That languishes in sorrow and in pain?  
I know not: so, in all the thought must move,  
That I do languish faithfully for love.

Thus, shall I leave you, the best loved lady  
That ever any man served anywhere,  
Or loved, yet my heart and memory  
I leave with you for your honour's share:  
They'll ne'er return, I say,  
To me: and so, now, of True Love I pray  
That Love will show you what you'll approve,  
That I do languish faithfully for love.

**If I love you with true faithful courage (Se je vous aim de fin loyal  
courage: CCXXXI)**

If I love you with true faithful courage  
As I have loved and shall love you still,  
And you have taken another in marriage,  
Must I be sent from you far? And will  
I be not e'en a memory?  
No, no, indeed: since there exists in me  
A heart so true that it eschews false art,  
You must not divorce me from your heart.

Rather, keep me here to serve on suffrage,  
As a slave you've bought, and paid the bill,  
Whose wish it is to commit no outrage.  
And you must love, and this thought fulfil,  
Husband as husband see,

And your dear friend as friend, dear as could be.  
And since in this you take honour's part,  
You must not divorce me from your heart.

And if your heart should ever learn to stray,  
No lover, then, would be betrayed so ill,  
As I would be: but then you are so sage  
And your heart so gently nurtured, it will  
Ne'er dare deceive me  
So that it might love elsewhere. So, hear me:  
Since your sweet self, peerless, I set apart,  
You must not divorce me from your heart.

**Should your pride not humble itself to me (Se vo grandeur vers moy ne  
s'umilie: CCLXIII)**

Should your pride not humble itself to me  
Sweet friend, whom I love without deceit,  
Then there is little hope in life for me,  
For my torment then would be complete,  
Through you, on whom is set  
My heart so firmly it could ne'er forget;  
Nor ought I to think of you so often,  
Sans love, or hope of love being given.

Twixt lovers that love true, nobility  
Should not exist; they should each other greet  
As one sole heart, one soul, one malady,  
One mind, one single wish, one passion sweet:  
So, if your heart's not yet  
At one with my desire, mine will be met  
With shame, since I live but briefly then,  
Sans love, or hope of love being given.

And if Fortune's gifts fall less royally  
At mine than at other women's feet,  
As loving a heart I'd claim mine to be

As any Queen's, if with truth you'd meet.  
And true love, I reflect,  
Only seeks the heart, as you have yet  
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