

Christine de Pisan

The Hundred Ballads (Les Cent Ballades)

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Introduction

Christine de Pisan (or Pizan, 1364-c1430), born Christina de Pizzano, was a poet and author at the court of Charles VI of France. Her Italian father moved to Paris as Court astrologer to Charles V, and she married, in 1379, a notary and royal secretary, Etienne du Castel, who died of the plague in 1389, her father having died the previous year. She wrote a number of works on the situation of women, in particular *The Book of the City of Women* (*Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, 1405) and *The Treasure of the City of Women* (properly *Le Livre des Trois Vertus*, 1405), as well as various political treatises written from a primarily royalist perspective. Renowned as the first female professional European author, she entered into a famous dispute (the *Querelle*) with Jean de Meung over his *Continuation* of the *Romance de la Rose*, in which she perceived misogynistic elements. A contemporary of Charles D'Orléans, among her works is one (published in 1418) of consolation to women who had lost family members at the Battle of Agincourt (1415), presented to Marie of Berry, whose husband John I, Duke of Bourbon was, like Charles, held in captivity in England. A fine illustrated collection of her works, presented to Queen Isabeau in 1414 (*British Library, Harley 4431*) contains thirty of her works and many superb miniatures. *The Hundred Ballads* (*Cent Ballades*, published c1399) reveals her early poetry, primarily on the subject of love, though her pre-occupation with virtue and justice is already apparent, forming part of her later extended critique of the courts, nobility and attitudes of her age.

Ballades

I: So that I might accomplish their fair wish (Pour accomplir leur bonne volonté)

Various folk have asked that I might indite
Various pleasing verses for them to read,
Claiming I have the grace and skill to write,
Though – peace be theirs – I know not indeed
How to create fair verse; yet I've agreed,
Since they have asked, and their desire it is,
Howe'er unskilled I am, to thus proceed,
So that I might accomplish their fair wish.

Though I've not inspiration nor the might
To grant solace or joy, in this my screech;
For my sadness, beyond all others quite,
Death to my joyous feelings has decreed;
Yet of the sorrow that in me doth breed,
I shall speak more than enough, and this
I'll say: I'd willingly meet their need,
So that I might accomplish their fair wish.

And who would know why grief outright
Has destroyed all my good, let them heed,
It was Death, without warning, did alight
On him whence came my good; that deed
Of Death's has led me, and still doth lead
Me to despair; such that true health I miss;
Of such I'll write, to their request accede,
So that I might accomplish their fair wish.

Princes, accept that I may scarce succeed;
For I've scant skill, and all may go amiss,
Yet many have asked, and I thus concede,
So that I might accomplish their fair wish.

II: Worthy of being crowned with laurel (Digne d'estre de lorier couronné)

In Rome there was, on the ancient plan,
Many a fine and noble custom,
And one was that, when any brave man
When to fight on some far expedition,
And did good service there for his nation,
On his return to Rome it then befell
That he was deemed, in recognition,
Worthy of being crowned with laurel.

Many men received this highest honour,
For being most valiant or most wise,
Such that many I shall not name here,
Sought to win that most glorious prize.
Thus, we find, many of those, likewise,
Who razed proud Carthage, men of mettle,
Were thought, on returning to Rome's eyes,
Worthy of being crowned with laurel.

This was done long ago; but none
In France now gives a fig, sadly,
For what's good, or bravely done,
Only for riches and high nobility.
Yet of virtue, rather than family,
Should honour, fame, and praise dwell
With those who are, for their bravery,
Worthy of being crowned with laurel.

Princes, Dear God, it's an outrage surely,
If the good deeds are not rewarded well,
Of those, named in any language, wholly
Worthy of being crowned with laurel.

**III: See how true love the lover doth command! (Voyez comment
amours amans ordonne!)**

When Leander crossed the sea outright,
In no pleasant vessel did he voyage,
But naked and in secret, and at night,
He undertook the perilous passage,
For fairest Hero and her lovely visage;
She dwelt in a fort on the high headland
Near Abydos' shore; such was his courage;
See how true love the lover doth command!

That lover, of noble lineage, oft passed
Those narrows, the Hellespont by name,
To see his lady, concealing, to the last,
That passion which his heart did so inflame.
But Fortune that will thwart that very same,
And brings trouble to many a noble man,
Raised a storm in the tempestuous main.
See how true love the lover doth command!

In that channel which was deep and wide
Brave Leander perished, wretchedly;
Which so grieved the lady that she died,
Flinging herself, wildly, into the sea.
Thus, both were lost in the one tragedy.
Marvel, no words from me doth it demand,
At how lovers enact the extraordinary.
See how true love the lover doth command!

Though the fashion is lost, I would suggest,
Of loving in such a manner in our land,
Yet great love makes fools of the wisest.
See how true love the lover doth command!

IV: Through treason and not through courage (En traïson, non pas par vacelage)

By envy, which the whole world rends,
Treason is nourished, covertly,
In many a false heart that intends
To carry out some wicked perfidy,
And with foul deeds employ trickery,
By which it seeks a broad advantage
Through treason and not through courage.

Great Troy was once a mighty city,
Long ago, and maintained its power
Over wide lands, in joy, and plenty,
And honour, of chivalry the flower;
Which the Greeks burned in an hour,
So, taking the Trojans into bondage,
Through treason and not through courage.

Alexander, renowned in his day,
Was thus betrayed, and the fell hand
Of Mordred harmed Arthur in that way,
Such that he dwells in some faery land.
Proud Hector who had Troy's command,
Achilles slew through perfidious outrage,
Through treason and not through courage.

Princes, I say, restrain your mockery,
Let those who can guard against perfidy,
For, truly, much grief comes, in our age,
Through treason and not through courage.

V: Since that is dead which maintained life in me (Quant cil est mort qui me tenoit en vie)

Ah! God, what sorrow, pain, and sad mischief,
What vile discomfort, and what sad adventure,

For me who am tormented thus by grief,
Far more than any creature known did suffer,
In such an ill hour as my life holds ever,
For I desire naught in my misery
But my death, caring to live no longer,
Since that is dead which maintained life in me.

O harsh Death, at last you've snatched from me
All my fair days, tis a bitter thing indeed,
Since you of my chief help have robbed me,
That nourished me, of all my good the seed;
By this I am brought low, I beg you heed
My wish that from my body be taken, swiftly,
My dark, troubled weary soul, tis that I need,
Since that is dead which maintained life in me.

And if my weary saddened days prove brief,
At least they'll end, these sorrows I endure;
Yet they are not, for I live without relief,
Lacking all hope of any end or measure,
In lament, and tears, and pain full bitter;
For every sad assault is made upon me.
It is right so to spend my days however,
Since that is dead which maintained life in me.

Princes, behold this sorrow that doth injure,
That Death deals me, of which I'll die, truly;
For I am fallen into great misadventure,
Since that is dead which maintained life in me.

**VI: And, therefore, I can neither heal nor die (Et si ne puis ne garir ne
morir)**

Anguished sorrow, immeasurable pain,
Despairing grief, filled with resentment,
Endless languor, an ill life I maintain,
Full of sad tears, distress, and torment;

A dolorous heart in obscure discontent,
A shadowy body that death comes nigh,
Have I, without end, thus ever-present;
And, therefore, I can neither heal nor die.

Cruelty, harshness, parted from all joy,
Sad thought for ever deeply groaning,
Great anguish that the heart does annoy,
Bitter affliction borne in hidden suffering,
Lament endured, no true relief enjoying,
Mournful hope that ends all good, these I
Have in me, without their ever leaving;
And, therefore, I can neither heal nor die.

Inquietude, and everlasting weariness,
Dread wakefulness, and restless sleep,
Vain labour, a most wasteful weakness,
In grief travail that bitter luck doth reap,
With all the ills that one may ever weep,
Think, speak, without hope of aid, say I,
Torment me endlessly; with such I keep,
And, therefore, I can neither heal nor die.

Princes, pray to God that He may, shortly,
Bring my death, if He wishes not that my
Ills be healed, in which I languish wholly,
And, therefore, I can neither heal nor die.

VII: That made my life so joyous (Qui ma vie tenoit Joyeuse)

Ah! Fortune now so dolorous,
How from the heights you bring me low!
Your wounding deeply venomous,
You set my heart in vile hands; know,
You could ne'er have harmed me, no,
Nor pained me more, than by thus,
Robbing me of my solace, so,

That made my life so joyous.

Once I was filled with happiness,
It seemed to me none that I know
This world did more deeply bless;
Then I feared not your foul blow,
Nor felt the burden, nor the woe,
Of your false, heinous enviousness,
Robbing me of my solace, so,
That made my life so joyous.

Dreadful, dark, inconstant, though,
Through your malice and your envy
You've dealt justice such a blow
A host of ills have come upon me.
Why not, alas, have sought to show
Your malice otherwise than thus,
Robbing me of my solace, so,
That made my life so joyous?

Sweet Princes, did she not bestow
A vile cruel fate upon me thus,
Robbing me of my solace, so,
That made my life so joyous?

**VIII: There is good reason for me to grieve (C'est bien raison que me
doye doloir)**

It was long ago that my ills began;
And never since has ceased to worsen
My sad estate, that could not nor can
Advance, cruel Fortune having chosen
To torment me, seizing all I've won;
Through these sad ills that I receive,
There is good reason for me to grieve.

The sorrow that I have so long known
Is so great deep desire it yields me
To die full soon, such the evil sown
When that comes which afflicts me;
I have nowhere to turn, believe me,
For aught that might aid me or relieve.
There is good reason for me to grieve.

It was ill-chance that ruined me when
Fortune wished to bring destruction
On all my happiness; for since then
I can bring no good to my affliction,
Nor do I know or see by what action
I live on; such great ill I perceive,
There is good reason for me to grieve.

**IX: That my deep grief might be relieved by you (Que mes griefs
maulx soyent par toy delivré)**

O harsh Death, you've disinherited me,
And destroyed all my sweet worldly lore;
You've struck at, and hurt, me so deeply,
That you may prize your power the more.
For me you hold scant further ill in store,
Except to let my life unwillingly continue,
For, I desire, wounded to my heart's core,
That my deep grief might be relieved by you.

Five years it is since I'd cause to regret
Your deed, with tears upon my visage
Since I, robbed of joy, vile anguish met,
Falling thus from freedom into bondage.
When you stole the fair, the good, the sage,
That death delivered me to torment new,
Such that I often wish, since that outrage,
That my deep grief might be relieved by you.

If much you took from me, I've profited
And surely you bring me great benefit,
For since then I have been so wounded
By great pain, and had such harm of it,
And yet receive each day this sad profit,
That I wish naught, desire aught anew,
Only such tribute to pay you in forfeit,
That my deep grief might be relieved by you.

Princes, take pity on my use of language,
And Death, pray, write me in your book too,
And may I soon view that self-same message,
That my deep grief might be relieved by you.

**X: Now that Fortune so works against me (Puis que Fortune m'est
contraire)**

If Fortune thus my death has sworn,
And labours so to destroy me,
When I am so distressed and mourn
That I must live in pain and misery,
Why should I wish to cook or knead,
Draw and stir, or fetch and carry,
Now that Fortune so works against me?

She has snatched my joy away,
Nor puts an end to all my pain,
She is angered with me alway
Turning bad to far worse again,
Whenever my travail she doth see,
And what profit can I thus gain,
Now that Fortune so works against me?

Her influence trouble has ensured,
Which I thought each day to conquer,
By honest labour long endured,

Thinking to witness brighter weather,
That might some end to ill-luck offer.
But naught avails, no escape I see,
Now that Fortune so works against me.

XI: Alone am I, living without a lover (Seulete suy sanz ami demourée)

Alone am I, yet alone I wish to be,
Alone, as my sweet friend left me,
Alone am I, sans lordly company,
Alone am I, grieving and yet angry,
Alone am I, and so in languor suffer,
Alone am I, living without a lover.

Alone am I at every door and window,
Alone am I concealed in some corner,
Alone am I to feed on tears of sorrow,
Alone am I, grieving perchance or calmer,
Alone am I, nothing can please me better,
Alone am I enclosed within my chamber,
Alone am I, living without a lover.

Alone am I everywhere, in every way.
Alone am I, whether walking or seated,
Alone am I, more than aught else this day,
Alone am I, from whom all folk retreated,
Alone am I, brought low now and defeated,
Alone am I bathed in tears forever,
Alone am I, living without a lover.

Princes, sad now is my every morrow,
Alone am I menaced by every sorrow,
Alone am I than the blackness darker,
Alone am I, living without a lover.

**XII: That all her joys are but an idle breeze (Que ses joys ne sont fors
que droit vent)**

Who is too sure of Fortune's favour,
In that, in truth, is the more deceived;
For more than the moon she doth waver.
Many of the great themselves perceived,
That very same whom she had well received,
Soon fallen, so it is often seen, by these,
That her joys are but an idle breeze.

Who lives, finds that's it's a common thing,
That naught however perfect, or fine,
Is spared when Fortune, unforgiving,
Counters its good, it is her right I find
To take back the good she has assigned,
Dearly bought; wise or a fool, each sees
That all her joys are but an idle breeze.

Of her guise which is ne'er the same to all,
I can speak truly, for I know it well,
Poor wretch! Since false and cruel I call
Her who long harmed me, as I can tell,
For she has taken what, for a brief spell,
God granted me, alas! Thus, I reprise,
That all her joys are but an idle breeze.

**XIII: For far too grievous is the perilous sea (Car trop griefment est la
mer perilleuse)**

Tis a hard thing for a vessel to try
It's fortunes, all alone, amidst the seas,
Without a captain, or a patron by,
To steer her, sails flying in the breeze.
To save herself she must seek her ease
In safe harbour, tis hazardous, truly,
For far too grievous is the perilous sea.

No matter that the sun sometimes shines,
And she holds course and does not waver,
That the wind seems not too harsh at times,
Nor she adrift, nor the moon much darker,
If she is then o'erset by some encounter,
Some sudden gale, its dire uncertainty,
For far too grievous is the perilous sea.

It is pitiful when death takes forever
A true patron, or the vessel's captain,
Tis right the heart should mourn and suffer.
Whose treasure, goods, master's on the main,
Or but a lone ship seeking shore again,
And insecure, in doubtful case, we see,
For far too grievous is the perilous sea.

**XIV: That ever more I shall weep his death (Qu'a tousjours mais je
pleureray sa mort)**

Alone he has left me, in endless torment,
In this empty world filled with sadness,
My sweet friend, who with a true intent
Held this my heart, in all joyousness.
Now he is dead and sorrow doth oppress,
Such the grief that robs me of breath
That ever more I shall weep his death.

What more then can I do but weep and sigh,
For my dead love, and what wonder's there?
For when my heart considers now how I
Lived so sweetly, without a single care,
Did my childhood and my first youth share
With him, grief so steals away my breath
That ever more I shall weep his death.

Like a dove bereft am I, that seeks not

The green but rather the dry foliage,
Or like a ewe the shepherd has forgot,
The wolf will seek to slay in its rage,
So am I left now, whom grief doth age,
By my love, so troubled at each breath,
That ever more I shall weep his death.

**XV Now I have lost my sweet nourishment (Puis qu'ay perdu ma
douce nourriture)**

Alas! Alas! Well may I weep and cry,
Since I have lost my mother's nurture,
Who would sustain me, with ne'er a sigh.
Now not a soul looks to my sad future,
Nor with sweet milk doth sate my hunger.
Never will aught bring me true content
Since I have lost my sweet nourishment.

To moan and weep is now my whole affair,
For I am wretched now, feeble, poor,
And know not how to profit anywhere;
For I am young in wisdom and in law,
And widowed must languish evermore,
And must dwell with ill fate's intent,
Now I have lost my sweet nourishment.

In time past, all things would please me,
I was granted honour, gifts and service,
When my mother, gentle and kindly,
Nurtured me; now all such must vanish,
And by mischance and dolour perish,
Filled with cankers, every vile ailment,
Now I have lost my sweet nourishment.

**XVI: Tis sovereign good to suffer patiently (C'est souverain bien que
prendre en patience)**

Who would, as regards their life, consider,
This world where joy is never entire,
And all the mishaps that they must suffer,
And how death shall bring all to the pyre,
Who would into the matter thus enquire,
Will find, if they feel a grievance deeply,
And seek the greatest solace to acquire,
Tis sovereign good to suffer patiently.

Since it is thus, and one cannot stay,
Why then hold this sad life the dearer?
And then there is another life someday,
Which shall weigh heavy on the sinner.
To make full confession is far better
In this world, and a penitent to be;
And those whose penance is the harsher,
Tis sovereign good to suffer patiently.

Each true heart must be enamoured
Of the fair celestial light above,
And of the one God, to be adored.
Such the final goal and joy of love:
Who is wise will seek not to approve
Some other solace, all else is vanity,
And if the world cannot our pain remove,
Tis sovereign good to suffer patiently.

**XVII: A heart that dwells in such sadness (Cuer qui en tel tristour
demeure)**

If all my work is of sad sentiment,
All of my verses, it is no wonder,
For it can know no joyous intent,
A heart that must in sorrow labour.

For whether I do wake or slumber,
I am so filled with mournfulness,
So hard it is for joyfulness to enter
A heart that dwells in such sadness.

Never can I cease my sad lament,
This deep sorrow without a peer,
That delivers my heart to torment,
That often sounds to listening ear
My despairing grief, and that I hear
Counsel me to slay myself no less,
So hard it is for joy to enter, here,
A heart that dwells in such sadness.

So, I cannot create, while I lament,
Sweet verse; since, wished or no,
I must yet complain, in deep dissent,
Of grievous ill, and sadness show,
That like a leaf makes me tremble so,
With a weight of pain and distress,
So hard it is for joyfulness to know
A heart that dwells in such sadness.

**XVIII: For grief too deep doth in my heart remain (Car trop grief
dueil est en mon cuer remains)**

Folk will, it seems, ne'er cease asking
Why I am, forever, so melancholy,
And why I no longer laugh or sing,
But, plainer than a nun, look sadly,
Who used to live so gaily; joyfully.
But it is right that I sing not my pain,
For grief too deep doth in my heart remain.

And Fortune has worked so, God knows,
My carefree life she's changed, utterly;
My laughter gone she saw that I chose

Grief for solace, a life lived grievously.
So, I have reason to muse mournfully,
Nor do I hope for sweeter days again;
For grief too deep doth in my heart remain.

No wonder if my delight should fade,
For I've ne'er a thought that's gracious,
No other pleasure comes, in joy arrayed,
Since it makes me rude and ungracious,
My displeasure with this life so tedious,
And if I'm sad, naught better can I gain;
For grief too deep doth in my heart remain.

XIX: To be a lover, nor to love (De faire ami, ne d'amer)

Long time ago I lost, you see,
All my joy, and my solace,
Through a death, that frequently
I curse, for now I must face
A sorry future, and on this
I lay the blame, for such I prove;
Never since had I the wish
To be a lover, nor to love.

I know not how my poor heart
From this sorrow, far too great
To utter, failed to split apart;
Nor can I win to some state
Of indifference, nor will this
Bitter affliction e'er remove;
Never since had I the wish
To be a lover, or to love.

Since then I have never tried
To express or joy or solace,
So dull the feelings all allied

To the grief that I possess.
For all hope is lost in this
Life that once I did approve.
Never since had I the wish
To be a lover or to love.

XX: Nor have I reached its end (Encor n'en suis pas a chief)

How shall I make my verses flow
All fine and good and gracious,
When, since nigh ten years ago,
My heart's no longer joyous,
And not a woman whom, thus,
Neath the sky, pain so doth rend?
Nor have I reached its end.

Once, I had many a fine day;
But in winter's rainy weather
None so heavily did weigh,
Nor proved so tedious ever
As this, each place, I suffer;
For on this too I may depend,
Nor have I reached its end.

And so, I have the right to sing
My melancholy plaint:
For my poor heart is a thing,
God knows, all weak and faint,
Nor may I cease my complaint,
If my trouble will not mend;
Nor have I reached its end.

XXI: That I can scarce the thing refuse (Qu'a peine le puis escondire)

He asks of me so sweetly ever,
Who knows the way to speak so,
So pleasant is his sweet manner,

So fair his form and face do show,
So courtly, so debonair also,
Such I hear of him, such fair news,
That I can scarce the thing refuse.

He speaks to me so courteously,
In great fear of his doing wrong,
Of how he loves me faithfully,
And he can ne'er be silent long,
That nothing might to ill belong,
And then such sweet sighs doth use
That I can scarce the thing refuse.

So, I'm in some perplexity,
As to what to make of this affair;
For his pleasant treatment of me,
Wished or no, Love fosters there;
And though he naught would dare,
My heart on him doth so muse,
That I can scare the thing refuse.

XXII: To deny so gracious a friend (De refuser ami si gracieux)

Such you've wrought through sweetness,
Sweet friend, you've conquered me.
No need for plaint now or distress,
I make no more defence you see.
Love wishes it, of sweet mastery,
And I too wish it, for, God send
Me aid, it were folly in excess,
To deny so gracious a friend.

I hope for such worth and valour,
In you, that my love will be well met,
For such beauty, grace and honour
Is therein, tis right it suffices yet,
Tis right that you above all are set,

For you deserve that Fortune send
You better, and I erred, in the end,
To deny so gracious a friend.

So, I grant you my love, you see,
My true sweetheart, and no falsity
I pray be in you, nor yet trickery,
For your sweet person has utterly
Won me, and your calm mastery,
The loving gaze on me you bend.
Thus, it would be wrong, finally,
To deny so gracious a friend.

My sweet friend, that I love and prize,
I hear of you, where'er I wend,
Such good, twere wrong in reason's eyes
To deny so gracious a friend.

**XXIII: Surely tis he that all others doth surpass (Certes c'est cil qui
tous les autres passe)**

Truly I should praise Love's good deed
Who grants me a love so perfect, so fair,
That in all places he's so praised indeed,
His beauty, grace, and actions, everywhere,
That in him none finds fault, not anywhere;
God perfected him, grace and worth he has,
Such that none could ask for more or dare,
Surely tis he that all others doth surpass.

And then in company with his perfection,
And his goodness witnessed many a day,
To serve me he performs many an action,
And respects me, above all, in every way,
No fear of finding him play false, I say,
For he is such all wrongs do fade en masse
From his true heart, while none may stay.

Surely tis he that all others doth surpass.

If my heart is won to him, forever,
Which is all his, it has good reason;
For he wins all by his sweet manner,
And if in my heart his noble person
Is portrayed, and then in every season
Is absent not while my life shall pass,
Since in truth I can say so to everyone:
Surely tis he that all others doth surpass.

**XXIV: For you alone are all my happiness (Car vous tout seul me
tenez en leece)**

My sweet lover, my dear pleasure,
My kind friend, I love so deeply,
Your sweetness has, in full measure,
Cured my ills; I claim you, truly,
As the fount from which good flows,
Bringing joy and peace, God knows,
Granting me pleasure in excess,
For you alone are all my happiness.

And the dolour my heart did ever
Nourish, that brought such bitterness,
Is banished by your love forever;
Now I cannot berate the malice
Of Fortune which brings me good,
If I hold true in this, as I should.
You've set me on the true path, no less,
For you alone are all my happiness.

Praise Love, who, in his mastery,
Would recall me to such pleasure;
For I may say this without flattery,
No better ship sailed that sea, ever,
Than you, my love; and this my heart

Holds true, which, loyal, for its part,
Naught else doth muse on or bless,
For you alone are all my happiness.

XXV: Alas! What ill times I shall know (Helas! Que j'aray mautemps!)

Come my sweet friend, tell me
If it is true, what I have heard,
That ere the day of Saint Remi
You must go at others' word
Into Imperial Germany,
And remain, four months or so,
For three at least, far from me?
Alas! What ill times I shall know!

I would not suffer half a day
To pass, without seeing you,
And if you're so far away,
What martyrdom must ensue!
I'd rather die of such pains
Than bear its evil and its woe;
I'll be forced to gnaw the reins.
Alas! What ill times I shall know!

My heart will depart from me
To tell God how oft I sigh
And tremble in my misery.
For I shall melt like wax, say I,
From the grief and sorrow too,
That I shall suffer when you go;
If I must miss you utterly,
Alas! What ill times I shall know!

**XXVI: Slanderers who'd know everything (Les mesdisans qui tout
veulent savoir)**

My sweet friend, be not melancholy
If I display a joyous manner,
And visit many a place freely,
And speak with as many as ever,
Believe it of me, that I'd never
Think less of you, I go deceiving
Slanderers who'd know everything.

For if I'm gaily-dressed and happy,
Tis all for you, whom I love entire.
So, let your heart from fear be free,
Not for one moment could I desire
To love another who might so enquire;
One should rather doubt the lying
Slanderers who'd know everything.

Know that love so strongly binds me
To your true love, naught is so dear.
For it would prove too great a folly
To offer any but you, good cheer.
Yet tis not right that such appear
Before all folk, thus enlightening
Slanderers who'd know everything.

XXVII: Full many have I refused (J'en ay fait a maint reffus)

Think not that so vain I prove,
Nor fickle, nor so foolish,
Sir, that I would grant my love
To all who love might wish:
Of being light and skittish
I'd not be thus accused;
Full many have I refused.

Of such then be not anxious,
Nor show to me worse cheer,
For I seek not love, nor thus

To this am accustomed here,
From each man that hovers near,
From such I'd be excused;
Full many have I refused.

I would in truth do naught,
Whether in speech or manner,
That a woman should not
Who values her own honour.
Better swift death to suffer.
For be they dull or enthused,
Full many have I refused.

**XXVIII: Of the wish that I have to see you (Pour le desir que j'ay de
vous veoir)**

My sweet friend, please pardon me,
If I may not, as swiftly as I'd wish,
Speak to you, for first I must see
How it can be, from start to finish.
For slanderers, they spy upon me,
Who do such ill, of their enmity,
That I may have no joy, tis true,
Of the wish that I have to see you.

So, I pray to God that he seeks to slay
Them soon, for living they annoy,
And I sorrow that die I may,
Without seeing you, who are my joy.
For they are engaged in prying,
Day and night, and yet, my darling,
I forget naught, know this is true,
Of the wish that I have to see you.

Yet they've never troubled me so,
That, despite all, I'll not be there.
For I'll do all that I can, you know,

To see you, however I may fare,
And let you know how, presently.
So, my dear love, wait patiently.
Great pains I take because, tis true,
Of the wish that I have to see you.

XXIX: By God, tis grace indeed (Par Dieu, c'est grant grace)

The gracious help you grant,
That comes to me from you,
Great joy in me doth plant,
And such is right and true,
For all folk say this of you,
Your kindness doth exceed
All others; they speak true,
By God, tis grace indeed.

I cannot but true joy maintain,
When such good comes to me,
For love my heart doth attain
And, of that, more joy I see.
In every place thus you decree
Good to all who are in need,
So as with honour to agree,
By God, tis grace indeed.

For my heart doth maintain
No ill can come near me,
For I can come at joy again,
Through you who, readily,
In thought, word, deed, I see,
Do good, make ills recede.
The kindness you show me,
By God, tis grace indeed.

**XXX: That might do harm to honest love (Qu'a vraye amour puissant
faire grievance)**

False slanderers, have they the power
To part my love from me again?
No, by God! Howe'er they glower,
Or know of aught to bring me pain,
For that can never make my heart
Renounce love; let him, for his part,
Own all; for naught can they reprove
That might do harm to honest love.

Their falsehoods might yet succeed,
To hurt my body or means designed,
Or my honour, and thus proceed
To do me ill; to that I'm resigned.
Yet if my deeds must be so loudly
Banded around town, mockingly,
I know of naught they can prove
That might do harm to honest love.

With their truth-less tongues do they
(I pray God he'll clip them for them)
Stop me from seeing my love away;
About that business I often see them.
And ever, by that, folks do believe
Worse of me, and thus they grieve
My true love, but naught they move
That might do harm to honest love.

XXXI: I wish whate'er you desire (Je vueil quanque vous voulez)

My love, weep not, dry your eyes,
For you'll so arouse my pity
That my heart it then denies
All your most sweet amity.
For God's sake hold yourself dear,

And with grief no more conspire,
Reveal to me your good cheer:
I wish whate'er you desire.

No more now act the recluse,
Pensive, or struck by some spell,
But of your joy regain the use,
For you yet have acted well
Towards Love who is to you
Cruel no longer, so, retire,
I grant your prayer, anew,
I wish whate'er you desire.

This mighty stream of tears,
Attaches me more strongly,
And pacifies all love's fears,
That so hurt me, equally,
No more can I outbid you;
Sweet friend, clasp me entire,
I am your sweet love, too,
I wish whate'er you desire.

**XXXII: If you dwell, for long, far from me (Se demourez loing de moy
longuement)**

Alas, my love, must you depart
So far from me who loves you so?
For, be sure, I shall ache at heart,
And know great grief, it if be so.
Until you return, and happiness,
I'll live in woe, pain, and sadness
And I must die of sorrow, surely,
If you dwell, for long, far from me.

For my heart is yours, without debate,
Lost without you, eve or morn, still,
Nor is there aught that might abate

Its love for you, for well or ill;
And it, as in some strong tower,
Retains there your noble manner,
Doubtless to prove the death of me,
If you dwell, for long, far from me.

Now tell me, speak true, dear friend,
When you'll return. By God above,
Don't delay! For that would extend
My torment, that none else do love;
And forget me not an hour, my dear,
Be true to me, whether far or near,
I love you so twill be hard on me,
If you dwell, for long, far from me.

XXXIII: Since you're obliged to go (Puis que partir vous convient)

Weeping, with many a tear,
All saddened and full of woe,
My true love, above all dear,
Whom I love, and no other so,
I commend you to God, sadly.
For far too great a sorrow
My heart suffers, grieving deeply
Since you're obliged to go.

Gone now are my joyous days;
I sing, as I once did, no more;
I follow, now, sorrow's ways
And have not passed the door,
For I'll long be far away
From you; rightly I do so,
For I dwell in grief always,
Since you're obliged to go.

Without a doubt, I shall die,
Lacking your sweet embrace.

Ah, Fortune! You strike, say I,
A harsh blow, for I must face
Not seeing the one my heart
Retains except with inward woe
In thought: sure, is Death's dart,
Since you're obliged to go.

**XXXIV: Through the sweetness of the fair month of May (Pour la
doulçour du jolis mois de May)**

Now the most gracious month is here,
Merry May, where is such sweetness,
The fields, groves, and woods appear
Leafing, flowering, in fine excess,
While all rejoices, devoid of fear.
Nor, midst the grass flowering near,
Is there aught that can bring dismay,
Through the sweetness of the fair month of May.

The birds go singing out for joy,
All's gladdened in the usual way,
Except for me, who suffer annoy
Alas, for my love dwells far away;
Nor for myself can there be joy,
The fairer the time the more annoy.
But better I know I've loved today,
Through the sweetness of the fair month of May.

So, I must miss him, often weeping,
He who brings no succour to me,
Ever to love's deep sorrow holding,
Its stings, assaults, every vagary,
In this sweet time, where I can see
Naught but woe; for it troubles me
The longing fixed within me always,
Through the sweetness of the fair month of May.

XXXV: So long shall my pain endure (Tant ont a durer mes peines)

Far from my true love am I,
Such that I weep many a tear,
Taking solace in hope, whereby
Soon the moment will be here,
That he has set for his return.
Three weeks are now mature,
Six more must I pass in turn,
So long shall my pain endure.

Such is the longing alway,
That I am but ill and weary.
Now soon be on your way,
Friend, that I love so truly,
And then you will be to me
Of grievous anguish the cure;
But until you return, certainly,
So long shall my pain endure.

To sate my sorrows in tears,
I often conceal myself;
But it heals my pains and fears
That, in hope, I tell myself
That God will bring you ever,
Or good news if there's no more,
And until then I must suffer,
So long shall my pain endure.

**XXXVI: And who could such a love forget? (Et qui pourroit telle
amour oublier?)**

If true love is a heart that's fixed
Without variance or falseness,
Tis hard for aught to come betwixt,
Rather tis nourished to excess
By strong desire and love's sweetness,

Within the heart, which binds it yet,
Such that love ne'er can grow less,
And who could such a love forget?

I know tis so, who by too much love
Am scorched, for without recourse,
So firmly have I attached my love
To him I love, and set my course,
That I will have no other, perforce,
In this world, and must grieve as yet.
So far is he, of solace no source.
And who could such a love forget?

If so fixed a love might never be
Removed, since, rightly, I foresee
I have no power to pluck it from me,
Though others ask the like of me,
Yet in vain, for one alone won me,
He's humbly placed me in his debt,
So I set myself in his power, freely,
And who could such a love forget?

XXXVII: Yet cannot love so deny (Et si ne m'en puis partir)

Through you, my longed-for lover,
I'm so joyless ever,
And no lie,
I know, that death would I
Court, to be rid, forever,
Of all the ill I suffer,
Yet cannot love so deny.

Not e'en to be swiftly cured
Of the pain I've endured
I'd say ay;
To give assent thereby
To other love thus assured;

To perjury I'd be lured,
Yet cannot love so deny.

Since you dwell so far away,
My sweet love, now each day
Never nigh,
It has made my heart to sigh,
Clothing me in black, always;
The colour doth me betray,
Yet cannot love so deny.

XXXVIII: Since we are now past the day (Puis que le terme est passé)

Alas, sweet faithful friend
With longing I awaited
The day when it would end
And you return, as stated,
But joy turns to grief, today,
All the hope lost you created,
Since we are now past the day.

You told me, then you promised,
And I anticipated,
Two months or three, I insist,
Twas all you indicated,
So that I fear you'll stay away;
Ne'er to see you I'm fated,
Since we are now past the day.

Now I have lost entirely
My solace never sated
Thinking, while I waited,
All would be reinstated
By your return; lost, I say,
Is all my good, frustrated,
Since we are now past the day.

XXXIX: It's robbed me of my colour (Il en pert a ma colour)

Who is ill often complains,
For illness so demands it,
And so all my grievous pains
I cry, that all may see it
How tormented I am, here,
Through love, and the dolour
I feel I cannot hide, I fear,
It's robbed me of my colour.

One knows a person's fainting,
For who great grief receives
Their visage is seen paling,
If the heart with sorrow heaves,
And, thus, my weary sadness
Has stolen all my vigour,
Night or day I have no rest;
It's robbed me of my colour.

But he through whom I'm ill,
Cannot know, think, or see,
How my heart is troubled still;
Alas, now! How should he?
For he has been abroad now
For half a year, yet, as ever,
I am at death's door, I vow,
It's robbed me of my colour.

**XL: Five hundred griefs, or more, for one sole good (Pour un seul bien
de cinq cens doulours)**

Love, love, you do me certain wrong, surely
To bind me thus in your perilous snare,
Where my heart is entangled so harshly,
That I must cry woe, alas, everywhere!
And truly people say, or so I fear,

That you know of none who is held so dear
That they've not, of love, be it understood,
Five hundred griefs or more for one sole good.

From its commencement you have won my heart,
By granting me more than enough of solace;
But once you'd firmly attached it, by your art,
Then you stole all its many pleasures apace;
For without its knowing, I must believe,
The whole of the good it did once receive,
You stole, and rendered it, in your falsehood,
Five hundred griefs or more for one sole good.

And if he, through whom I'm fallen to all ill,
Comes not soon, you've ill prepared me
For the dangers by which I shall be still
Of all joy bereft, and so, of love's artistry,
Be brought to grief, in love's net caught;
For he, I do wish to see, more than aught,
And, if he comes not, I'll gain but wormwood,
Five hundred griefs or more for one sole good.

**XLI: No more, nor less, than if he were dead (Ne plus, ne mains, ne
que s'il estoit mort)**

Alas if some news, now, I might hear,
To know how, with him, it might be,
He who renews my sad fears here,
Though he is still so far from me,
For so long; twould bring joy, you see;
Yet never a word do I hear instead,
No more, nor less, than if he were dead.

I know not if he's in a boat at sea,
Or if he's journeying otherwise;
If he's in Aragon, Spain, Castile,
Or somewhere else, in other guise,

If he'll come soon, or contrariwise;
I know not where he is, nor is led,
No more, nor less, than if he were dead.

Or perchance he loves another, fairer
Than I, and thus, all neglectfully,
Comes not; yet there's no lady ever,
Nor other, say I, with certainty,
That loves him, each day, more truly;
Yet what good? My comfort is fled,
No more, nor less, than if he were dead.

**XLII: Announcing many a notable thing (Cil nonce au gens mainte
chose notable)**

Ovid said that there's a messenger
Who brings news to folk in sleep,
And makes them dream, in slumber,
Of joy or grief, dreams light or deep.
Morpheus is this messenger's name;
The son of the God of Sleep takes wing,
And comes, in several forms, they claim;
Announcing many a notable thing.

And this God of Sleep would mercifully
Ease the ills that I must suffer,
Bringing favourable news to me
Of my friend, where there's no other.
But when he tells me news less fair,
My heart's a leaf he sets trembling,
For never the truth does he spare,
Announcing many a notable thing.

And the God of Sleep eases my woe,
Full greatly; for, surely, I would die
If he did not; and yet often, even so,
I weep a little, for it makes me sigh,

When he says some other lady, fair,
Holds my friend; and I fear the thing
Is true; for he speaks of every affair,
Announcing many a notable thing.

XLIII: So doth work this malady (Ce me fait la maladie)

Ah, God! How this time brings pain,
A day's a week to me;
More than winter's endless rain,
This season's misery.
Alas! I've the 'quartain',
And the fever renders me
Distracted, all sad again,
So doth work this malady.

What I taste is bitter soot,
My colour pale, unhealthy,
And I can scarce set foot
To earth, and folk must ease me.
For when it has full reign,
This fever, I can scarcely
Drink a mouthful of tisane,
So doth work this malady.

There's no way I can flee,
For when I walk, tis hardly
The open road that I see,
But my room, bare and empty.
And I need a helping hand,
And often cry: 'Support me,
For tis not in my command.'
So doth work this malady.

Good doctors, I am full ill,
I beg of you, now bring me
A health that evades me still,

So doth work this malady.

**XLIV: I know full well to what to cleave (Je m'en scay bien a quoy
tenir)**

Love, it is madness to believe,
In you, or offer you service;
For the best your servants receive
Is pain, and a life of mischief,
Or greater ill they must weave;
I know full well to what to cleave.

Your fine welcome each deceives,
All it attracts, and none refuse,
Promises much, much each receives,
But when payment comes all abuse
You, and worse, for they accuse
You, who would your path achieve;
I know full well to what to cleave.

Yet in the end all must perceive,
Your act is naught but a ruse.
If at the start one could conceive
How in the end it doth bemuse,
They'd avoid it who did so muse;
But none knows the thing to leave.
I know full well to what to cleave.

XLV: Yet great joy he doth also bring (Et a la fois grant joye aporte)

The messenger of all that's Famed
The one that Pegasus is named,
Through whom great news is brought to us,
For naught he knows is hid from us,
He flies faster than a swallow,
And such news he doth bring
That oft it seems all is hollow,

Yet great joy he doth also bring.

The news a multitude are arming,
Or that some region is rebelling,
Or of something else lamentable
Of that he'll soon appear and tell;
But often, for the same abounds
In great words true or deceiving,
Through him a cry of grief sounds,
Yet great joy he doth also bring.

To me he named the war indeed
To which my true love has gone,
And that another's love he's won
Which makes my heart to bleed.
Tis not the first or second time
That he's set me to sorrowing,
Such that I weep for some crime,
Yet great joy he doth also bring.

Thus, all lost in thought profound,
I dream he opes the door to grieving,
Such that in tears I'm ever found,
Yet great joy he doth also bring.

XLVI: Not one word comes to me (Ne Nouvelles ne m'en vient)

To Love would I do wrong
By taking a new lover,
Since for this whole year long,
And a half, I must, helpless, suffer,
Waiting for him, whom I love true?
That he's forgot me, I now see,
He comes not, nor sends anew,
Not one word comes to me.

Many a day have I lacked cheer,

Yet if he'd lacked such through me,
Swift as the breeze he'd be here;
For I sleep not comfortably,
Since he's gone, nor meet with joy,
Nor know why he's yet unfree,
Nor sight nor sound do I enjoy,
Not one word comes to me.

So, I would live no longer thus,
In tears, I've grieved enough;
I could be where, ever joyous,
The path proved not so rough.
For tis not right that I must love
Him, yet not have him wholly;
He cares not his love to prove,
Not one word comes to me.

**XLVII: Since he's neglected me completely (Puis qu'il m'a mis en
nonchaloir)**

For him I shall no longer wait,
Who doth no longer wait on me,
Since he comes not soon nor late.
I've waited two years, patiently,
Evil times I'd no longer see,
Folly has brought but grief to me,
Since he's neglected me completely

To God's true body, I commend
Him, that He from grave danger,
Guard him, and from peril defend,
Though I wait for him no longer,
But hold to my retreat, the stronger,
Making that my devotion, wholly,
Since he's neglected me completely.

He's wronged me, but reparation

Is not some matter of profit shared,
Rather Love commends devotion,
To those who ever are prepared
To serve love; and yet ill has fared
My troubled heart, to speak truly,
Since he's neglected me completely.

XLVIII: I wish to serve no longer (Je ne m'i vueil plus tenir)

I would no more to you belong,
Love; to God I commend you.
You'd have me serve too long
Yet you'd pay me badly too,
My recompense but pain anew.
Tis a dreadful thing to suffer,
I wish to serve no longer.

For your well-earned favour
I've served most loyally,
But can't complete my labour,
For, now, you grievously
Torment me, and so briefly,
To abandon you I'd prefer:
I wish to serve no longer.

Who'd engage themselves to you,
And give themselves entirely,
To descend and rise anew,
At your command completely,
Must do so right painfully,
As I do well remember,
I wish to serve no longer.

**XLIX: You will make me flee your presence (Vous me ferez d'environ
vous foïr)**

Speak no more, I would not love,
Sir, for God's sake now withdraw,
Nor hatred nor blame should move
You, if such pleases me no more.
Alas! For God's sake now withdraw,
I'll have no complaint, no nonsense,
You will make me flee your presence.

By such seeming you'll defame me,
You'll incur great wrong so to do.
I'll spread it everywhere, and freely,
That I wish naught to do with you,
And so, there's naught now to pursue;
For if you're seeking a renaissance,
You will make me flee your presence.

There's no sea-siren's singing
Can so seduce the human heart,
Nor fine speaking, begging, crying,
That could attract me by its art,
So silent be, from speech depart;
For if no other joy comes hence,
You will make me flee your presence.

L: I report but as all wise folk have writ (Je m'en raport a tous sages ditteurs)

Many a person might think, wrongly,
I speak of love on my own account,
And say that Love's dangers, surely,
I know too well, all its turns recount;
And that I could not speak so truly
Without having risked them wholly.
But, by the grace of those who say it,
I report but as all wise folk have writ.

For who would seek to charge fair verse

Fine and pleasant, be it long or short,
With liveliest sentiment, and rehearse
That which pleases all folk at court,
Must speak of love, for not otherwise
Will it be fair or sweet; or the wise,
If not, must some fine moral admit.
I report but as all wise folk have writ.

Who reflects, must dismiss the claim
My labour attempts aught but that same.
I pen not some excuse or justification,
Enough of my best find appreciation.
But of love indeed I've known no torment,
Joy, or grief; solely for your enjoyment,
In speaking of those Love's arrows hit,
I report but as all wise folk have writ.

**LI: It troubles me that it has come to this (Ce poise moy quant ce m'est
avenue)**

It is not right that you sought love of me;
For tis unjust that one who does not love
Doth, nonetheless, request a lady's love,
For from the loving such comes, usually.
Tis truly a great grief if such should be,
That one has taken a lover such as this,
Who owns to neither truth nor loyalty;
It troubles me that it has come to this.

And even though tis not appropriate
For me to speak on, since you care not,
Yet I cannot thus make my pride abate
So as not to speak of my woeful lot.
For my heart thinks it very ill indeed
To find you naked of true love like this,
Such that I see my own retreat decreed;
It troubles me that it has come to this.

Love deceived me truly in your person,
Who claimed, my heart remembers well,
That you would love me with true passion.
Yet truly I think those who thus excel
In treason have by that scant honour got;
Though I see you think of me, in this,
Little enough, yet since I have you not,
It troubles me that it has come to this.

**LII: And all of their misfortunes never end (Et que jamais leur
mischance ne fine)**

By all the gods of whom Ovid speaks
In his works, who e'er sought the prize
Of love that madness in hearts wreaks
That they might come to true paradise,
Let all false lovers be here accursed.
My prayer to Pluto, Proserpine, I extend,
That upon such may descend the worst,
And all of their misfortunes never end.

I pray to Cupid, the winged god of love,
And to Pallas, Jupiter, and Apollo,
And great Venus, who keeps the school of love,
That they be banished from their courts also,
And thus, forbidden and denied all good,
And that love's sharp thorns their hearts do rend,
And they be barred from every neighbourhood,
And all of their misfortunes never end.

And that Mars, who brooks no barrier,
The god who aids the steadfast in war,
Would fire his weapons at them ever,
So that vanquished, mazed, stunned the more,
The honour of arms in them he might erase.
And then I pray that kindly Juno send

Them poverty, that they find ill always,
And all of their misfortunes never end.

**LIII: Who complains the most is not the most ill (Qui plus se plaint
n'est pas le plus malade)**

Wise would they be who could defend
Against false lovers, that ever fashion
Their words to deceive some fair friend,
Pleading always their amorous passion,
That holds them like a bird in a cage,
Feigning that their colour doth age,
And yet, as for me, I am certain still
Who complains the most is not the most ill.

Who hears them swearing, and yet lying,
While seeming humbler than any page,
Coming and going, musing, spying,
And in speaking abusing the language
To thus deceive, would scarce be wise
To meet their pleasantries with sighs,
For from their faces one might distil
Who complains the most is not the most ill.

Would God above but amend such lovers.
There's much, I think, that causes damage,
In those who ask ladies, here or wherever,
For grace or mercy, or send a message,
And yet only do so to seek advantage,
In certain places; for my ballad says still,
That in this matter, regardless of lineage,
Who complains the most is not the most ill.

**LIV: Thus, shall be present in you true grace (Ainsi sera grace en vous
assouvie)**

True lovers, young, happy, and at your ease,
You who'd aspire to the highest prize,
Own noble hearts, gentle, and at peace,
Blame and ill-speaking ever despise,
Be keen to win honour in others' eyes,
Speak well, be generous, all envy erase,
Respect the servants, grant age its place,
Be courteous, loyal, gracious and wise,
Thus, shall be present in you true grace.

Worry not whether you're ugly or fair,
Great or small, on such things ne'er be set,
But that your good deeds, in every affair,
Fame witnesses, and ne'er honour forget.
About others' deeds be silent, and yet
Let your own be fine, and everywhere,
The ladies will wish to see your face,
To good and honourable games repair,
Thus, shall be present in you true grace.

And follow the good, free of vanity,
Nor have recourse too often to lies,
Do deeds of arms most willingly,
Who to master that art forever tries,
None do blame, howe'er they apprise
Their efforts; God, and the saints above,
Serve all your life, and in every place,
And ever among the best you'll prove,
Thus, shall be present in you true grace.

Noble lovers, be in this manner wise,
Keep from you all dishonour, disgrace,
Good deeds have ever before your eyes,
Thus, shall be present in you true grace.

**LV: Has done many a lover harm, we see (A fait en amours maint
dommage)**

Who loves deeply will ne'er neglect
His true love, to journey further,
For in voyaging much happens yet
From which the traveller is in danger,
And one needs to love full greatly,
Any one leaves for a long journey,
For such a voyage over the sea,
Has done many a lover harm, we see.

Many seek Cyprus or Damascus,
Where they may stay two months or three,
Or the relics of Saint Thomas
In India, where danger they see;
But Love who ever bids them arm
Does little to keep them from harm,
For such a voyage over the sea,
Has done many a lover harm, we see.

A lover's heart will oft grow weary
Through undertaking such a journey,
And so are forgot those who forever
Still pace about in some dark corner;
Thus, I'd not dare to affirm ever,
That lovers' hearts can never alter,
For such a voyage over the sea,
Has done many a lover harm, we see.

LVI: For the work betrays the master (Car l'oeuvre loe le maistre)

My fair love, I do see it truly,
Howe'er it may seem to you,
That you love me not dearly;
E'en the one-eyed would know.
You say you do, as if twas so,

But tis to comfort me rather,
For the work betrays the master.

Tis revealed by your manner
How your heart doth love deny;
For one whole month, never
Has it meant a thing to you.
Who could think you true?
It cannot be the case, lover,
For the work betrays the master.

I think myself a fool indeed,
And others too think me so,
For loving you; tis agreed
No good can I win from it,
Since your heart's not in it,
And I see through you ever,
For the work betrays the master.

**LVII: Until such time as I see him again (Jusques a tant que je le
reverray)**

If I've a sad heart now, then well I may,
For into England now my love has gone,
Nor know I if I'll see him some fine day,
Who holds my heart, the fair and handsome;
For a barrier twixt him and me hath come,
And never a joy shall I have, tis plain,
Until such time as I see him again.

When I think of his every gracious deed,
Sweet and pleasant, deeply my heart grieves;
And am I not troubled to death, indeed,
Where can I seek, so the heart receives
Aught pleasant? God I would ask, for He
Alone knows; and I shall feel sore pain,
Until such time as I see him again.

Now is my heart charged with heaviness,
Such that complaint and tears war in me;
And for him alone are all my dear regrets,
For I love him more than aught, you see.
So I can but seek his swift return to me,
Or languish in woe and misery, tis plain,
Until such time as I see him again.

LVIII: Lord! Lord! What a valiant knight is here! (Ha Dieux! Ha Dieux! quel valiant chevalier)

Sir Knight, you love many a fine word,
But I wish you loved fair deeds better.
To begin you're slow, so I have heard,
But, as tis said, better late than never.
For you serve as rare amusement ever:
Your ballads you sing out loud and clear;
Tis a fine thing that you do ever,
Lord! Lord! What a valiant knight is here!

You are a very fine knight and true
But you love peace a little too much,
So be careful, armed woes weigh too
Heavily, it seems, on cowards and such.
A knight might well be shamed, a touch,
Who to strive for honour doth fear!
And yet the rest would do you good,
Lord! Lord! What a valiant knight is here!

Worse still, by the God of Paradise,
It's a villain you'd be if you could,
For slanderer, jongleur, full of lies,
Are you, but I'll say naught; twere good,
If from court and palace, you should
Be banished they say, and disappear;
Your purpose? Virelays? Understood!

Lord! Lord! What a valiant knight is here!

Leave your ill-talk of men and women,
Sir Knight, you're the very worst I fear,
One in a thousand, say clerks and laymen:
Lord! Lord! What a valiant knight is here!

**LIX: Are they at ease? Truly I think no (Sont ilz aise? certes je croy
que non)**

Amidst the aisles I see come and go
Many a fair and gracious lover;
Who dares not address his lady, though,
For slanderers are intent, forever,
On troubling such; so, the noble ever
Leave, lest a bad name they gain so,
And when from church goes each lover
Are they at ease? Truly, I think no.

And if their name is good, to speak
More fondly they must leave the lady;
For who to accord with love doth seek,
Must not, for his sake, quit decency.
Love holds such subject, fearing greatly
That rumour might come of doing so,
Such folk, low or high though they be,
Are they at ease? Truly, I think no.

Nor should one side with the slanderer;
For, nor good nor ill merely indolent,
They're bitter, and can hide it never;
Deceiving, feigning, upon evil bent
Are they, malicious, of subtle intent;
Yet caring not if they're loved they go,
And if good they win, for so little spent,
Are they at ease? Truly, I think no.

**LX: Yet you speak as one filled with envy (Mais vous parlez comme
gent pleins d'envie)**

By love's ills may you be tormented,
You who speak so ill of true lovers!
In blaming them mere lies you presented,
I say tis wrong to so defame others,
For they are fine people and contented
In thus embracing life so graciously,
Yet you speak as one filled with envy.

For they are not so base, doubt it not,
Who have tasted the sweet, wondrous,
Benefits Love grants them as their lot,
Who right noble, powerful, vigorous,
Thus become, and in riches prosperous.
Utter no ill of those lost in ecstasy;
Yet you speak as one filled with envy.

Better that they no opportunity give,
To you, false slanderer, villain, malcontent,
You who are everywhere so abusive
That everyone must fear your ill intent;
A coward you are, dangerous, who resent
Those in whom grace realised we see;
Yet you speak as one filled with envy.

LXI: One cannot good from it create (Qu'on ne traye bien a bon chief)

There was once a lovely girl,
Whom Jupiter loved greatly.
Juno heard news of this pearl;
Lest he sport with her madly,
Descending in a cloud, swiftly,
To surprise her husband, in fact,
She came upon them suddenly,
And so caught them in the act.

Yet there's no mischief so great
One cannot good from it create.

For Jupiter did a ruse devise;
And the god invented a way
To transmute and so disguise
The girl, as a heifer that day,
Yet Juno had come so near
She suspected him, I fear,
And captured the heifer too
Despite all Jupiter could do.
Yet there's no mischief so great
One cannot good from it create.

The heifer she placed in the care
Of Argus, sleep he ne'er did gain,
A hundred eyes he had, I swear,
To watch the girl, yet he was slain
By Mercury who played a tune
And sent the cowherd to sleep,
Lulling him all that afternoon,
And so, much grief did Juno reap.
Yet there's no mischief so great
One cannot good from it create.

From this, I claim that a guard
Is little use, though strongly set,
Neither for man or maid, as yet,
For if they're both of one accord
They will still foster their love,
And one another yet encounter;
So it happens and doth prove
Of many a thing an agitator;
Yet there's no mischief so great
One cannot good from it create.

**LXII: To leave me thus for another lover (De moy laisser ainsi pour
autre amer)**

Ah! My love, whom I have loved so long!
Why do you own to such a faithless heart,
That you would seek to do me such wrong
Whom you so sweetly won with loving art?
Perjurer, rogue, and liar, in no small part,
As all of that, I must claim you forever,
To leave me thus for some other lover.

Yet I have affirmed you to be always
My love, set there, a cut above the rest,
And cherished you, and granted praise,
With all my heart, to your faithfulness;
But none in France or Caulx could possess
Nor elsewhere, so cruel a heart, ever,
To leave me thus for some other lover.

Is your heart so taken, so desirous
Of one through whom I great ill incur,
That, in loving her, you're so zealous
That you hold me cheap next to her?
You descend, by doing so, far lower,
And deserve more blame than another,
To leave me thus for some other lover.

**LXIII: Have they deserved such scant reward? (A il doncques tel
guerredon?)**

Love! Love! All this you have done,
Who burden me with such a weight,
For I have offered you no wrong,
And yet so troubled is my state,
You abandon me to my fate;
Who did to you their heart afford,
Have they deserved such scant reward?

Your solace is but counterfeit,
Its comfort is soon gone from me,
Countering good ill comes of it;
To great woe changed rapidly,
Without warning you slay me,
Tis thus your servants are ignored,
Have they deserved such scant reward?

And why then, for what wrong done,
Have you deserted that true friend,
Who renders my life a ruined one?
For through him, now, I so descend,
That all such feeling is at an end.
Whom your brand's light you accord
Have they deserved such scant reward?

**LXIV: Who would maintain order in knightly guise (Qui maintenir
vault l'ordre a droite guise)**

Wise and good, gracious and courteous
Every perfect knight should rightly be;
Frank, kind, peaceful, handsome, generous,
Great travellers too in search of chivalry.
Ever in deeds of arms engaged, proudly,
To serve and defend the Church likewise,
Thus, bearing arms to gain their mastery,
Who would maintain order in knightly guise.

Haunting the courts of princes and kings,
Achieving good deeds most willingly;
Defending orphans and women, things
Defenceless, and the law, as customary,
Escorting noble strangers courteously,
Proud, steadfast, no coward in men's eyes,
Speaking the truth, firmly, truly, wholly,
Who would maintain order in knightly guise.

And nobility of which they are the voice,
They must hold to, faithfully and justly;
For fame, a French virtue, out of choice,
All must seem light to them that is heavy,
No flatterers there, boasting out of vanity,
Shall they be, for each knight must despise
Thus, deceitful deeds, slander, and cruelty,
Who would maintain order in knightly guise.

Such knights one must hold dear for, truthfully,
God, the saints, all the world, such men do prize.
Let them seek to follow such ways, endlessly,
Who would maintain order in knightly guise.

**LXV: Do not seek to deny me, sweet lady (Ne me vueilliez, douce
dame, escondire)**

Peerless lady, with all true virtues blessed,
To whom I have now granted all my love,
Gracious soul, of calm sweet ways possessed,
Fair beauty, sweet your fashioning doth prove,
Whom, more than aught, I do fear and love,
You see I dare not propose
Speech with you, to tell of my misery;
Yet that all, to the end, I might disclose,
Do not seek to deny me, sweet lady.

For tis very nearly six years now,
Since to you my whole love I assigned,
Nor at any time sought thanks, I vow,
For fear that you'd be wearied in mind
By listening, but not one more day, I find,
Can the woe that I enclose
Within my heart be suffered wordlessly;
To see that for you I seek no repose,
Do not seek to deny me, sweet lady.

Sweet, gentle heart may my ills be eased,
By you, and may my wounds be healed.
For I ache with weeping, ever displeased,
Nor can live a year from death concealed,
If sorrow is not forced, through you, to yield.
Fair one, fresher than the rose,
Your sweet love demands no more of me
Than that I ask but this, amidst my woes:
Do not seek to deny me, sweet lady.

**LXVI: And so, retain you as my faithful lover (Et vous retien pour
mon loial ami)**

My true knight, my most gracious servant,
I know you love me, truly, with good heart,
And long now I have seen you burdened
With amorous ills with which you sit apart
Blaming yourself; be not downcast, aspire,
Grieve not a day, not twelve hours together,
For I would love you with a love entire,
And so, retain you as my faithful lover.

And the grief that sets you longing so,
For my love, such that for death you cry,
I will ease, and shall see you oft also.
For my body is not so like to die
That I shall not find my way full clear,
To seeing you; now be mine forever,
For I would be your lady and your dear,
And so, retain you as my faithful lover.

So, take care, don't go my heart deceiving,
For such faithful lovers are rare, indeed,
I know it all too well, so no pursuing
The false who are accursed in every deed.
Thus, I'll prove not proud in this affair,

But take pity on you, who grieve ever,
Such that I yield my love, at your prayer,
And so, retain you as my faithful lover.

**LXVII: Ah, God grant me the power to so deserve! (Hé Dieux me doint
pouvoir du desservir!)**

My dear lady, in no way, certainly,
Could I give thanks of a sufficiency
To match the noble gift your heart sent
To me, your true liege servant in intent,
That of granting me your love entirely;
Tis of the one I love, and long to serve,
Ah, God grant me the power to so deserve!

Now have you filled my poor heart with joy,
And freed that same heart from the torment
That I've long suffered in your love's employ;
You have thanked me, and with fair intent
Take thought concerning my advancement,
And my desire for all good things observe;
Ah, God grant me the power to so deserve!

And now I shall be happier than before,
And right it is that I live joyfully,
Your granting me your love so pleases me,
That were this whole world mine, and more,
I would rather lose that whole, entirely,
Than your love, which I seek to preserve,
Ah, God grant me the power to so deserve!

**LXVIII: Lady, for God's sake, I cry you mercy (Dame, pour Dieu,
mercy vous cry)**

Lady, ne'er have I seen you till now,
Yet, without a lie, I dare here avow,
You have ravished my heart utterly,

For evermore, nor will it e'er be free.
Yet I must feel ill hands upon me,
If you deny me; I pray you, aid me.
Lady, for God' sake, I cry you mercy.

You would indeed content me greatly,
If it were your pleasure to grant me
Your love, and I, hereby, guarantee,
That I am yours, and, ceaselessly,
I shall be so, nor shall seek to leave;
With folded hands, I beg you humbly;
Lady, for God's sake, I cry you mercy.

I will have been served, immensely,
By the great power of your beauty,
That will eclipse my smiles; surely
I'll find good fortune; if you decree
You seek my death, then see me
Die like a martyr; yet, hear my plea;
Lady, for God's sake, I cry you mercy.

LXIX: Sir, of loving you too soon (Sire, de si tost vous amer)

It has gripped you suddenly,
The love-sickness that wounds you so;
Accuse yourself not, to me,
For being slow in asking, though.
I am no mistress of love, oh,
A fool am I to play this tune,
Sir, of loving you too soon.

Tis the lady's fault, it seems to me,
Against honour and nobility so,
To grant so soon what certainly
Is worth so much that none know
Of greater wealth nor such ecstasy.
One would hasten, thus, the boon,

Sir, of loving you too soon.

For you have earned, previously,
The fruits of love, by hours of woe,
Suffering from the cold and heat,
And have found great riches so;
Name me fool, you might well be
Right this rashness to impugn,
Sir, of loving you too soon.

LXX: That strength and courage fail me (Que vigour et cuer me fault)

Would you wish me then to die,
Fair one, for love of you?
Alas! To what place can I fly,
If your sweet heart is bitter rue,
I cannot take up arms, anew,
Gainst love, which so assails me
That strength and courage fail me.

For God's sake offer me no harm,
Oh, sweetest star of all the sea,
For I wish, drawn by your charm,
That you my sole love would be,
Would you but love me equally,
Whence I say to you, and truly,
That strength and courage fail me.

By your desire I would be led,
That all my cares would allay;
Naught else delights in its stead.
So, I must shut myself away
And never thus seek to stray
From you, so far yet from me
That strength and courage fail me.

**LXXI: Sweet lady, I must render me your prize (Doulce dame, je me
rens a vous pris)**

Your beauty, and the graciousness whereby
You welcome me, so captivates my heart,
Lovely lady, and your sweet laughing eye,
That if I may not have your love, I'll die
This very moment, for my heart doth start
To tremble when your beauty it doth spy.
So doth your beauty take me by surprise,
Sweet lady, I must render me your prize.

See how I am drenched by many a tear,
For you, nor can I live much longer;
The ills of love they grieve me, I fear,
Such that nigh to death I now appear.
Lady I would revere, show mercy ever
On one who all recourse lacks, tis clear,
And as one captured by love, likewise,
Sweet lady, I must render me your prize.

Yet, gentle, humble heart, without pride,
Sweet person, so adored, I would wish
Naught else from you, nor seek, beside
Aught but the savour of one sweet kiss;
That, from my lips, no more be sighed
Complaint of the sweet lips I'm denied;
But if I have done wrong, in any wise,
Sweet lady, I must render me your prize.

**LXXII: I know not what has been said to you (Ne sçay qu'on vous a
raporté)**

My lady, I know not what to say,
Of yourself and of your manner;
It seems as if myself you'd slay
By showing me a face so sombre;

You'd put me behind you, forever,
And so I am discomforted, tis true.
I know not what has been said to you.

Naught is done that you will suffer,
Not a thing I might request is done,
Which troubles me and must do ever.
Tis not your former custom, my fair one,
To be so proud towards me, or to shun
Me so, unless for me some ill ensue,
I know not what has been said to you.

To make me melt like wax thus, in the sun,
To set my corpse soon, high upon its bier,
To strip from me all good, as you have done,
Makes me wonder, lady, whom I hold dear,
If another has decried my virtues here,
And has informed your heart of things untrue,
I know not what has been said to you.

Speak if you'd wish me good and dead,
Causelessly, to take another instead,
Who robs me thus of the good I knew:
I know not what has been said to you.

**LXXIII: What shall I do, sweet lady, without you? (Las! que feray,
doulce dame, sanz vous)**

Alas, my lady, I must go far away
From your beauty, which doth my heart insult.
Thus all ills now assault me, without stay,
For I love you more than Tristan did Iseult,
Fair one, in whom is my last sanctuary,
Now all my gracious manner quits me
No greater solace do I have, tis true;
What shall I do, sweet lady, without you?

And my poor heart must bathe in tears always,
My heart that suffers now too great an ill;
For no other good could I desire, I say,
Except you ask it, fair one, of your will.
Thus, I am discomfited, entirely,
For without you there is no life for me,
Nor can aught from death grant rescue;
What shall I do, sweet lady, without you?

And now I must fear our parting, greatly,
For thus I'll lose what I did once enjoy,
Your sweetness, that comforts me sweetly,
When you deign that sweetness to employ
And ease me so; now I'll find no comfort
Till the grievous sorrow death has brought;
Now all good things are beyond my view;
What shall I do, sweet lady, without you?

**LXXIV: I leave you my heart now as gage (Je vous laisse mon cuer en
gage)**

Sweet lady, to God I commend you,
I must away, and it brings me woe,
Yet a hundred times I'd beg you,
Sweet courteous one, where'er I go,
Do not forget me, and to bestow
A pledge I'll return from voyage,
I leave you my heart now as gage.

Lover, this separation from you
Can but little delight my heart
And if you forget me, tis true
There is no subtle skill nor art
Will quench my tears; soft, we part,
I say adieu, yet grief to assuage,
I leave you my heart now as gage.

Fair one, know that I shall not,
Because of some other lady,
Alter; you'll ne'er be forgot,
For I care not a sou, you'll see,
For any other, soon here I'll be,
And, of you, to send me message,
I leave you my heart now as gage.

LXXV: I'll not forget you for a moment (Ne vous oubli je nullement)

Do not seek to forget me ever,
For, as long as I'm far from you,
Fair one, I pray you, remember
That none but you do I love true,
And even, though, far from you,
In another land, I'm long absent,
I'll not forget you for a moment.

It would mark me out as foolish,
Bound hand and foot, mad, say I,
If your heart should ever wish
Another, far better I should die,
Than that our hands part thereby;
Despite every pain and torment,
I'll not forget you for a moment.

Thus, I must prove melancholy,
Far from you, in tears, complain,
Nor that of which my heart is full
Can I forget, the trouble and pain;
And if you know not the woe I gain,
Yet know amidst my discontent
I'll not forget you for a moment.

**LXXVI: Of her true love, desiring that he return (De son ami, desirant
qu'il reviegne)**

I pray to God that he'll give goodnight
To the fair one, for whom I truly sigh,
And that naught may annoy her sight,
Except that absent far from her am I.
For it would please, if her heart in turn,
Was waiting, so the memory was nigh,
Of her true love, desiring that he return.

She's the loveliest and the best, I say,
In this world, and thus assured am I
That loyalty governs and instructs always
Her noble heart, that is not proud or high,
Nor by ill thought tainted that folk spurn;
But praying God news comes, by and by,
Of her true love, desiring that he return.

Ah! That I was now where sweetness is,
Brought or blown to where she doth wait!
To her, and I, that would bring great bliss,
Such that our ills would be lessened straight;
Lord! If she knew at least how much I burn;
That she'd know, but for the distant fate
Of her true love, desiring that he return.

**LXXVII: Lady, for to serve you, I attend (Dame, qu'a vous server
j'entende)**

I am not, truly, your equal here,
For you are a lady without peer
In this world, beauty sans pride,
To serve whom I shall thus abide;
Yet know tis Love has supplied
Me to labour, and doth intend
Lady, for to serve you, I attend.

So, the tale of my sorrows, hear,
With true pity, in your sweet ear;
And be aware that I would be
Yours alone, and would not see
Your sweet heart so trouble me,
But rather please and so amend,
Lady, for to serve you, I attend.

Look at me with your sweet eyes,
Lady, I tremble, a leaf that dies
Before you, nor dare pass the sill,
Lest your anger I'd suffer still,
Your great valour, pride, and will,
Against me, rather kindness send,
Lady, for to serve you, I attend.

**LXXVIII: Who such harm and such evil does us! (Qui tant de maulz et
tant d'anuis nous fait!)**

What to do with a spouse so jealous?
Pray God that he's flayed altogether.
He who sets so close a watch upon us
That neither one can approach the other.
Hang him on high, that vile face smother,
Foul, evil, and cunning that he shows us,
Who such harm and such evil does us!

By ravening wolves may his flesh be torn,
Who proves but an obstacle in our way!
For what was this vile old fellow born,
Except to grimace, and spit all day?
Let the devil clasp him, and tight, I say,
I loathe him, this guard, old and useless,
Who such harm and such evil does us!

Oh, how he merits a blow on the head,

He who does naught but search away,
And all the house! Send him off to bed,
Scourge him a little, and make him pay,
Or send him down stairs, upon his way,
Topple him soon this wretch, so curious,
Who such harm and such evil does us!

**LXXIX: So, I cry mercy of you, most humbly (Si vous en cry mercy
trés humblement)**

Alas! My lady, twas love that made me say
What I said, as if coarse and ill-taught;
Thus, I spoke, as if grieved and angry.
But, for God's sake, take not as aught
What I said, sweet lady, ever sought;
For I know full well that I spoke rudely,
So, I cry mercy of you, most humbly.

For the heart that's full of jealousy
Is not always on the side of reason,
As there's no worse grief or malady;
And I was told, the day twas written,
That another lover you had taken;
And twas made me speak foolishly,
So, I cry mercy of you, most humbly.

Yet I pray you that you will suffer
Me as a lover, though there are many,
I am the worst, who deserve it better;
Perchance so, yet treat not disdainfully
My loyal heart your love seized suddenly,
I called you false, I lied assuredly,
So, I cry mercy of you, most humbly.

**LXXX: Would you then have me die for you? (Voulez vous donc que je
muire pour vous?)**

May I then never aspire to achieve
Your love, my lady, so debonair,
By true love, nor loyalty win leave,
Nor by begging, nor by service fair?
Have I no power your sweet heart to share,
Lovely one, my gracious heart and true,
Would you then have me die for you?

Alas! For God's sake, seek to take me
As your love! For that must be, say I,
If I'm to live, nor may I bear, readily,
Your refusal, that doth reward deny;
The more I serve the more you decry,
Honourable lady, and disdain me too,
Would you then have me die for you?

If at least you might deign to recall
The bitter grief for you I must bear;
So, it might please you, when I call
Upon you and speak what I must share,
To make of your sweet face a fair
Sweet seeming; yet this you do not do;
Would you then have me die for you?

**LXXXI: Accept with grace this gift from your lover (Prenez en gré le
don de vostre amant)**

This New Year's Day, when gifts we award,
Lady most dear, I give to you entirely
My heart, my body, all that I can afford;
I would abandon myself completely
To you, offering my goods, wholly,
And thus, this little diamond I offer,
Accept with grace this gift from your lover.

I give you freely all that I have to give,

For in this world there's no other one
I would rather recompense, as I live,
Than you who are the noblest person,
Commanding all the wealth I've won,
Thus, I'd be all yours, to love you ever;
Accept with grace this gift from your lover.

Seek then to grant your sweet heart to me,
As well; do not so drive me to despair,
That you contrive my death, and cruelly.
But rid my heart of all the sorrows there.
Thus, the lovers' crown you shall bear;
My heart I give, and ask yours forever;
Accept with grace this gift from your lover.

**LXXXII: The God of Love be my true witness (Le dieu d'amours m'en
soit loial tesmoins)**

Sweet lady, pardon me, although
I have stayed away too long,
I cannot soon return, e'en so,
Which troubles me, for a throng
Of obstacles I've met; yet know,
I'm yours, near or at a distance,
The God of Love be my true witness.

I truly thought my life was done
So much woe I felt on leaving
You, fair one; and once begun,
I've felt there yet, ever grieving;
Without you there's no rejoicing,
There is but lack and wretchedness,
The God of Love be my true witness.

Once I am home, seek to decree
Your will, for your every demand
I'll seek to satisfy, as you'll see,

Strive to serve you, and be on hand
As long as I live; for you command
All of my thoughts and cares, no less,
The God of Love be my true witness.

**LXXXIII: Ah, my disloyal one! Have you a heart? (Ha desloial!
comment as tu le cuer?)**

False perjurer, rogue, full of vicious art,
More than Judas, a mere thing of treason,
I loved you like a fool, with all my heart,
Not one ill thought towards you, not one,
Yet you betray me now, without reason.
You ought not to play so ill a part,
At any price, and thus leave me undone.
Ah, my disloyal one! Have you a heart?

Lord, who from such can win true justice?
Many have been hung, and for less reason,
If I could avenge myself, I'd heal by this
The ills I've had through you, every one.
Would you were held here, in my prison!
They burden me, your pride and presumption,
Such that you make all of my joys depart.
Ah, my disloyal one! Have you a heart?

For my good deeds you render me this,
No more nor less than did false Jason
Render Medea, who did him service,
Such that the golden fleece was won,
For him she left her land, thus was done
That which but little honour did impart,
Yet worse you do me, by comparison.
Ah, my disloyal one! Have you a heart?

LXXXIV: For you bring me such woe (Se vous me faites tel grief)

If you'll but grant me leave,
With what the slanderers said,
Lady, who ten years, I believe,
To serve well I've been led,
I'll take me to my bed:
You love me not, I know,
For you bring me such woe.

I've not deserved to be
Estranged, my duty done,
Yet must give way, I see,
To another, lesser, one,
Who your heart has won;
On him my ills bestow,
For you bring me such woe.

Your heart to me has altered;
For with words unpleasant
I'm now by you mistreated
As if I were a peasant;
Yet, all my pain depleted
Thus, much relief I'll show,
For you bring me such woe.

**LXXXV: Yet, if God should please, I shall be nearer (Mais, se Dieux
plaist, j'en seray plus prochains)**

The present hope of seeing you, my lady,
And soon, makes me sing out, joyously,
All aloud, under the greenwood tree,
Where I've taken to lingering, to be free
For a little of all these ills troubling me,
For I'm, so long, so far from her, as ever,
Yet, if God should please, I shall be nearer.

And I ought to feel, of love, the longing
To see her, for I would e'er dare to claim

That there is none, be he prince, or king,
Who would not bring honour to her name
For her great virtues, that all folk proclaim;
And thus, I'm sad that I'm so far from her,
Yet, if God should please, I shall be nearer.

And then her beauty, that my heart inflames,
That oft makes me to sorrow and lament
With the longing, that pains me and constrains,
To see her, my small comfort to augment,
I will sing of, and calm my heart thus rent.
Such my complaint, I'm far from my lover,
Yet, if God should please, I shall be nearer.

LXXXVI: If the fables all speak true (Se les fables dient voir)

Once their lovers they all loved
Every god, every goddess,
So Ovid says, and were moved
By their love to much distress:
Faith, loyalty, and promises
They, without deceit, held to,
If the fables all speak true.

From the skies came that cohort
Despite their great loftiness,
And here to be loved they sought,
Those gods full of nobleness,
For their loves their great riches
They did set at naught, that crew,
If the fables all speak true.

Then were sorely tormented,
Nymphs and enchantresses,
And the divinities demented,
Young satyrs and mistresses,
By love, that they, to excess,

Granted flesh and riches too,
If the fables all speak true.

**LXXXVII: Adieu, gracious one, of the lovely eyes (A Dieu vous di,
gracieuse aux beaulz yeux)**

Since it is thus, and I cannot please you,
My beautiful one, my fair sovereign,
For you approve of nothing that I do,
And I do nothing except lose my pain;
I'd rather that you let me die,
Than deign to heal the ill I have thereby.
Since I would not weary you with sighs,
Adieu, gracious one, of the lovely eyes.

It troubles me I have no way to win you,
And your sweet heart, for you may be sure
That if my love for you had pleased you
Paris would have loved not Helen more;
And yet I might have rotted there,
Awaiting recompense from this affair;
Thus I say, for the better I'd surmise,
Adieu, gracious one, of the lovely eyes.

And yet I would not so far withdraw,
If there were a single thing, be sure,
Which I could say or do, and willingly,
That was to your liking, my sweet lady;
That I'd do, and yet you'd leave me
To perish here rather than relieve me;
And so, I say, ere death doth me surprise,
Adieu, gracious one, of the lovely eyes.

**LXXXVIII: It shall go hard with me if I live long! (Ce sera fort se je vif
longuement!)**

What can I do, forever, but wear black,
Now that it seems all pleasure I must lack,
And no more that sweet realm may I know,
Where none asked more than that I come and go,
Such that my heart now enters on a battle,
Which harms more grievously than any trial?
For, when all fails me that might right my wrong,
It shall go hard with me if I live long!

Ah! My lady, I must lament indeed,
When my desires and love must speed
Beyond the country where you reside;
I have no power to think of aught beside;
For all other love I prize not one sou;
All my advancement now should come from you;
But now Love renders grief so strong,
It shall go hard with me if I live long!

In great languor I live, morn and night.
Cursed be the one who destroys me quite,
So that I lose you, when I would rather
Face death swiftly than lose you forever;
For in this world there is none like you,
In beauty or in manner, for such is true.
Parted from you, who may I dwell among?
It shall go hard with me if I live long!

**LXXXIX: For otherwise the love's but weak and feigned (O
autrement l'amour est fausse et fainte)**

Many there are who would through mastery
Acquire love's benefits, yet that would prove
Great folly; for tis wrong, who'er those be,
That one constrains or seeks to conquer love.
For humbly one must ask, and hearts approve,
That which is freely given, unconstrained,
For otherwise the love's but weak and feigned.

And if it happens any have so acquired
Such love by great care to make it sure,
They'd yet have it submit, as required,
As if by right they were the conqueror,
Oft through this the sweetness is no more,
That must be through sweetest grace attained,
For otherwise the love's but weak and feigned.

Thus, in such, one must not claim authority
In word or deed, but rather seek to die,
Than dominate the sweet gift that liberty
Doth yield, and that harshness doth deny.
Serve well to merit your reward, say I;
In great fear true love is thus attained,
For otherwise the love's but weak and feigned.

XC: There he will shortly die it seems to me (Il y morra briefment, au mien cuidier)

(Ballade Pouetique)

If by Juno, the powerful goddess,
Adonis is not aided, and promptly,
The fierce god Mars must him distress.
Far from Vulcan's chains he's run swiftly,
Venus has greatly loved him formerly,
But yet can aid him in naught, you see;
There he will shortly die it seems to me.

And Pallas too is harsh to him outright,
Though Mercury is rushing to his aid,
Making his troubled state seem bright.
Before Jupiter, fair Adonis is arrayed,
And opposite him Cerberus, in the shade,
Who knows about the bringing of a plea,
There he will shortly die it seems to me.

For all the gods look ill upon him now,
Except for Mercury who Argus slew,
Though with Juno's favour, I'd allow,
He'd not find that death, now, was his due.
Yet if Apollo strikes him hard and true,
Blood will flow, drained from him freely;
There he will shortly die it seems to me.

(Note: This appears to be a thinly disguised presentation of Christine de Pisan's own plight in being forced to go to law to seek her rights, the mythological characters finding equivalents in her own situation, she being Adonis, and Juno her desired patroness. Mercury represents her own ability to write and communicate, Jupiter is the judge, Mars and Pallas, the war-gods, are her opponents, with Cerberus as their attorney, etc)

**XCI: There's naught so good that they'll not slander (N'il est si bon
qu'ilz n'y trevent a dire)**

Some folk set all their intent and care
On keeping watch on what others do,
And speaking of others lay all bare,
Hiding nothing, and replacing virtue
With envy, that so grips and gnaws too,
It makes them speak ill of every other,
There's naught so good they'll not slander.

Tis a great ill that life must long endure
In such folk, whom God troubles not.
Thus, the vile, whose actions often injure
Many a fine person that deserves it not,
And may at first seem honest, yet are not,
Many are worse than Judas however,
There's naught so good they'll not slander.

Their false tongues full of evil rumour
Trouble folk, and e'en the air in passing,
Yet who lies willingly shines the brighter,
A fine path the slanderer goes pursuing;
A marvel earth refrains from swallowing
Such folk, who corrupt the world forever,
There's naught so good they'll not slander.

**XCII: In whom God set such noble prowess (En qui Dieux a toute
proece assise)**

There you among the noble should be set
Fair valiant knight, full of manly virtue,
Who with many a valorous foe has met,
Subduing great realms and castles too.
Great Hector's path you forcefully pursue,
And that of Caesar, wise and valiant,
And Alexander who did e'er advance
That he might subdue the world entirely,
And Judas Maccabeus, virtuously,
And David's and Joshua's success;
Thus, he is surely of your company,
In whom God set such noble prowess.

Charles the Great to whom God was friend,
King Arthur famed for his nobility,
Godfrey that the faith did so defend
Against the unbelieving enemy,
Your virtuous qualities seek equally
To emulate, employing all your skill
In wielding the trenchant blade at will,
That gaining honour you seem wholly,
Like a sun that in the sky shines brightly,
That all must desire, and love, and bless;
Thus, he is surely of your company,
In whom God set such noble prowess.

And God has granted you and promises
Such great good, and with such largesse,
That if Semiramis were alive, no less,
Who of her land was the royal mistress,
Her love for you would bring you riches.
For we see no virtue's lacking in you,
Nor do you ever fail us, but hold true,
Thus, the world speaks of you fulsomely.
The Romans once showed like bravery
In action, and won praise, in their success;
Thus, he is surely of your company,
In whom God set such noble prowess.

XCIII: Wisdom enough have they acquired (Il a assez science acquise)

The kings, the princes, and the wise,
With the nobles of ancient days,
Many a custom did devise
That none in this age seek to praise;
Honour and not greed, tis known,
Above all things they admired,
Yet any that do keep their own
Wisdom enough have they acquired.

Prowess, honour, great bravery,
The Emperor Otto once did show,
Prudent, generous, wise was he,
And great riches he did know;
Yet whoe'er tight hold doth claim
Of their wealth, when all's conspired,
To seize it, whate'er fools maintain,
Wisdom enough have they acquired.

And thus, ill-born covetousness,
Causes many a vile assault
On poor folk, and much distress,
Yet never once will men cry 'halt'

But evermore: 'that shall be mine'.
Whoe'er gains what they desired,
By flattery, argument, design,
Wisdom enough have they acquired.

**XCIV: Though fools believe not till tis so (Mais fol ne croit jusqu'il
prent)**

Whoever claims the contrary
Yet one must practise loyalty
In all that one may seek to do,
If one would profit by it too:
Let others treachery pursue,
Ill will pursue the base and low,
Though fools believe not till tis so.

Firm loyalty is necessary
To those that honour would see,
And so, achieve their true prize;
None that bad deeds do devise
Should ere advantage realise;
To a bad end the treacherous go,
Though fools believe not till tis so.

And twere better to say naught
Than to speak and claim one ought
All thoughts of loyalty reject
When riches are one's sole object,
But cunning be, and circumspect;
Who takes that road will suffer woe,
Though fools believe not till tis so.

**XCV: Our good king who has the malady (Our good king who has the
malady)**

We should, surely, above all other ill,
Grieve for that which harms the realm of France,

Which was the kingdom, and such is still,
Of Christian folk of noble circumstance;
But God doth strike the proud as with a lance,
And thus I pray for joy and remedy,
Since for our sins he does penance,
Our good king who has the malady.

Tis great pity for a prince of this age;
Among all of such high inheritance,
The world has none of equal courage,
All to him show love and allegiance;
May all love the youth in this instance;
Thank God, not lost, despite our misery,
Is that love, yet woeful his mischance;
Our good king who has the malady.

So, we pray to God with humble heart
That he might be a shield to our good king,
Against all ill, and make it so depart,
Granting cure; for I go yet believing
That if of his sickness he has healing,
He will be, as they say of him truly,
A valiant prince, well-set for governing,
Our good king who has the malady.

**XCVI: If he lacks goodness he's not worth a sou (S'il n'a bonte,
trestout ne vault pas maille)**

Noble he who in himself shows goodness,
There is no treasure equals such a one,
And to the highest prize, and true success,
Mount the good, while to one wicked come
Shame, dishonour as his dower,
For though he may hold great wealth or power,
And is so handsome naught fails him too,
If he lacks goodness, he's not worth a sou.

And when deeds of goodness are recounted,
All enjoy those same where'er they're told;
And all are pleased when evil is surmounted,
By good, and will re-tell them by the hour,
Thus, some good deed they remember,
And each would in his deeds prove greater,
For there's none so rich this proves untrue:
If he lacks goodness, he's not worth a sou.

The nobler he is, the more he's shamed,
Be he prince or king, or count, or knight,
If for true honour he's not greatly famed
More than the rest. Where is his delight
If naught better he can achieve
Than others? Tis well known, I believe,
Of every man, whate'er his place or hue,
If he lacks goodness, he's not worth a sou.

**XCVII: With several sages whom we should believe (Se font plusieurs
sages qui font a croire)**

In the course of things, all hold more dear
Fortune's benefits than those of Nature;
But tis wrong for they're so slight, I fear,
None aught at any price to call them treasure.
Boethius of this makes mention,
In his work that offers Consolation
Denying the glory Fortune would weave,
With several sages whom we should believe.

And despite their holding Fortune dear,
And though all care greatly for their riches,
We see that all wealth and honour here
Soon fails, and the pleasures of success
Are of limited duration
That belong to Fortune, whose condition

Is constant change, the histories so conceive,
With several sages whom we should believe.

But so certain are the great goods, so entire
Of Nature, that there is ne'er a creature
Has e'er its fill, yet needs, in its desire,
To be filled with fear of Fortune's tenure.
Tis good sense and true discretion,
Clear understanding and reflection,
To which Aristotle would have us cleave,
With several sages whom we should believe.

**XCVIII: Who hold the sages in great derision (Qui des sages font grant
derrision)**

All men possess the desire for knowledge
And truly there is naught of such richness,
More so then, since all do so acknowledge,
That none should seek to despise its greatness,
Yet there are many who lack its largesse,
Nor of their deeds is there much mention
Who hold the sages in great derision.

And, therefore, the philosopher speaks true,
In claiming wisdom's greatest enemy
Is ignorance; but for no price would many
Countenance receiving such a guest,
God promises it to the elect, no less;
Though there are many, without just occasion,
Who hold the sages in great derision.

And so, one should give one's every hour,
And strength, such fine riches to possess;
For who attains knowledge has great power,
Happy are those of whom she's the princess,
Governing their every deed as mistress.
Between those and these there is division,

Who hold the sages in great derision.

**XCIX: And may God preserve us all at the close (Dieux nous y maint
trestous a la parclose!)**

If all do believe, and with good reason,
In one sole God, while harbouring no doubt,
Who to the elect His paradise has given,
Shaming the perverse He keeps without,
Then to all tis necessary
To reach that sovereign refuge, certainly,
And at the end be where all things repose,
And may God preserve us all at the close.

And though tis true that every human heart
Falls into sin, and many a misdeed here
We hit upon, one must seek not to part
From God, and soon return, for but a tear,
One drop, is to God most pleasing
Shed by the repentant, such is moving,
For so tis written there, in sacred prose
And may God preserve us all at the close.

So, all, both he and she, should means employ
To reach that place, with noble faithfulness,
Of the blessed saints, where reigns in joy
Our Lord on high, in whom is all goodness,
That place where He'll grant our reward,
If we repent, and good deeds do record,
Which joy and peace and glory doth enclose,
And may God preserve us all at the close.

C: To the writing I've set my name (En escrit y ay mis mon nom)

One hundred ballads I have writ,
Out of my inspiration wholly,
That of my promise I might be quit,

Which was begged of me sincerely;
And thus, am I named here, fittingly;
If any would know, or not, that same,
With this, hundredth ballad, lastly
To the writing I've set my name.

So, I pray those who've read a bit,
Or will read, of their courtesy,
And all wherever they utter it,
Let the work be taken pleasantly,
And without adverse commentary;
I've sought only good not blame,
And so, with this last poem, rightly,
To the writing I've set my name.

I made them not to garner merit,
Nor for any reward, but wholly
Created them of my choicest wit
And although most wretchedly
My intellect has sufficed, truly,
To render them deserving of fame,
Yet nonetheless, here, finally,
To the writing I've set my name.

(Note: The 'en escrit y' of the refrain, may be read as 'cristyene', an anagram of Christine de Pisan's own 'Christian' name, thus making good her claim to have set her name to the writing)

EXPLICIT CENT BALADES

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