

Early French Poetry

Translated by A. S. Kline © 2004, 2008 All Rights Reserved
This work may be freely reproduced, stored, and transmitted, electronically
or otherwise, for any non-commercial purpose.

Contents

Marie de France (Late 12th Century)	5
The Lay of the Honeysuckle.....	5
Arnaut Daniel (Late 12th Century)	9
I am the one that knows the pain that flows	9
When the pale leaves descend.....	11
Anonymous Aubes (12th or 13th century)	14
When I see the light of day appear,	14
Between my true love and me,.....	16
Bertran de Born (c1140-before1215)	17
Lady, since you care not at all	17
Gace Brulé (c1159-c1212)	20
Chanson d'Amour	20
Le Châtelain de Coucy (Guy d.1203)	22
Chanson d'Amour	22
Anonymous Reverdies (12th or 13th Century)	24
In April at Easter Tide.....	24
Would it please you then if I.....	26
Guillaume de Loris (fl c. 1240)	28
From: Le Roman de la Rose (First Part).....	28
Thibaut IV De Champagne, Roi De Navarre (1201-1252)	31
I can't prevent myself from singing,.....	31
'Mercy, my lady! One thing I ask you,.....	33
Love I have served, for such length of time	35
Colin Muset (Mid-13th Century)	37
Sir Count, I've been fiddling	37
Guillaume de Machaut (c1300-1377)	39
Of all the fruits and all the flowers	39
The stars could no more be counted by you,	40
I'd rather languish in a strange country,	41
If I love you with true faithful courage.....	42
If your pride will not humble itself to me.....	43
Eustace Deschamps (1346-1407)	44
If I travelled the earth and every sea,.....	44

In Hainaut and Brabant I.....	46
Who loves well has little peace:	47
If the whole sky were made of beaten gold,	48
Carrion for worms, our poor fragility,	49
Christine de Pisan (1365-1431?)	51
Founts of tears, and rivers of sadness,	51
If I often go to church today,	52
Severe or slight, my heart has felt no wound.....	53
Ha, the gentlest that there ever was made!	54
Lover I feel such sorrow now you go,	55
All things rejoice this month of May	57
‘You’re a most welcome sight	58
When I see these lovers true	59
Alas, now! If I were only able	60
Let him attend no more on me,	61
Alain Chartier (1385-1429)	62
From ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’	62
Charles d’Orléans (1394-1465)	64
Through the forest of Gloomy Sadness,	64
When I am lying in my bed.....	66
Soon, if God wills, the shadow	67
The very first day of the month of May.....	68
In my lost days of childhood I flowered,.....	69
Ballads, songs and plaintive rhymes.....	70
Not long ago, in the early morning,	72
The season has cast its cloak away	73
Off with you now, away, away,	74
Would you stop them flowing	75
In my Book of Thought today,.....	76
The heralds of Summer are here	77
Is she not blessed with every grace,.....	78
I think little of kisses like these	79

Marie de France (Late 12th Century)

The Lay of the Honeysuckle

It pleases me, I'm willing too
To tell you a story plain and true
'The Honeysuckle' is its name
Here's why and how it came.
Many people have told it me,
And much has been written I see,
Of Tristan and of the Queen,
Of their faithful love I mean,
Of which they had many a pain,
Dying for it on the very same day.

King Mark it seems was angry,
With Tristan his nephew, his fury
Because of his love for the Queen:
He drove him out of his country.
He went to the land of his birth
South Wales, his native earth,
And stayed there a year at least,
Unable to cross the sea.
But then again he set his face
Toward his death and disgrace.
That isn't so amazing,
Whoever's in love is grieving
Heavy of heart, he'll perish
If he can't have his wish.
Tristan was both pensive and sad,
So he left his own land, the lad
And travelled to Cornwall straight
Where the Queen held state.
He hid in the woods, alone,
Not wanting his presence known:
And he only came out at twilight
To look for a bed for the night.

With peasants, among the poor,
He found a welcoming door.
He asked them for all the news
Of what the King might do.
They told him they had heard
The barons had all been stirred,
To Tintagel they must fare
And join the King's court there,
At Pentecost, among the nation,
In their joy and celebration,
The Queen, and every knight.
Tristan heard it with delight.
She could scarcely go by,
Without his catching her eye.
On the day the King passed through,
Tristan came to a wood en route
By a road down which he was sure
That whole company would pour:
He cut down a hazel bough,
And trimming it, carefully now,
When he'd prepared the same
With a knife he wrote his name.
If it caught the Queen's bright eye
Who'd be looking on every side
(For on many another day
She'd met with him this way)
She'd quite easily find
His hazel branch: their sign.
So ran a letter to her of old
In which he'd sent and told
How long he'd been lingering
Hidden there sadly waiting
To discover like any spy
A way to only catch her eye,
Since he couldn't live without her:
They were two bound together
As the honeysuckle binds

To the hazel that it finds.
When it's caught and enlaced
Around its branches traced,
They can stick fast like glue,
But if anyone parts the two,
The hazel is quickly gone
Honeysuckle then follows on.
'Sweet love, so it is with us, too:
No you without me, no me without you.'

So the Queen came riding by:
She looked at a slope nearby,
She saw the branch quite clearly,
Made out the letters easily.
The knights ordered to ride
Who all crowded along beside,
She commanded to stop, confessed
She wished to dismount and rest.
They executed her clear command.
While she strayed far from their band,
Calling her faithful maid,
Branguine, to her aid.
She went from the path some way
In the wood found him, hid away,
Who loved her more than all alive.
Between those two what great delight.
He speaks to her at leisure,
She to him all her pleasure:
Then tells him how he may
Be reconciled to the King that day,
And how grieved she had been
That the King sent him overseas,
Because of the accusations made.
Then she left him, in the glade:
But when it came to their goodbyes
Their tears filled both their eyes.
Tristan now returned to Wales

Till his uncle bade him sail.

Because of the joy he had known
In seeing his beloved, his own,
And because of what he'd penned
As the Queen instructed him then,
So he might more easily remember
Tristan who was a fine harp player,
Made of it a fresh new lay:
Whose title I'll quickly say:
'Goat-leaf' is its English name,
'Honeysuckle' in French, the same.
Now I've told you the true source
Of the lay I sang you here of course.

Arnaut Daniel (Late 12th Century)

*'Ieu sui Arnautz qu'amas l'aura
e chatz la lebre ab lo bueu
e nadi contra suberna.'*

*'I am Arnaut who nets the breeze
and with an ox pursues the hare
and swims against the rising seas.'*

(From the Occitan: 'Sols sui qui sai lo sobrafan que·m sortz')

I am the one that knows the pain that flows
Through loving hearts that suffer love's excess,
For my desire is ever so firm and whole
I have never denied her, never wandered
From one I so desired at once and ever:
Far from her, now, I call to her urgently,
Though when she's here I know not what to say.

My blindness, my deafness to others shows
That only her I see, and hear, and bless,
And I offer her no false flatteries so,
For the heart more than the mouth gives word;
That in field, plain, hill, vale, though I go everywhere
I'd not discern all qualities in one sole body,
Only hers, where God sets them all today.

Many a goodly court my presence knows,
Yet in her there's more that does impress,
Measure and wit and other virtue glows
Beauty, youth, good manners, actions stir,
Of courtesy she has well-learnt her share
Of all displeasing things I find her free
I think no good thing lacking anyway.

No joy for me were too brief that arose
From her: I hope that she might guess,
For of me she'll otherwise not know,
Since the heart such words can scarce utter,
That the Rhone, its swollen waters there,
No fiercer than my heart flows inwardly,
Nor floods more with love, when on her I gaze.

Solace and joy seem false from those
Other girls, none share her worthiness,
Her solace exceeds all others though,
Ay, alas, ill times if I do not have her,
Yet the anguish brings me joy so fair,
For thinking brings desire of her lustily:
God, if I might have her some other way!

No play ever pleased more, you may suppose,
Nothing could bring the heart more happiness,
Than this, of which no evil rumours grow
All publicly, to me alone its treasure;
I speak too openly? Not if it brings no care:
My beauty, by God, I'd lose my tongue and speech,
Rather than trouble you by what I say.

*And I pray my song indeed brings you no care,
For if you like both words and melody
What cares Arnaut whom it pleases or shall dismay.*

(From the Occitan: 'Quan chai la fueilha')

When the pale leaves descend
From the high crowns of trees
And the cold airs ascend,
Hazel and willow freeze,
To sweet melodies
The forest is then no friend,
Yet, who may flee,
I long for true Love again.

Though cold it grows,
I will not freeze forever,
In whom love rose
That will my heart deliver
I'll not shiver,
Love hides me from head to toe,
Brings strength rather
And tells me which way to go.

Good is this life
That my delight sustains
Though he who knows strife
May otherwise complain
I know no gain
In changing of my life
All free of pain,
By my faith's, my share of strife.

In true love-making
I find none here to blame,
With others, playing,
There's bad luck in the game,
There's none the same
As her, there's no repeating,
She's one I name
Beyond all equalling.

I'd not go giving
My heart to another love
Lest I find it fleeing
Or from her gaze remove;
I fear not too
That Malspina's rhyming,
Can prove
A nobler than her in seeming.

There's nothing bad there
In she who is my friend;
This side Savoy here
None finer I contend;
Joys without end
She gives and greater
Than Paris gained
In Troy from his Helena.

She is more lovely
She who brings delight,
Than the noble thirty
Finer in every light,
So it is right
That she hear my melody
For she's the height
Of worth, wins all praise truly.

*My song take flight,
present yourself to her sweetly,
but for her might
Arnaut might strive more lightly.*

Anonymous Aubes (12th or 13th century)

I

When I see the light of day appear,
There's nothing I hate so much, I fear:
It makes him part from me: my dear,
The friend, I love with all my heart.
Nothing I hate like day's bright start,
Lover, that makes me part from you.

I cannot see you all the day:
Of being seen I'm so afraid,
There are envious ones I say,
Who watch for us, I tell you true.
Nothing I hate like day's bright start,
Lover, that makes me part from you.

When I am lying there in bed,
And look around me, if instead
I find no lover at foot or head,
I cry out to every lover true:
Nothing I hate like day's bright start,
Lover, that makes me part from you.

Sweet handsome lover, you must go.
Let God watch over your body. So
I pray, don't you forget me though:
There's no one I love so much as you,
Nothing I hate like day's bright start,
Lover, that makes me part from you.

Now I beg all you lovers true,
Go along singing out this tune,
In spite of wicked tongues, and you
The cruel and jealous husbands too:
'Nothing I hate like day's bright start,
Lover, that makes me part from you.'

Bertran de Born (c1140-before1215)

“All this to make ‘Una dompna soiseubuda’, a borrowed lady, or as the Italians translated it ‘Una donna ideale’”

– Ezra Pound

(From the Occitan: ‘Dompna, puois de mi no·us’ cal)

Lady, since you care not at all
For me, but keep me far from you,
And for no good reason too,
The task it seems immense
Of seeking some other,
Who might bring me new joy ever,
And if I have not the making
Of a lady as much to my liking,
Of the worth of she that’s gone,
I shall love no other one.

Since I’ll not find your equal,
Lovely as you, made as nobly,
Nor so joyous, sweet in body,
Lovely to every sense,
Nor so happy
Nor, by all repute, so worthy
I’ll go seeking everywhere
A feature from each woman fair,
To make a borrowed lady
Till you look again toward me.

Colour fresh and natural
I'll take, fair Cembelins, from you
And your sweet love-glances too!
And risk the impertinence
Of forgoing there
All else in which you lack no share.
Then of Aelis I'll demand
Her adroit and charming tongue
Which must surely aid my suit,
That it be not dull or mute.

On Chalais' Vicomtess I call;
I'd have her give instantly
Her throat and hands to me.
Then take the journey thence,
Without straying,
To Rochechouart speeding
That Agnes her hair might grant me
Since Isolde, Tristan's lady,
Who was praised in every way
Was less fair than she today.

Audiart, though you wish me ill, in all,
I would that you dress her in your fashion,
That she might be well-adorned
And, as you are perfection, hence
Naught shall tear,
Nor love find aught improper.
Of my Lady Better-than-Best, my plea
Is her true fresh noble body
That shows her at first sight
Sweet to see naked if one might.

On the 'Exile', too I call
Wishing her white teeth, also
The welcome and conversation, so
Sweet in her presence
And her dwelling.
My 'Fair-Mirror' in your giving
Is your gaiety and stature
And what your fine manner
Displays, well-known as ever,
Never to change or waver.

My Lady, all I'd wish befall
Is that I might feel love, in truth,
For her as much as I do for you!
That a passionate intense
Love be sired,
One by my body well-desired,
Yet I'd rather of you demand
A kiss than any other woman,
So why does my love refuse me
When she knows I need her truly?

*Papiol, straight to my Lover,
Go, for me now, sing to her,
That love's all disregarded, gone
From the heights, fallen headlong.*

Gace Brulé (c1159-c1212)

Chanson d'Amour

This absence from my own country's
So long, it brings me to death's door,
I languish here, beyond the sea,
Weary, in comfort and joy no more,
And I greatly fear that enemy
Who slanders me: I wronged endure,
Yet feel my heart so true and pure,
Please God, no harm will come to me.

Sweet Lady mine, don't believe
Those who speak of me in malice.
Though you no longer look at me
With those sweet eyes that took me captive,
Me, with your true heart, you'll still see.
But whether it urges you so to live
I know not: of all things fearing this
Alone: lest you not remember me.

For lightness in the hearts of women
Often strikes fear in the hearts of men,
Though loyalty stops me from despairing:
Without it I'd soon be dead and gone!
And you know that True Love's coming
Causes lovers such fear, no one
Who ever loves is ever certain,
And false the love that is un-fearing.

My heart comforts me and destroys me,
But it's right that I should think of her,
And the fear she might be lost to me,
Makes me doubly thoughtful of her.
So my solace only comes to flee,
Yet thinking always of my lover,

To my mind, as you would discover,
Is always a true delight to me.

Song, I send you to my Lady,
Before a single one has sung you,
And you must say to her from me,
(Let it not stay a hidden truth)
'If in Faith there's no treachery,
Of treason in Loyalty no proof,
Then I'll have what's owed to me,
Since with loyal heart I've loved you.'

Le Châtelain de Coucy (Guy d.1203)

Chanson d'Amour

I thought to live without true love
All my life through to be at peace,
But this heart, once again, would prove
Its folly from which I had won free.

Greater the folly is in me
Than child crying foolishly
To possess the lovely star
He sees shining clear and far.

However much I may despair
Love has well rewarded me
For serving him with all the care
I possess, without treachery,

Making Folly's King of me.
Let all beware his deceit
Who grants such a gift, we see,
To those who serve loyally.

If I show anger it's no wonder
To one who wounds me so sore.
God! If I had him in my power
For just one day and no more:

Then he'd pay for his folly
As God my witness be!
He'd pay with his death, unless
He vanquished my lady blessed.

Ay! Noble heart, that is so wise,
Don't scorn all my foolishness.
I know I've not the slightest right
To love you, just a lover's right:
 But folly drives us recklessly
 Like a storm-tossed ship at sea,
 That's blown where the wind will blow,
 Until all's wrecked and brought low.

My lady who lacks never a grace,
Generous, kind, show me mercy:
Since there's no evil in that face
But all good shines there clearly,
 You know from whence this folly
 That takes my life comes to me.
 To whom can I cry again,
 Except to you, in pain?

Song, pay her your respects, she
Is my sweet folly, and please
Beg her for God and honour
Never to prove a traitor.

Anonymous Reverdies (12th or 13th Century)

I

In April at Easter Tide
When flowers in grass spring to life
The lark at break of day does rise
And sings away with true delight,
With the sweetness of fresh greenery.
Early one morning I did rise,
And heard a little bird on a tree
His own song carolling on high.
I lifted my head to spy
What sort of bird he might be:
In the twinkling of an eye
Flocks of birds descend on me.
 Orioles I hail,
 And the nightingale,
 Chaffinches I view,
 And the merlin too,
God knows how many in the air,
Whose names I am lost among,
 That roosted on the branches, there,
 And began to sing their song.
I walked through that blossoming
Listening to love's joy ring.

Over the meadow, riding slow,
I saw the god of Love pass by.
At his summons to him I go
And he makes of me his squire.
 His horse was made of delight,
 His saddle of Love's delays,
 His shield quartered by, I say,
 Love's kisses and Love's sighs.
 His coat of mail
 Was a close embrace,
 His helm of flowers
 Of the rainbow race.
God, his lance was of courtesy,
 His sword an iris blade,
 His hose a caress, you see,
 Spurs made of the beaks of jays.
 They all sang a single song,
With never another musician.

II

Would it please you then if I
Sang to you a pleasant rhyme?
 With no vile maker,
It was made by a gentle knight
Under the shade of an olive bright,
 In the arms of his lover.

Her petticoat was linen
Her tunic of white ermine
 And her gown of silk:
Stockings made of iris blades,
Shoes of flowers of the may
 Fitting her feet closely.

She'd a little belt of leaves
That when it rained grew green,
 Buckles all golden.
Her purse was fashioned of amour,
With pendants of hanging flowers:
 As a lovers' token.

And she travelled on a mule,
All silver were its shoes,
 It's saddle was of gold:
Behind her as she sat at ease,
Were planted three rose-trees
 To give her shade also.

Through the meadow as she rides
She meets there with gentle knights,
 And they sweetly say:
'Lady, where were you born?'
'From France it is I come,
 Of high family.

My father's the nightingale,
Who sings on the branch all day,
 Of the highest wood.
My mother is the mermaid,
Who sings in the salt wave,
 Of the deepest flood.'

'Good fortune, lovely lady!
You come of fine stock I see
 Of high family.
I would that God our Father,
As a bride in marriage,
 Might grant you to me.

Guillaume de Loris (fl c. 1240)

From: *Le Roman de la Rose* (First Part)

...There were roses massed on high,
The loveliest beneath the sky,
Little buds all tightly closed,
Others slightly larger though:
And some of a different size,
Almost ready for our eyes,
Ready to bloom in season,
Not to be scorned, for that reason:
Those that are opened wide
In a day have blown and died,
But the little buds stay quite fresh
For two or three days I'd guess.
They seemed beautiful to me,
Never such sweetness did I see:
If a man could cull one there
He should treasure it with care:
If I could have a garland made,
No greater wealth would be displayed.

Among these buds there caught my eyes
One so beautiful, it was the prize
Among the others clustered there
When I stopped close by to stare,
Illuminated by such a hue
Of the deepest red and true
That Nature could conceive.
It had four pairs of leaves,
That Nature with great skill
Placed there tier on tier at will:
Straight as a reed its stalk set,
And above the little bud-let
Without drooping or bending
Its fragrance there lingering

The scent within it spread
All around my head,
When I smelt its perfume I'd
No thought of stepping aside,
But would have stooped to cull it,
If my hand had dared to touch it:
But sharp stabbing thistles
Kept me far from its petals:
Fierce, spiny thorns, nettles
And curved grasping brambles,
Would not let me pass:
I feared to harm myself.

The God of Love with arching bow
Had been ever following though,
Intent on keeping his eye on me,
He'd stopped beside a little fig tree:
And when he perceived
That I'd settled on it indeed,
That little bud that pleased me so
More than any other I know,
Quickly an arrow he caught,
And when the string was taut,
He drew it back to his ear
And fired it at me there,
With such skill from his bow,
That he struck me a mighty blow
Into the eye with such power
He lodged it in my heart that hour....

Thibaut IV De Champagne, Roi De Navarre (1201-1252)

Chansons

I

I can't prevent myself from singing,
And yet I'm full of grief and sadness,
Though joy is always a lovely thing,
And no one takes pleasure in distress.
I don't sing as one loved will sing
But as one troubled, downcast, weeping,
Since I've no more hope of happiness,
Ever deceived by what words are weaving.

I will tell you one thing without lying:
Love greatly depends on fate and chance,
If I could sever from her, cease loving,
It would be better than ruling France.
Now I've spoken like a mad thing,
Her beauties I'd rather die recalling
Her great wisdom and sweet acquaintance,
Than see the whole wide world bowing.

I'll never be happy, I'm sure that's true,
Since Love hates, and my lady forgets me,
Yet there's sense for one with love in view
In not fearing death, or pain, or folly.
As I give myself, with Love so willing,
To my lady, then it's of his desiring,
That I shall die or regain my lady,
Or my life will be not worth living.

The Phoenix seeks the wood of the vine
And plunging there dies an incendiary.
So I sought death and this torment of mine
When I saw her, should pity not find me.
God! How beautiful that first seeing
That brought upon me so much suffering!
The memory makes me die of my need
For her, my desire, and my great longing.

The marvellous power of Love is such
He gives joy and sadness as He wishes,
Me he keeps in misery overmuch.
Reason tells me to think of other issues.
But I have a heart beyond discovering:
'Love! Love! Love!' ever commanding.
No other argument's there but kisses,
And I'll love, from that there is no turning.

Mercy, my lady, who knows all things!
All goodness and everything worth having
Are yours: more than any woman living.
Help me, now, it is in your giving!

Song! To my friend, Philip, go running!
Since he's become a Courtly being,
All his love is transformed to hating:
He's scarcely loved by the fair and loving.

II

‘Mercy, my lady! One thing I ask you,
As God may bless you, answer me fairly:
When you are dead, and I – for it’s true
After you there can be no life for me –
What of Love, without our company?
For there’s such wisdom and worth in you
And I love so: after us, He’ll not be.’

‘Before God, Thibaut, I judge it true
No one’s death ever killed Love. I see
You mean perhaps to mock me too,
Since you don’t seem wasted much to me.
When we’re dead (Long may our lives be!)
I’m sure Love will suffer a pang or two,
But Love’s worth holds for eternity.’

‘Lady, you mustn’t merely imagine
But know in your heart I love you deeply.
That is why I have put on flesh again,
This joy makes me love myself more dearly:
For God never made a creature so lovely
As you, but it makes me fear that when
We die it will end all Love completely.’

‘Thibaut, silence! No one should begin
A discussion developed so foolishly.
It’s only your means of softening
My heart, when you’ve already beguiled me.
I don’t say I hate you, certainly,
But if Love’s fate’s left for me to sing,
He would still be served honourably.’

‘Lady God grant that you judge aright
And see the ills that you make me suffer:
Since I well know, that if die I might,
Whatever the judgement Love will wither,
If you, Lady, don’t keep him together,
In the place he has always occupied:
To your wisdom aspires no other.’

‘Thibaut, if Love is making you suffer,
For me, don’t regret it, if I love ever,
Mine is a heart that will fail you never.’

III

Love I have served, for such length of time
If I forsake Him no man should blame me,
Now I go, and commend him to God in rhyme,
Man shouldn't give his whole life to folly.
And he's a fool who can't keep from loving,
And can't see in it all these torments of mine.
I'd be thought a child if I furthered the crime,
There's a season for everything in being.

I've never been like those other men
Who having loved, seek to decry him,
And speak of him with boorish intent:
A man shouldn't sell his loyalty towards him
Nor slander his Lord nor turn against him:
Let whoever renounces avoid dissent.
For myself, my wishes are all well meant.
May lovers have joy, now I'm free again.

Love has been good to me until now,
For he made me love with nobility
The loveliest and the best I vow,
That in my opinion's ever been seen.
Love wishes it and my Lady begs me
To leave off loving, I thank her and bow,
Since it pleases my lady I do allow
No better reason than that for me.

No other reward from Love I received
Long though I served him faithfully:
But God in his mercy has rescued me,
And released me from his mastery.
Since I've escaped with my life, I see
This as the best hour of life, set free,
And I'll still write many an elegy,

And many a sonnet and eulogy.

A man at the outset should always take care
To aim at something modest to win,
Though Love won't always let us beware
What we choose as object, or what we think.
We fall for a stranger, and in we sink,
Who lives so far off we can't travel there,
Rather than with one who's always near:
And that shows the folly Love traps us in.

Now God save me from love, and loving again,
Except love of Her whom we should love here,
Through whom every man's redeemed from sin.

Colin Muset (Mid-13th Century)

Song

Sir Count, I've been fiddling
For you in your dwelling,
You've given me nothing
Not paid me what's owing:
 It's villainy!
By what I owe Saint Mary,
You'll get no more of me.
My wallet here's empty,
My purse is still hungry.

Sir Count, now be giving
Your orders, I'm waiting.
Sir, now, if it's pleasing
To you, give me something
 From courtesy!
I would love dearly
To visit my country.
But with my purse empty,
My wife won't love me.

She'll cry: 'Sir Clowning
Where were you living,
That you've won nothing?
You could have brought something
 From the city!
Your bag looks so sorry!
It's filled with a flurry
Of wind. Curse anybody
Who wants your company!'

But if I reach my dwelling
And my wife starts gazing
At the fat sack there swelling
Behind my furred clothing,
 Miniver surely,
Well-dressed, she sees me,
Her spindle falls willingly,
She smiles at me brightly,
Embraces me charmingly.

My wife goes off bustling
To unpack all my clothing,
My servant comes running
Starts watering and grooming
My horse: the maid's killing
Two capons for eating
 With saucery:
My daughter, prettily
Brings me comb's courtesy.
Then I've the mastery
More joy, less anxiety,
Than any could rhyme for me.

Guillaume de Machaut (c1300-1377)

Ballades

I

Of all the fruits and all the flowers
My garden holds a solitary rose:
The rest lies ruined, every bower,
By Fortune, who's herself opposed
 to this the sweetest bloom
Spoiling its fragrance and its hues.
Should it be culled, crushed in the mire,
After that flower no other I'd desire.

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

But I could never imagine how
The virtues that my rose enclose
Derive from your lies even now,
Rather they're Nature's gift: I know
 You have not the power
To destroy such worth, or sour:
So leave me here, or elsewhere, all its fire,
After that flower no other I'd desire.

II

The stars could no more be counted by you,
When they're all shining at their brightest,
Nor the ocean's drops, nor the falling dew,
Nor the grains of sand the sea has blessed,
No more could the sky's breadth be expressed
Than you could imagine, or ever view,
The great longing I have to gaze at you.

Yet there's no way I can come to you,
Since Fortune won't let me be your guest,
And I must stifle my sighing too,
When I think of you, here among the rest:
And when I'm alone, in silence dressed,
It pains me with torments, sufferings new,
The great longing I have to gaze at you.

It makes me complain, I sigh to review
Your noble face, and of all that's best
Your sovereign beauty, none exceeds you,
And what flows from it, your great sweetness.
So I languish here in wretchedness,
It quenches my hopes, kindles them too,
The great longing I have to gaze at you.

III

I'd rather languish in a strange country,
Lament and cry for my sadness there,
Than, by your side, sweet noble lady,
Among those who joy lead a life of care.

 If I sigh and weep far away
No one will know why I weep today:
But here they can easily see it proved
That I languish faithfully for love.

And if my face reveals what men pity
That's a fault that I can't repair,
Great grief can't hide in secrecy,
Nor give rise to joy, if truth is there.

 How can the heart joy again
When it languishes in sorrow and pain?
I know not: so in men thoughts I'll move
That I languish faithfully for love.

So I shall leave you, the best loved lady
That ever a man served anywhere,
Or loved, but my heart and memories
I leave with you for your honour's share:

 They'll never return I say
To me: and so to True Love I pray
To show you plain what you will approve
That I languish faithfully for love.

IV

If I love you with true faithful courage
As I have loved and will love you still,
And you have taken another in marriage,
Must I be sent from you far? And will

I be not even a memory?

No, no, indeed: since there is in me
A heart so true it eschews false art,
You mustn't divorce me from your heart.

Rather, keep me here to serve on suffrage,
As a slave you've bought, and paid the bill,
Whose wish it is to commit no outrage.
And you must love, and this thought fulfil,
Your husband as husband see,
And your friend as friend, dear as could be.
And since in this you take honour's part
You mustn't divorce me from your heart.

And if your heart should learn to stray,
No love would be ever betrayed so ill,
As I should be: but you are so sage
And your heart so gently nurtured, it will
never dare to deceive me
In order to love elsewhere. So hear me:
Since your sweet form, above all, I chart,
You mustn't divorce me from your heart.

V

If your pride will not humble itself to me
Sweet friend: whom I love without deceit,
Then there's little hope in life for me:
Since I suffer too great torment indeed
 For you: on whom is set
My heart, so firm it could never forget.
And I ought not to think of you so often
Without love or hope of it being given.

Between lovers who love, nobility
Should not exist, they should rather meet
As one heart, one soul, one malady,
One mind, one wish, one passion complete:
 So if your heart's not yet
At one with my desire, mine will be met
With shame, since I cannot long live on
Without love or hope of it being given.

And if Fortune's goods fall less royally
At mine than at other women's feet,
As loving a heart I claim mine to be,
If truth be known, as is any Queen's.
 And true love, I do reflect,
Only asks for the heart, as you have yet
My heart, my dear: I should not be one
Without love or hope of it being given.

Eustace Deschamps (1346-1407)

Ballades

I

If I travelled the earth and every sea,
And visited all you can view
Jerusalem, Egypt or Galilee,
Alexandria, and Damascus too,
Babylon, Cairo and Tartary through,
 All the harbours that are there,
With sugars and spices they prepare,
Each country's gold and silver fabrics,
What the French have is still most rare,
There's nothing can compare with Paris.

She's crowned above the rest, our city,
The well and fount of what's wise and true,
On the Seine she's there, sitting pretty,
With vines, and woods and fields: no few.
With more of mortal life's goods to choose
 Than other cities, she shows more wares:
All strangers care, and will always care,
For her, they'll find no place that marries
Such pleasures with such elegant fare,
There's nothing can compare with Paris.

And her walls are finer than towns a many,
With ancient towers arrayed for you,
Full of merchants and nobility,
Goldsmiths, armourers to forge anew,
The flower of every art's her due:

 All her works are fine and rare:
Subtle skill, deep knowledge there,
In her citizens you'll see: there is
True value in everything they share:
There's nothing can compare with Paris.

II

In Hainaut and Brabant I
Ordered sauces freely:
In each inn where I would lie,
Yet they'd always bring me,
With mutton, roast and coney,
With hare, and boar, and bustard,
With fish from river or from sea,
Without ever asking: mustard!

Fresh herring, I demanded, ay,
Or carp at every place to eat,
Steamed in pure water, pike,
Or giant soles for supper treats:
In Brussels I said to give me
Green sauce: chef looked disgusted,
Then sent some lad to serve me,
Without ever asking: mustard!

No food or drink without it, why
It's mixed with the water you see,
The fish goes in, and I've espied
The dripping from the roast run free
With mustard mixed for gravy.
They serve it you unflustered:
You'll always have it handy,
Without ever asking: mustard!

Prince: cardamom need have no fear,
Cloves, saffron, ginger mustered:
For every traveller they prepare,
Without ever asking: mustard!

III

Who loves well has little peace:
His love he always fears to lose:
Trembles, shivers. Dread without cease,
In skin, bone, mind and heart, it brews:
He moans, he groans, no sleep to lose.
Such is a love between he and she:
Spy, search, listen: then seek to prove.
No Love exists without Jealousy.

Yet bitter words we shouldn't speak
Nor picture Her greedy, old, untrue,
To abuse Her's a foolish thing indeed:
If she were so treacherous and cruel
Love would have long destroyed Her too:
For his own good they keep company:
She's shield and guard, and servant true.
No Love exists without Jealousy.

One who scarcely loves knows nothing. He
Has no fear of that which he hates to view:
Jealousy clothes Love utterly:
They doubt each other who seek to woo,
Proof that they travel the highroad to
True Love: who hates will never feel
Jealousy. Lovers, now, grant her due.
No Love exists without Jealousy.

IV

If the whole sky were made of beaten gold,
And the air was starred with purest silver,
And every wind did plenteous treasure hold,
And every drop of the brimming ocean's water
Were a florin: and night and day were to pour
Down riches, honours, jewels, goods, and money,
Till the showers had satisfied everybody,
And earth was drenched as far as you could see,
And I stood naked in the rain and flurry,
Never a drop of it would fall on me.

And what's worse, I think you should be told,
If they gave away the Rhineland's treasure,
And I was there, I'd see not even an old
Dried herring, a farthing for my pleasure:
No giver and I have ever got together:
Trouble seeks me out, goods always flee,
Whatever I need it's always sold to me,
For more than it's worth, best believe me.
If good fortune rained on the ground beneath,
Never a drop of it would fall on me.

Whatever I lose never regains the fold:
Whatever I ask will get short measure:
If I do good then it's always undersold
As ill: always I'm poor Martin for sure,
With his nag, and the hood and gown he wore,
Dry bread and tears his destiny,
Wearing his days out miserably,
In all his life none poorer than he.
If it rained mulled ale, why, like him, you see,
Never a drop of it would fall on me.

V

Carrion for worms, our poor fragility,
That we might well liken to the rose,
A bud that is born to the summer's heat,
Flowering at noon, then fully blown,
Fragrant, sweet a while, but when night's flown
Bud and flower and rose are vanished,
In less than a day is beauty perished.
So goes it also for Woman and Man:
In a moment we lose life, soul and body.
May God protect us and Notre Dame!

Can't a child die at the height of its beauty,
A girl: a man? Who dares to have shown
Their pride, or anything but humility,
And fear of God? It slips under the bone
A barb of wood or iron, a fever grown!
A tiny worm, an earwig, a spider at best,
A dog's bite, enough to cause our death,
A wild beasts' claw puts us under the sand
In the time that a flower blossoms, or less.
May God protect us and Notre Dame!

Ah! What use is our famous ancestry,
Our great houses and cities made of stone,
Our vast treasure and mighty victories,
Eloquence, strength, all we have known?
Death takes us whether we wish it or no.
Alexander, Croesus in darkness dressed,
David and Solomon, have all found rest.
We die: pay our debts, you understand.
Let none have trust in earthly success.
May God protect us and Notre Dame!

Prince, Lords, mortal men as I attest,
Found not faith on life's fickleness.
The body dies: take the soul in hand,
Serve God and the Virgin Mary, lest
All our glory dies with what vanishes.
May God protect us and Notre Dame!

Christine de Pisan (1365-1431?)

Rondeaux

1

Founts of tears, and rivers of sadness,
Streams of grief, seas full bitter again,
Surround me still, drowning in deep pain
My poor heart that suffers such great distress.

So am I sunk deep drowned in harshness:
Over me flow more powerful than the Seine
Founts of tears, and rivers of sadness.

Their great waves breaking, a vast largess,
As the winds of Fortune heave and strain,
I beneath, so deep that to rise again
Is hard, so heavy their loads oppress,
Founts of tears, and rivers of sadness.

II

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

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

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

Ballades

I

Severe or slight, my heart has felt no wound
From Love's sharp arrows that they say make war
On many of us folk, I've not been bound
God be thanked, by prison or snares, what's more,
Of the god of Love.

Nothing I ask, nothing I seek to move,
Without him I live in joy and sunlight:
I love no lover: I want no love's delight.

I'm not afraid either of being enslaved
By a glance or a gift or a long pursuit,
Nor of drowning deep in flattery's wave,
For my heart there's no man would suit:

Let none call above
For succour from me, I'd reject his love
Immediately, and tell him outright:
I love no lover: I want no love's delight.

I laugh indeed at a woman who's bound:
In such danger, she'd surely be better
To seize any sword or dagger around
And kill herself, having lost her honour.

And therefore I choose
To pass my days in this state and muse:
Saying to all who would love me quite:
I love no lover, I want no love's delight.

Lord of Love, what use at your court am I?
I love no lover, I want no love's delight.

II

Ha, the gentlest that there ever was made!
The pleasantest that any woman knew!
Most perfect to receive a high acclaim!
The best beloved of any woman too!
Of my true heart ever the sweetest food!
My only love on earth, my paradise,
All that I love, my sweetest desire,
And the most perfect joy of my eyes!
Your sweetness in me fierce war does inspire.

Your sweetness has truly forced its way
Into a heart, that never thought to rue
Such a state, yet has been so inflamed,
By ardent desire, life would leave it too,
If Sweet Thought did not comfort it anew:
But Memory comes to lie with it, and I
Hold and embrace you in my thought the while,
Yet when your sweet kisses are denied,
Your sweetness in me fierce war does inspire.

My sweet love, loved with all my heart, I say,
The thought does not exist that could remove
That sweet glance from my heart, that your gaze
Enclosed within it: Nothing could so do –
Nor your voice, nor gentle touch of those two
Dear hands, that barely causing me to sigh,
Wish everywhere to search and to enquire:
Yet when I cannot see you with my eyes,
Your sweetness in me fierce war does inspire.

Fairest and best to capture my heart, I
Pray you, remember me: this I require,
For when I cannot see you as I desire
Your sweetness in me fierce war does inspire.

III

Lover I feel such sorrow now you go,
That I do not know if I can bear it.
My sweet secret love without you, oh,
How can I live? But one day even yet
 Without seeing you
Has been so hard for me I neither knew
Ease, nor rest: how then can I survive
A year or more till I shall see you plain?
I know not even if I can stay alive,
For I've no joy till I see you again.

Lover must you travel the salt sea's flow
So soon, and take my happiness? Is it
For honour's sake? Then for me no sorrow:
But nothing indeed can bring me comfort
 At losing you,
So long it will be till you are here anew,
I swear I'll take no pleasure, all the while
That you are absent journeying far away,
God knows how much I shall weep and sigh!
For I've no joy till I see you again.

Simple in dress and adornment though,
Shall I pass by, and none shall credit
Me with pleasure, my secret none shall know
The grief I nurse, and indeed no comfort,
I speak true,
Can any man bring: so dark and dismal too
Will be my heart: and I could never buy
Anything that could ever ease my pain:
In this wearisome sadness I will lie,
For I've no joy till I see you again.

My sweet love, I'll promise you that I
Will always feel so, wherever I stay.
What a hard and bitter year will be mine,
For I've no joy till I see you again.

IV

All things rejoice this month of May
Except, alas, it seems, for me!
Who have not him with me today
I once had, so sigh so softly.
He was my dear love, sweet to see,
And now he's so far removed.
Alas! Come soon, again, my love.

On the fresh turf let's go and play,
In this sweet month of greenery,
Where we shall hear the nightingale,
And many a lark, sing joyfully,
You know where. Once more my plea
In truest tones, ah me, I move.
'Alas! Come soon, again, my love.'

For in this month where Love displays
Many a prize, there's a duty
On him who loves to joy today
With the darling who's his lady:
And not a day, it seems to me,
Or half a day, himself remove.
Alas! Come soon, again, my love.

My heart's breaking, for love of you:
Alas! Come soon, again, my love.

V

'You're a most welcome sight
My love! Clasp me, now, and kiss me.
How've you been, have you been all right,
Since you left? Have you been happy
For all of that time? Come here, see,
Sit by my side, now, tell me more
Of how, for good or ill, it's been:
Of this I need to know the score.'

- 'My lady, to whom I'm more tied
Than to others (they'll pardon me!),
Know that desire held me so tight
I never was so unhappy,
Taking no pleasure I mean
Far away from you: Love he swore,
The heart-tamer: 'Keep your faith green,
Of this I need to know the score.'

- 'Then you have kept your word alive:
By Saint Nicaise, have thanks of me.
And since you're safely here, delight
We'll know, enough: now be at peace,
Tell me how great your pain has been,
And, if you can say, by how much more
It surpassed the trouble my heart's seen,
Of this I need to know the score.'

- 'Greater than yours my pain has been
I say, but tell how great a store
Of kisses I'll have for it, my queen?
Of this I need to know the score.'

VI

When I see these lovers true
Exchanging looks so sweetly
Between themselves, and a few
Sweet glances, soft and gently,
Stealing aside, with light feet,
Laughing, such vows they make,
My heart is ready to break.

For then they recall to view
The one whom my heart's not free
To leave, but rather, so true,
Longs to draw closer to me:
But the debonair and sweet
Is far, and for my grief's sake
My heart is ready to break.

My heart will languish anew
In this sorrow that I see,
Full of sighs, through and through,
Until he returns from sea,
Whom Love has made sweet to me:
Yes, with pain to which I wake
My heart is ready to break.

Princes, no silence for me:
When pairs of lovers I see
That joy in each other take,
My heart is ready to break.

VII

Alas, now! If I were only able
To hear a bit of news of how that man
Is doing, who makes me so miserable,
And what is keeping him away so long,
Far from me, it might bring a little song
To my heart, but I hear not one word said,
No more or less than if the man was dead.

He's crossed the sea in who knows what vessel,
Ship or barge or yacht, to some foreign strand,
Is he in Spain, or Aragon, or Castile,
Or somewhere else, such a slow course he's on,
Or is it nearer neighbours he's among?
I don't know to what port it is he's fled,
No more or less than if the man was dead.

Or now perhaps he loves another girl,
Lovelier than I, and cares naught as a man
About his home: but there's no mademoiselle
Of any rank, I know this for certain,
Who'd ever love him better than I can:
But how's that help? I'm comfortless instead,
No more or less than if the man was dead.

VIII

Let him attend no more on me,
One I no longer hope to view,
Since he no longer comes to me,
Or writes. I've waited nearly two
Years. I'll seek no suffering new,
It would be mad to grieve, you see,
Since he treats me so carelessly.

I commend him to God, truly,
Who'll keep him from evil issue,
And guard him from danger, duly,
One I no longer hope to view,
Who I'm trying to forget, too:
And that's just how it ought to be
Since he treats me so carelessly.

To right the wrong he's done to me
Can't be achieved by coins untrue,
Only by Love's bounden duty,
In those who undertake to choose
Love's service: and my heart it's true
Is cheerless, gripped by misery
Since he treats me so carelessly.

Alain Chartier (1385-1429)

From 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'

I rode past, thinking, recently,
Like one who's sad and sorrowful,
Of that lament that renders me
Of all lovers the most mournful,
Since, with his dart so dreadful,
Death has stolen my mistress,
And left me lonely: left me dull,
In the sole charge of Sadness.

I said to myself: 'I should cease
Writing and rhyming, it appears,
Abandon laughter, and be pleased
To replace all this with tears.
And so I must employ my years,
Without heart or inclination
To pen a single thing, I fear,
That pleases me, or anyone.

If any would constrain my will
To write of happy things,
My pen would not possess the skill,
Nor my tongue the power to sing.
My lips could never part, in smiling,
Without a gaze that lips betrayed,
Since my heart would claim denial
Through the tears my cheeks displayed.

I leave it to the lover, who nurses
Hopes that his wound might heal,
To make ballads, songs and verses,
That each might his own skill reveal.
My lady, by her will, did steal
At her Death, God save her soul,
And carry away, my power to feel,
That lies with her beneath the stone.

Charles d'Orléans (1394-1465)

Ballades

I

Through the forest of Gloomy Sadness,
One day I chanced to make my way,
And there I met with Love's Goddess
Who spoke and asked me why I strayed.
And I replied: 'Fortune decreed this day,
Exiled me to these woods, long ago,
I might rightly call myself, always,
The man who wanders a path unknown.'

Smiling, in her great lowliness,
She answered: 'Friend, if you could say
Why you are filled with this distress,
I'd try to help you in every way:
For I set your heart on the road, one day,
To all joy. Who has led it awry so?
It troubles me now to see you stray,
The man who wanders a path unknown.'

'Alas!' I said, my sovereign Princess,
Why should I tell you? You know my fate.
It's Death, who brings us mournfulness.
He has taken the one I loved away,
She in whom all my fond hopes lay,
Who guided me: as my friend below,
While she lived, so I need not play
The man who wanders a path unknown.

Blind I am, cast adrift today:
Here and there with my stick I stray,
Lest I'm quite lost, feeling my road:
It's a great shame I must be always
The man who wanders a path unknown.'

II

When I am lying in my bed
I can never rest there in peace:
All the night my heart's well read
In Sweet Thought's history,
Making me listen carefully.
Who dare disobey, not I,
For fear it will be angry:
So I let sleep slip by.

In that book are written, I said,
The tales of my marvellous lady:
Often hearing them in my head,
My heart laughs joyfully,
They are praised so truthfully,
And they raise him so on high:
Of them I too am never weary:
So I let sleep slip by.

If my eyelids seek rest instead,
And Drowsiness makes them heavy,
My heart berates them, and yet
He still can't gain their mastery:
He sighs there ceaselessly,
All to himself, and without a lie,
Soothing him is hard for me:
So I let sleep slip by.

Oh! Love, I cannot easily
Rule my heart, day and night
He wishes to serve you, endlessly:
So I let sleep slip by.

III

Soon, if God wills, the shadow
Of my sadness will pass away,
When the lovely one, I love so,
And fine weather are on display:
And do you know when, I say?
When the sweet gracious light
Of your beauty itself shall play
Through the windows of my eyes.

Then thought's chamber will glow
With great joy, and all arrayed
In delight present its lovely show.
And then my heart will wake
That slept with grief so many days.
No longer asleep, for a ray so bright
Will strike, with all God's good aid,
Through the windows of my eyes.

Alas! When shall I come to know
Such a happening, and such a day?
My mistress I have longed for so,
Soon will it be, do you think, oh say?
For my heart will languish always
In gloom, without signs of life,
Until it sees that brightness play
Through the windows of my eyes.

Comfort into my heart will flow,
As great as any beneath the sky,
When it looks out at you, love, so,
Through the windows of my eyes.

IV

The very first day of the month of May
Is treating me courteously:
For just as I have nothing today
In my heart but torment and grief,
He is also equally
Troubled, rain-drenched, and windblown:
How different he used to be
In days that my life has known.

I think he's doing his best, I'd say,
To keep me faithful company:
And I'm content, in truth, for they,
The wretched, find their thoughts may be
Greatly lightened in misery,
When they've a friend of their own.
I have proved it certainly,
In days that my life has known.

Alas! I've seen May, happy, at play,
So lovely for all who may be,
That I could never fully relate
All the pleasure and jollity,
Of which he had the mastery:
For Love in his abbey alone
Appointed him head of the See,
In days that my life has known.

The times now run beyond me,
God better them rapidly!
For Pleasure is lying low,
Who used to live so joyously
In days that my life has known.

V

In my lost days of childhood I flowered,
And later in my youth I became the fruit:
Then, green, unripe, from the tree of Pleasure,
My mistress, Folly, cast me down at its foot.
Because of it, Reason, who when it suits
Puts right all things, with no wrong intention,
In her great wisdom, and quite as I should
I'm left to ripen on straw in prison.

And I have lingered an endless time here,
With not a taste of the air of freedom:
But I am content: without doubt I swear
It's all for the best though I've become
Withered by idleness now age draws on.
In me every spark of foolish passion
Is quite dead since, hid from everyone,
I'm left to ripen on straw in prison.

God forge us a peace, that's my desire!
Then I'll be quickly refreshed for one,
Wiped clean of the stain of unhappiness,
In France once more there taking the sun:
I wait fair weather, a humble man,
Hoping that God will ordain salvation:
That's why He has done what He has done,
I'm left to ripen on straw in prison.

I'm a fruit of winter, and so less tender
Than fruit of summer: so their decision
Is to let my hard greenness turn softer
I'm left to ripen on straw in prison.

VI

Ballads, songs and plaintive rhymes
All long forgotten are, by me,
For I've been held an endless time
Numbed with sadness and ennui.
Yet to dispel anxiety,
As I once did, I'll try and see
If I can make true poetry.
At least I'll do my very best,
Though I know, and understand,
I'll find the language of my land
All rusted away by this Neglect.

The stream of pleasant words runs dry,
In me, now stale with age's follies,
But I'll still follow my desire
Even with true speech denied me.
So I beg all who heard me speak
Long ago in my youthful freshness,
When I was full of joyousness,
To excuse what they may reject.
Never before have I seemed a man
So coarse of speech, in truth I am
All rusted away by this Neglect.

Lovers have words that please the eye,
And language fresh and lively,
All the pleasures that they try
Speak for them: I too have been,
Though no more, of that company;
There I found the loveliest speech,
Most easily, whenever I wished;
So I squandered all my finesse,
And I'll find whatever I retain,
When I put it to the test again,
All rusted away by this Neglect.

I ought to be immune from all this,
But they may say I yielded amiss
Without a blow, and I should expect
Good Hope says, a youth renewed:
So I'll go burnish my heart anew,
All rusted away by this Neglect.

VII

Not long ago, in the early morning,
The white sun, bearing his candle-shine,
Into my close chamber came stealing
In secret: the day was Saint Valentine's.
All the brightness he had brought
Wakened me from the sleep of Care,
In which I'd passed the whole night there,
On the harsh bed of Wearied Thought.

On that day too all the birds came flocking
To share what they had of Love's treasure,
Aloud in their own sweet Latin calling,
Demanding Nature grant equal measure
All She ordained for them they sought:
A mate that is, as each might select.
Their noise was such none could have slept
On the harsh bed of Wearied Thought.

Then drenching my pillow with my tears,
I lamented my cruel destiny,
Saying: 'You birds can have never a fear
Of finding the joy and pleasure you seek:
Each one an agreeable mate has caught
While I have none, for Death has betrayed me,
Taken my mate, so I languish grieving,
On the harsh bed of Wearied Thought.

Let them choose a Valentine as they ought
Those men and women of Love's party,
This year I'm alone, no comfort for me,
On the harsh bed of Wearied Thought.

Rondeaux

I

The season has cast its cloak away
Of wind, and cold, and falling rain,
Dressed in embroidery again,
The clear and lovely light of day.

There's not a bird or beast, I say,
But in its own tongue sings so plain:
'The season has cast its cloak away.'

Fountain, river and stream that play
Wear, with their bright livery
Silver drops of jewellery:
Everything makes its fresh display:
The season has cast its cloak away.

II

Off with you now, away, away,
Grief and Care and Melancholy!
Think you to take control of me
All my life, like yesterday?

I promise you, no, never, I say:
Reason shall have the mastery.
Off with you now, away, away,
Grief and Care and Melancholy!

If you ever come back this way
You and your whole, company,
May God curse you, all you three,
And whatever brought you, I pray:
Off with you now, away, away,
Grief and Care and Melancholy!

III

Would you stop them flowing
Those rivers that run by
Or while they're flying high
Catch herons as they're going?

Dreaming about such things
Is a game for fools to buy:
Would you stop them flowing
Those rivers that run by?

As Fortune wishes, bowing,
Let time go past with a sigh,
Let all those things go by,
You cannot help allowing.
Would you stop them flowing?

IV

In my Book of Thought today,
I found my heart there writing
A true history of sighing
With tears adorned in every way.

Erasing the deeply loved display,
The picture of sweetness, dying,
In my Book of Thought today.

Where did my heart find this, say?
Great drops of sweat are falling,
With all the pain and toiling,
It expends each night, and may
In my Book of Thought today.

V

The heralds of Summer are here
To ready his living room,
His carpets from the loom
Of flowers and leaves appear.

Carpets of grass spread near,
Green velvet fields assume,
The heralds of Summer are here.

God be thanked there's joy and cheer,
In hearts that were full of gloom.
Winter be gone! Be off with you!
For you must disappear:
The heralds of Summer are here.

Chansons

I

Is she not blessed with every grace,
She that I love so true?
And I swear, by my faith too,
Of her equal there's no trace.

What say you? Isn't it the case?
How does she seem to you?
Is she not blessed with every grace,
She that I love so true?

Her dancing, singing, laughing face,
Whatever she seeks to do,
Taking an honest view,
Without favour or flattery new:
Is she not blessed with every grace?

II

I think little of kisses like these
Given in everyday address
A matter merely of pure politeness:
With too many beneficiaries.

One can enjoy a thousand free,
In all their numbers, valueless.
I think little of kisses like these
Given in everyday address.

But do you know those that please?
The secret ones that joy has blessed:
The rest are nothing, you must confess,
But the way everyone greets a guest.
I think little of kisses like these.

