

Christine de Pisan

Rondeaux

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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), which was 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 Ballades and Rondeaux reveal 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.

Rondeaux

I: I'm like a solitary mate-less dove (Com turtre suis sanz per toute seulete)

I'm like a solitary mate-less dove,
A ewe, without pasture, lost, alone,
For death has cleft me from my own,
From my sweet mate, whom I did love.

Tis seven years since death did remove
My love; better if I had died, I own!
I'm like a solitary mate-less dove.

For, since then, but grieving I approve,
And, in my misery, must weep and moan,
Nor have I hope, such harshness am I shown,
That I'll find solace, or may joyful prove;
I'm like a solitary mate-less dove.

II: What use then if I complain (Que me vault donc le complaindre)

What use then if I complain
Or cry my pain,
For the grief I bear hereby,
Since naught can I restrain?
Greater it grows, say I,
And will do so, till I die.

My grief doth such depths attain
I cannot restrain
The suffering that makes me sigh;
What use then if I complain?

When he I loved, nor did feign,
Death did retain,
I was wronged then, thereby;

My joy was turned, thus, to pain.
Nor can I attain
To fair grace or favour nigh;
What use then if I complain?

**III: I am a widow, dressed in black, alone (Je suis vesve, seulete et noir
vestue,)**

I am a widow, dressed in black, alone,
Sad-faced, and as simply clad, as ever;
In great affliction, with woeful manner,
I bear the bitter grief I must bemoan.

And it is right I'm full of tears, I own,
And like to die, while few words I say;
I am a widow, dressed in black, alone.

Now I have lost him, and so have known
Great sorrow, till my wits are all astray,
In harsh state is my fortune this sad day,
All my sweet times, my joys are flown;
I am a widow, dressed in black, alone.

**IV: Since tis thus, and I must live in sorrow (Puis qu'ainsi est qu'il me
fault vivre en dueil)**

Since tis thus, and I must live in sorrow
And, in this world, not one good thing own,
Let death come, and slay the ill I've known,
That grips me so that I'd die tomorrow.

And I must quench the bitterness I show,
Though my sad heart doth its deep loss bemoan,
Since tis thus, and I must live in sorrow.

In manner, face, and glance, I must borrow
The looks of a woman who grieves alone;

So great these ills of mine have grown,
The path towards death I would follow,
Since tis thus, and I must live in sorrow.

V: Little the cheer in my face (Quelque chiere que je face)

Little the cheer in my face,
How seldom now I smile,
Since I've had, all this while,
No husband, in this place.

Twere wrong joy to grace,
From all such, I'm in exile,
Little the cheer in my face.

Though little of my sad case
I show, my pain and trial,
That naught can reconcile,
Yet grief doth joy efface,
Little the cheer in my face.

VI: While hoping for better days (En esperant de mieulx avoir)

While hoping for better days,
I must ignore the weather,
However much I recover
Hope of ending my malaise.

I must wear black always,
And dress simply as ever,
While hoping for better days.

If Fortune sad deeds essays,
I must those sorrows suffer,
Myself to the times temper,
Accepting the world's delays,
While hoping for better days.

VII: I know not how I endure (Je ne scay comment je dure)

I know not how I endure,
For my sad heart's full of pain,
And yet I dare not complain,
Or speak of my ill tenure.

My mournful life's obscure,
Naught but death would I gain,
I know not how I endure.

Though, to hide it the more,
I must sing a sweet refrain,
And many a smile must feign;
Yet God knows my heart's core,
I know not how I endure.

VIII: Since you're bent on leaving me (Puis que vous vous en allez)

Since you're bent on leaving me,
I can do no more than tell you,
Of my love; you'll sadden me,
If you should seek thus so to do.

I know not if it grieves you, too,
No ill's worse than mine, you see,
Since you're bent on leaving me.

Kiss me then, and embrace me,
For God's sake, write me anew,
Do thus the worst that ill can do,
Wounding my heart full deeply,
Since you're bent on leaving me,

IX: Fair to my eyes, and pleasant to my sight (Bel a mes yeulx, et bon a mon avis)

Fair to my eyes, and pleasing to my sight
Filled with grace, and with all goodness,
Worthy of honour, of all things the best,
Is my love, of all on which thoughts alight.

Young, noble, in body and face so bright,
Wise, humble, sweet, in manner gracious,
Fair to my eyes, and pleasing to my sight.

And when I can see you, tis such delight,
Face to face, you are mine then, I profess,
For naught would I wish more, I confess,
In all this world, to which you are the light,
Fair to my eyes, and pleasing to my sight.

X: Since Love, in this, grants you consent (Puis qu'Amours le te consent)

Since Love, in this, grants you consent
Through whom you've seized the prey,
Lover, such that you've won the day,
My heart, as well, must yield assent.

Thus, from all I turn, for my intent,
Is to love you, without more delay,
Since Love, in this, grants you consent.

Though not one in a hundred sent
By Love could take me this way,
Yet, as you hold me in your sway,
I must not wound you by dissent,
Since Love, in this, grants you consent.

**XI: With sad heart, to sing joyously (De triste cuer chanter
joyusement)**

With sad heart, to sing joyously,
To laugh, in grief, is hard to do.
Showing to all a contrary view,
Feeling sad, yet smiling sweetly.

Tis thus I must act publicly,
Learning, while keeping all from view,
With sad heart, to sing joyously.

For in my heart I bear, covertly,
Woe from which ill might ensue,
And so folk will keep silent too,
I seek, while weeping bitterly,
With sad heart, to sing joyously.

XII: Since I am so long away (Pour ce que je suis longtains)

Since I am so long away
From you, whom I love so,
No joy, fair one, do I know,
So, all my good goes astray.

In Lombardy, where I stay,
My heart is filled with woe,
Since I am so long away.

Regretting your sweet way,
I'm certain to death I'll go;
I'll feel emptiness and woe,
Till I regain joy, someday,
Since I am so long away.

XIII: Great good comes of these amours (C'est grant bien que de ces amours)

Great good comes of these amours,
For miracles they make manifest,
Fair ladies with courage blessed,
Who never were so brave before.

They heal, in the common course,
Quartain fevers, and all the rest,
Great good comes of these amours.

There's none so old, rich or poor,
If they're well-stricken, I attest,
Who'll not feel that, with the best,
A running hare they'd catch, for sure;
Great good comes of these amours.

XIV: My love, my good, my lady, my princess (M'amour, mon bien, ma dame, ma princeps)

My love, my good, my lady, my princess,
My pole-star, who leads me to harbour,
Of all I have, the sovereign mistress,
You're my delight, source of all my ardour.

My goddess I must call you, and yet more
My sweet hope, my defence, my fortress,
My love, my good, my lady, my princess.

Lucretia was not of greater loveliness,
Penelope no Greek did so adore,
The noble Semiramis you outsoar.
In all humility, so I must address,
My love, my good, my lady, my princess.

XV: When I have done no wrong (Quant je ne fois a nul tort)

When I have done no wrong,
Why then should any blame me,
For loving my sweet love truly?
His wish is mine, for him I long.

If in him my delight is strong,
None else can claim so, surely,
When I have done no wrong.

I love him, what is so wrong
With that, that everybody
Must everywhere defame me?
To death must I now belong
When I have done no wrong?

**XVI: Sweet lady, whom I have served so long (Doulce dame, que j'ay
long temps servie)**

Sweet lady, whom I have served so long,
I beg that you might ease my sadness,
Nor think my plaint mere foolishness,
So that my grief proves not lifelong.

See how, through love, I am not strong,
I die, lose vigour, hue, sense, and the rest,
Sweet lady, whom I have served so long.

Be not angry, nor think my illness wrong,
Or I shall die of amorous excess,
At your beauty, its sweet freshness,
And so, aid me, and my life prolong,
Sweet lady, whom I have served so long,

XVII: I am joyous, and so I ought to be (Je suis joyeux, et je le doy bien estre)

I am joyous, and so I ought to be,
On hearing news that is so sweet,
That my lady as her love doth greet
Myself, none finer could command me.

Naught that's sinister will harm me,
Since her love for me proves complete,
I am joyous, and so I ought to be.

And when true paradise I now see,
Freed from hell, her sweetness meet,
Whom all hold loveliest of the elite,
And regard her manner, and her beauty,
I am joyous, and so I ought to be.

XVIII: Blue-grey, laughing eyes that seized my heart (Rians vairs yeulx, qui mon cuer avez pris)

Blue-grey, laughing eyes that seized my heart,
By your glances full of amorous languor,
I yield to you, maintaining it an honour
To be so sweetly captured by your art.

None could sum the worth, for their part,
Of your great virtues, their sweet savour,
Blue-grey, laughing eyes that seized my heart.

So pleasant, sweet, in learning set apart
Are you, that in this world none is ever
So sad that should he your glance encounter
He would not, soon, find all his ills depart,
Blue-grey, laughing eyes that seized my heart.

**XIX: Thinking ever of my lady's beauty (Tout en pensant a la beauté
ma dame)**

Thinking ever of my lady's beauty,
That none can praise sufficiently,
This rondel I then made, presently,
For, by my soul, all my thought has she.

If I've done so, no wonder should it be,
Such is the feeling that doth rise in me,
Thinking ever of my lady's beauty.

Of true love, that lights the heart wholly,
Has come this sweet inspiration, surely,
Filling all my heart, so joyously,
Till I'm blithe as songbird in a tree,
Thinking ever of my lady's beauty,

**XX: In manner wise, adorned with beauty (Sage maintien, parent
de beauté)**

In manner wise, adorned with beauty,
Set in a form worthy of great praise,
A changeless heart, firm and true always,
Dwells in her to whom I owe fealty.

Great honour, peerless grace and loyalty
Guide her thus, nor leave her all her days,
In manner wise, adorned with beauty.

Heart high and noble, devoid of cruelty,
Injuring none with her humble ways,
With angelic beauty enough to raise
Her to a kingdom's rule, fair royalty,
In manner wise, adorned with beauty.

XXI: If there was not hope to comfort me (S'espoir n'estoit, qui me vient conforter)

If there was not hope to comfort me
And memory to dissipate my woe,
I'd not bear the ills, from which my lady
Fails to rescue me, that afflict me so.

For despair indeed would render me
Close to death, and slay me I know,
If there was not hope to comfort me.

But joy and solace come of memory,
That brings me hope of healing also,
And that she may be stirred by pity
To cure me; I would perish though,
If there was not hope to comfort me

XXII: Of all lovers I am the most joyous (De tous amans je suis le plus joyeux)

Of all lovers I am the most joyous,
Since my lady is at peace with me,
Who was so harsh to me, recently,
That of seeing her I proved anxious.

Tis better now peace has come upon us;
Since she's pleased to kiss me, sweetly,
Of all lovers I am the most joyous.

Her anger to me has been so tedious,
Rendering me woeful and uneasy,
But now I'm delighted she is happy;
Praise be to God, since it goes thus,
Of all lovers I am the most joyous.

XXIII: Fair one, what I have sought (Belle, ce que j'ay requis)

Fair one, what I have sought
Now be pleased to grant me,
For my many prayers ought
To have won that, surely.

So long now I have thought
To seek thus, and win truly,
Fair one, what I have sought.

If you've asked about me, naught
Should you do to deny me
My recompense, and my fee;
For by reason I have bought,
Fair one, what I have sought.

XXIV: Ever in black now I shall dress (Jamais ne vestiray que noir)

Ever in black now I shall dress,
Since I'm given leave so to do,
And since my lady quits me too,
Who had made me her heiress.

To her house I had access,
So deep grief is now my due,
Ever in black now I shall dress.

Since I no more may her address,
Now harsh treatment doth ensue,
So are my fortunes changed anew,
Thus, condemned to grief's excess,
Ever in black now I shall dress,

**XXV In plaints, in tears I must spend my days (En plains, en plours me
fault user mon temps)**

In plaints, in tears I must spend my days
If from you, my lady, I lack comfort,
Better if I were soon to die, in short,
Than suffer the grief I endure always.

Through you, Fair One, at death I gaze,
And know that thus, in true discomfort,
In plaints, in tears, I must spend my days.

And if your sweet heart likewise weighs
Against me, surely, I can do naught
To escape death, through my own effort;
Though I live out a hundred years' delays,
In plaints, in tears I must spend my days.

**XXVI: Sweet pleasant visage, whereon I gaze (Visage doulz, plaisant,
ou je me mire)**

Sweet pleasant visage, whereon I gaze,
The perfect exemplar of true beauty,
I am joyful, when you return my gaze.

Naught could suffice me, all my days,
If I saw you not; you should please me,
Sweet pleasant visage, whereon I gaze,

For in all this world, none can praise
Aught so fair, nor can I cease surely
To exalt you, speak of you always:
Sweet pleasant visage, whereon I gaze,

XXVII: Adieu, my lady, I am leaving (A Dieu, ma dame, je m'en vois)

Adieu, my lady, I am leaving,
A hundred times myself commend
To you, within a month returning.

I shall no longer count on seeing
Your beauty which doth never end;
Adieu, my lady, I am leaving.

A thousand times, while thanking
You, my prayer to God I send:
Let there be no swift forgetting,
Adieu, my lady, I am leaving.

**XXVIII: You to God, my love, I commend (A Dieu, mon ami, vous
command)**

You to God, my love, I commend,
Adieu; from Him is all my good;
For His sake, return soon, my friend.

Tearfully, on that you may depend,
I say adieu to you, and, as I should,
You to God, my love, I commend.

Now forget me not, to you will tend
My every thought, be it understood;
Kiss me, on parting, if you would;
You to God, my love, I commend.

XXIX: It seems a hundred years ago (Il me semble qu'il a cent)

It seems a hundred years ago
Since my lover went from me!

Tis a fortnight since, although
It seems a hundred years ago!

Weary the time that I spend so,
For the day he went from me,
It seems a hundred years ago!

XXX: It is a month this very day (Il a au jour d'ui un mois)

It is a month this very day
Since my lover went from me.

My heart is sad and calm always,
It is a month this very day.

'Adieu,' he said, 'I am away'
Nor since sends aught to me,
It is a month this very day.

XXXI: If loyalty proves of worth to me (Se loiaulté me puet valoir)

If loyalty proves of worth to me,
And serving well, and loving true,
Without fail, due reward I'll see.

I should not grieve so bitterly,
Nor say that love harms me anew,
If loyalty proves of worth to me.

And if that's neglected, utterly,
Then better at sea would I do;
Yet none shall rob me of my due,
If loyalty proves of worth to me.

XXXII: Gance so sweet, loving, pleasing (Trés doulz regart, amoureux, attraiant)

Gance so sweet, so loving, pleasing,
Full of great comfort and sweetness,
My heart you pierce, hurt in passing.

Yet nonetheless, your toil unceasing,
Dart ever toward me, upon me press,
Gance so sweet, so loving, pleasing.

For, to my heart, true love, straying,
Reveals your sweetness, my distress
You relieve, my whole heart healing,
Glance so sweet, so loving, pleasing.

XXXIII: The fairest there might be in France (Le plus bel qui soit en France)

The fairest there might be in France,
The best of all, and sweetest too,
Alas! Why are you not in view?

My love, my faithful assurance,
My god on earth, none's like you,
The fairest there might be in France.

If you can your powers advance,
Why not present yourself anew?
And thus, be seen as, at a glance,
The fairest there might be in France.

XXXIV: I'm in accord if you would have me die (J'en suis d'acort s'il vous plaist que je muire)

I'm in accord if you would have me die
For you, fair one, yet it would be wrong.
For that I've earned harm of you, I deny.

If you would so torment me, thereby,
Leave me without relief, my woes among,
I'm in accord if you would have me die.

Never a wish of yours should I defy,
And from your bonds, where I belong,
I'll not depart, though you slay me thereby,
I'm in accord if you would have me die.

**XXXV: Better and better I'd serve you (De mieulx en mieulx vous
vueil servir)**

Better and better I'd serve you,
My lady, from whom comes my good,
To earn your grace, and favour too.

And, so as to submit to you,
Completely, as indeed I should,
Better and better I'd serve you.

But seek not to strip me of true
Joy if so, be it understood;
I would you every wish pursue,
Better and better I'd serve you.

XXXVI: Alas, the evil dream I dreamed (Helas! le très mauvais songe)

Alas, the evil dream I dreamed,
This night, has made my heart to sigh,
Anxious, utterly, it has seemed.

No sea-sponge, praised, esteemed,
E'er retained aught, better than I,
Alas, the evil dream I dreamed.

Yet it tells me naught, thereby,
To hope for, but to say goodbye;
Would God that a lie twas deemed,
Alas, the evil dream I dreamed.

**XXXVII: Sweetest lady, now I'm here once more (Trés douce dame, or
suis je revenu)**

Sweetest lady, now I'm here once more,
Ready to serve you, if you'll command me,
As your slave, make your demands of me.

I have been joyless, on another shore,
Many a day, but to amend all, swiftly,
Sweetest lady, now I'm here once more.

Whether you still recall me, I'm unsure,
I who would serve you now most promptly;
Yet in hopes of retaining your grace, truly,
Sweetest lady, now I'm here once more.

**XXXVIII: Since it is thus and naught can I obtain (Puis qu'ainsi est que
ne puis pourchacier)**

Since it is thus, and naught can I obtain
Of mercy, at all, from you, dear lady,
I part from you, most troubled inwardly.

I seek no more to meet with you again,
For that could lead you to denounce me,
Since it is thus, and naught can I obtain.

And though I know not how without great pain
I may quench my love for you, that burns me,
Not a soul should I blame, in winning free,
Since it is thus, and naught can I obtain.

XXXIX: Sweet lady, I ask of you (Doulce dame, je vous requier)

Sweet lady, I ask of you
Your love that I will cherish,
So, freely, grant me my wish.

Come, offer what I pursue;
To make my ills all vanish,
Sweet lady, I ask of you.

And if such grace I win from you

I'll hope to gain reward, in this;
Healing for all that's amiss,
Sweet lady, I ask of you.

XL: If I had wished my love to offer (Se m'amour voulsisse ottoier)

If I had wished my love to offer,
It had been long since sought of me,
Yet my intent's elsewhere you see.

They'd have come late to prayer,
And for as scant reward, truly,
If I had wished my love to offer,

Since many say by praise, as ever,
They might have gained it, surely;
I'd have been thus settled, firmly,
If I had wished my love to offer.

XLI: With such woe you have filled me (De tel dueil m'avez rempli)

With such woe you have filled me,
Lady, since you my suit deny,
That never yet more grieved was I.

In such a dire plight you've left me,
As dull as a piece of wood, I sigh,
With such woe you have filled me.

I beg you now, my lady, slay me,
For from birth ill-starred am I,
None is more confused than I,
With such woe you have filled me.

**XLII: Now is my heart pierced by dual pain (Or est mon cuer rentré en
double peine)**

Now is my heart pierced by dual pain
My lady's husband is returned today,
Who, from the country, was long away.

Alas! I, throughout my whole domain,
Joy and pleasure and solace, did survey,
Now is my heart pierced by dual pain.

He'll rob me, let God his ill deeds restrain,
Of my delight, for little and oft I'd stay,
At her request indeed, where she lay,
Now is my heart pierced by dual pain.

**XLIII: Ah, Moon! You shine too long indeed (Hé lune! trop luis
longuement)**

Ah, Moon! You shine too long indeed,
Through you, I lose all that sweetness,
With which Love does true lovers bless.

My heart is wounded by your deed,
In its longing, and your brightness,
Ah, Moon! You shine too long indeed;

For this parting have you decreed,
Twixt myself and love's joyfulness,
Your favour neither shall possess,
Ah, Moon! You shine too long indeed,

XLIV: Love, be not discomfited now (Amis, ne vous desconfortez)

Love, be not discomfited, now,
For I shall prove an aid to you,
And, as if shut in an abbey too,

I'll not be slow to ease, I vow,
Or fear, the ills afflicting you.

Love, be not discomfited, now.

Ever my company allow,
And have no more harm in view
And if I'm shunned because of you,
Love, be not discomfited, now.

XLV Let fair welcome you suffice (Souffise vous bel accueil)

Let fair welcome you suffice,
Sir; for far too much you call,
You'll lose all in seeking all.

I'd not grant more, at any price,
At present; and yet hope recall,
Let fair welcome you suffice.

Ever I give you more than twice
I'm used to; if you've the gall
To ask and win more, withal,
Let fair welcome you suffice.

XLVI: If I often go to church today (Se souvent vais au moustier)

If I often go to church today,
It's to see that girl so good,
Fresh as is a new rosebud.

What does any need to say:
Why such a stirring of mud,
If I often go to church today?

There's no path, no right of way,
That I take but for her, or would:
Fools call me fool, understood,
If I often go to church today.

XLVII Though seldom now we meet (Combien qu'adès ne vous voie)

Though seldom now we meet,
Honest and sweet,
My joy complete,
Yet I love most loyally,
Nor could I ever happy be,
If you I could ne'er greet.

Sans you, naught can I eat,
Naught can complete,
Nor do wish, my sweet,
A single day alive to be;
Though seldom now we meet.

And you should see, complete,
How I perform each feat,
Day long, and no deceit,
Thinking of you entirely:
For there's naught fair, believe me,
That I otherwise might greet,
Though seldom now we meet.

XLVIII: As one surprized (Comme surpris)

As one surprised
And compromised
By your offer,
To love I render
Myself surrender,
Lady, with honour.

Naught ill's surmised
Since I've realised
Such high honour
As one surprised,

Nor shame advised
By worth so prized
For its nobleness,
Since I'm apprised
Of the good comprised
In all your sweetness,
As one surprised.

XLIX You might ruin, tis no surprise (Vous en pourriez exillier)

You might exile, tis no surprise,
Whole hordes, at a glance,
Of lovers, with those sweet eyes
Full of vigilance,

That have made full many fretful
Who lie awake,
As I do, while feeling woeful,
Saddened, for your sake.

You, who know how to defeat
And to mistreat
Poor hearts, as you so devise;
Those fools, unwise,
You might exile, tis no surprise.

For you know well you might,
Readily, drive from sight,
All those who stand there so,
Yielding less joy, more woe;
Wastrels you otherwise
Incite, and grant the prize
Of your charming welcome,
A shameless custom,
You might exile, tis no surprise.

L To attract (Pour attirer)

To attract
Your love so
Ease, in fact,
All my woe,
You I'd please,
Flower, I say,
Nor would cease,
Night and day.

Nor, at will,
Hide my ill,
But speak still,
Harshness kill,
To attract.

None on earth
Own such worth,
To please ever
Thus, I'd act,
So, labour
Win honour,
Do no less,
Your sweetness
To attract.

LI: Lover, come while yet tis night (Amis, venez encore nuit)

Lover, come while yet tis night,
I told you long since of the hour;

So that in joy we might delight,
Lover, come while yet tis night.

Naught is here that shall affright,
Swiftly come, tis in your power,

Lover, come while yet tis night.

LII: Monday seems to come so slowly (Il me tarde que lundi viengne)

Monday seems to come so slowly
For I shall see my lover then,
In his arms, at last, he'll take me,
Monday seems to come so slowly.

So, I must pray he remembers, truly,
Longing for his presence again,
Monday seems to come so slowly.

LIII: This ring I wear on my finger (Cest anelet que j'ay ou doy)

This ring I wear on my finger
My sweet lover he gave it me.

Often it brings us two together,
This ring I wear on my finger.

I love to do my duty ever,
For my joy it doth decree,
This ring I wear on my finger.

LIV: The cause of my annoy (La cause de mon annoy)

The cause of my annoy,
I dare not mourn, or say,

Not tomorrow nor today,
The cause of my annoy.

If I weep, what harm I pray,
Yet it makes me die away,
The cause of my annoy.

LV: Tis a hard thing to sustain (Dure chose est a soustenir)

Tis a hard thing to sustain,
The heart to weep, the mouth to sing,

And in oneself one's grief retain,
Tis a hard thing to sustain.

Though one must, who would maintain
Their honour, whom slanderers sting,
Tis a hard thing to sustain.

**LVI: He who has set me thinking anew (Cil qui m'a mis en pensée
nouvelle)**

He who has set me thinking anew
And asks that I grant him my love,
Pleases me most, although I move
Not to affirm it, but conceal it too.

Yet sweeter than a girl he doth woo,
Courteous and pleasant does prove,
He who has set me thinking anew.

Yet fearful of the talk that might ensue,
I dare not all my love of him approve,
Hiding it, yet would not him reprove,
So greatly is a fairer love his due,
He who has set me thinking anew.

**LVII: Your sweetness does my heart attract (Vostre douçour mon cuer
attrait)**

Your sweetness does my heart attract
I would refuse your love no longer;
Sweet friend, why then should I linger,
If Love in your eyes does mine impact?

If you would love, and ne'er retract,
Then love on, for I'm no deceiver,
Your sweetness does my heart attract.

Now be all mine, with no false act,
Thus, our days we'll spend together
In great sweetness, with no ill ever,
For, all due to your charm in fact,
Your sweetness does my heart attract.

LVIII: So does my lover serve me (Se d'ami je suis servie)

So does my lover serve me,
Fear, love and obey me,
None now should blame me,
If I choose this life, truly.

Nor am I held in slavery,
Rather all acclaim me,
So does my lover serve me.

And reassured completely,
By his renown, must I be,
Thus, none shall ever call me
Fool, except through envy,
So does my lover serve me.

LIX: Dear lady, be pleased to offer (Chiere dame, plaise vous ottoier)

Dear lady, be pleased to offer,
What I have sought most humbly,

Not asking for aught further,
Dear lady, be pleased to offer.

My heart, my body, all, I proffer,

All my praise; then true delight,
Dear lady, be pleased to offer.

LX: You cannot, the place is taken (Vous n'y pouvez, la place est prise)

You cannot, the place is taken,
Sir, all your efforts are in vain,
Requesting me not worth the pain;
He's won me who's the best of men.

Tis right that one suffices, when
Only a fool would more obtain;
You cannot, the place is taken,

All my love to him I've given,
I'll love him, ever and again,
So, take me not for a villain;
To you I'll say, and say it often,
You cannot, the place is taken.

LXI: If it suffices you, so must it me (S'il vous souffist, il me doit bien souffire)

If it suffices you, so must it me,
However much I've wished it otherwise,
For I find you care not, in any guise,
To see me; now, dear sir, assuredly,

I must go; since you choose to love me
In this manner, however deep my sighs,
If it suffices you, so must it me.

For tis not right to demand of a lady
Greater loyalty, but to do likewise,
When one acts thus; I shall be wise,
I'll do as you do, and tell you plainly:
If it suffices you, so must it me.

**LXII: A fountain of tears, a river of sadness (Source de plour, riviere de
tristece)**

A fountain of tears, a river of sadness,
A flood of grief, a sea full bitter again
Surround me now, drowning in deep pain
My poor heart, suffering such great distress.

So am I sunk low, submerged in harshness:
For over me flow, stronger than the Seine,
A fountain of tears, a river of sadness.

And the great waves break, in vast largess,
As the winds of Fortune heave and strain,
Over me, so deep that to rise again
Were hard, so does their weight oppress,
A fountain of tears, a river of sadness.

The End of the Rondeaux