

Léale Amie: Texts and Translations

Introit

Por mal tens ne por gelee

Ne por froide matinee
Ne por nule autre riens nee
Ne partirai ma pensee
D'amors que j'ai,
Que trop l'ai amee
De cuer verai.
Valara!

Dame, en la vostre baillie
Ai mis mon cuer et ma vie,
Por Deu, ne m'ociez mie!
La ou fins cuers d'umilie
Doit on trouver
Merci et aïe
Pour conforter.
Valara!

De fine amor vient seance et biautez

Et amors vient de ces deus autressi
Tuit troi sont un que bien i ai pensé
Ja ne seront a nul jor departi
Par un conseil ont tuit troi establi
Lor correors qui sont avant alé –
De moi ont fet tout lor chemin ferré
Tant l'ont usé, ja n'en seront parti.

Li correor sunt de nuit en clarté
Et de jors sont por la gent obscurci
Li douz regart et li mot savoré
La grant biauté et li bien que j'i vi
N'est merveille se ce m'a esbahi.
De li a Deus cest siecle enluminé
Quant nos aurons le plus biau jor d'esté
Lès li seroit obscurs de plain midi. [...]

Je n'i voi plus mes, a lui me conmant.
Que toz bien faiz ai laissez por cestui
Ma bele joie ou ma mort i atent
Ne sai lequel dèsques devant li fui.
Ne me firent lors mi oeil point d'anui
Ainz me vindrent ferir si doucement
Dedens le cuer d'un amoreus talent;
Qu'encor i est le cous que j'en reçui.

Li cop fu granz, il ne fet qu'enpirier
Ne nus mirez ne m'en porroit saner
Se cele non qui le dart fist lancier.
Se de sa main me voloit adeser
Bien en porroit le cop mortel oster
Atot le fust dont ja tel desirrier;
Mais la pointe du fer n'en puet sachier
Qu'ele brisa dendenz au cop donner.

Dame, vers vos n'ai autre messagier
Par cui vos os mon corage envoier
Fors ma chançon se la volez chanter

Prologue

Neither for bad weather nor for frost

Nor for an icy morning
Or anything else on earth
Will I turn my thoughts
From the love I have,
For I have so dearly loved her
With a true heart:
Valara!

Lady, in your keeping
I've placed my heart and my life –
For God's sake, do not slay me!
Wherever a noble heart humbles itself
It should find
Mercy and aid
To comfort it.
Valara!

From true love come wisdom and goodness

And love also comes from these two;
All three are one, if you think about it.
They will never be separated.
By a council, they have all three chosen
Their scouts, who have gone on ahead –
Their high road is my heart, and so much have they
traveled it that never will they leave it.

These scouts are in light even during night,
And during the day, they are not visible to anyone.
They are the sweet glance, pleasing and beautiful,
The great qualities that I find in my lady;
It is not surprising if I am amazed,
Since God has enlightened the world by her:
even the brightest day at noon in summertime
would seem like darkness compared to her. [...]

I have failed, lady of great valor,
since I do not know where I am
I expect great joy, or death,
I do not know which; when meeting her,
her glance didn't pain me,
but her eyes struck my heart
so sweetly with loving desire,
That I still bear their blow.

The blow was great, and is getting worse,
no doctor can ever cure me from it
but she, who threw the dart.
If only she would deign to touch this wound
she could remove its deadly throes, the wood of the
arrow, which is my dearest desire.
But she couldn't withdraw the iron tip
which was shattered when she gave me this blow.

Lady, I have no other messenger
to send my desire your way,
but my song, if you would wish to sing it.

Amors me fet commencer

Une chanson novele
 Qu'elle me veut enseigner
 A amer la plus belle
 Qui soit ou mont vivant
 C'est la bele au cors gent
 C'est cele dont je chant:
 Dex m'en doint tel novele
 Qui soit a mon talent,
 Car menu et sovent
 Mes cuers por li sautele.

Bien me pourroit avancier
 Ma douce dame bele,
 S'ele me voloît aidier
 A ceste chanconele.
 Je n'ain nule rien tant
 Conme li soulement
 Et son afairement
 Qui mon cuer renouvele.
 Amors me lace et prent
 Et fait lie et joiant
 Por ce qu'a soi m'apele.

Quant fine Amour me semont,
 Mour me plait et agree,
 Que c'est la riens en cest mont
 Qu j'ai plus desirree
 Or la m'estuet servir,
 Ne m'en puis plus tenir,
 Et du tout obeir,
 Plus que rien qui soit nee.
 S'ele me fait languir
 Et vois jusqu'au morir,
 M'ame en sera sauvee.

Se la meiudre de ce mont
 Ne m'a s'amour donee,
 Tuit li amoreus diront
 Ci a fort destinee.
 S'a ce puis ja venir
 Qu'aie, sanz repentir,
 Ma joie et mon plaisir
 De li qu'ai tant amee:
 Lors diront, sanz mentir,
 Qu'avrai tot mon desir
 Et ma queste achevee.

Bele, por cui sopir,
 La blonde coronee
 Puet bien dire et jehir
 Que por li, sans mentir,
 S'est Amours mout hastee.

Novel amour qui si m'agree

De joli cuer mi fait chanter
 Et cele ou j'ai mis ma pensee
 Me tient en bone volonte
 Sans demoree
 Li ai donee
 M'amor, ja ne l'en quier oster.

Love bids me begin

a new song
 for it wishes to teach me
 to love the most beautiful lady
 living in the world;
 she is the beauty with a fine body,
 she is the one of whom I sing:
 God grant me such news
 as is pleasing to me,
 for often my heart
 beats rapidly because of her.

My sweet beauteous lady
 could indeed favor me
 if she were willing
 to help me with this little song.
 I love no other being
 as much as her
 and her qualities,
 which give my heart new vigor.
 Love binds me and possesses me
 and makes me joyous and happy
 and because of this calls me to itself.

When fine love summons me,
 it pleases and suits me well,
 for she is the being on earth
 whom I have desired the most.
 Now it behooves me to serve her,
 which I can no longer resist,
 and to obey totally,
 more than any living being.
 If she makes me languish
 and I reach the point of death,
 at least my soul will be saved.

If the best lady of this world
 has not given me her love,
 all lovers will say:
 "he is most unfortunate,"
 if I can unceasingly
 derive my joy
 and my pleasure
 from her whom I have loved so much,
 then they will say, in truth,
 that I have realized all my desires
 and ended my quest.

Beautiful one, for whom I sigh,
 the regal blonde
 may indeed say and avow
 that for her, in truth,
 love has acted with haste.

A new love which pleases me so

Makes me sing with a light heart;
 And she on whom my thoughts are set
 Keeps me in good spirits.
 Without reserve
 Have I given her
 My love, and I don't wish to take it back.

Ja n'iert fausee
Mes melz amee
Se de cuer mi voloit amer.

Por li fas soner ma viele
Tant doucement et main et soir
D'un douz penser qui me resveille
Des biens que je soloie avoir.
Cortoise et sage
Et cler visage
Onc de mes euz plus bele ne vi —
Se vostre amour
Ne m'assoage
Je ne vos quier metre en oubli.

Léale Amie

L'on dit qu'amors est dolce chose,
Mais je n'en conois la dolcor.
Tote joie m'en est enclouse,
N'ainz ne senti nul bien d'amor.
Lasse! mes mals ne se repose,
Si m'en deplaing et faz clamor
Mar est batuz qui plorer n'ose
N'en plorant dire sa dolor.
*Ses duels li part, qui s'ose plaindre,
Plus tost en puet son mal estaindre.*

De ce me plaing qu'il ma traie;
S'en ai trop grant duel acouilli,
Quant je qui sui leals amie
Ne truis amor en mon ami.
Je fui aincois de lui baisie,
Si lo fis de m'amor saisi ;
Mais tels baise qui n'aime mie :
Baisier ont maint amant trai.
*Ses duels li part, qui s'ose plaindre,
Plus tost en puet son mal estaindre.*

Estre cuidai de lui amee
Quant entre ses braz me tenoit;
Cum plus iere d'amors grevee,
A son parler me refaisoit;
A sa voiz iere si sanee
Cum Piramus quant il moroit:
Navrez en son flanc de s'espee,
Au nom Tisbe les iauz ovroit.
*Ses duels li part, qui s'ose plaindre,
Plus tost en puet son mal estaindre.*

Margot, Margot, greif sunt li mau d'amer,
treduce Margot.
Margot s'en sist sus la rive de mer;
Margot, Margot, greif sunt li mau d'amer!
Entre ses bras tint son amy naufré
son amy naufré.
Margot, Margot greif sunt li mau d'amer,
treduce Margot.

She will never be betrayed,
But loved the better,
If she wished to love me truly.

For her I make my vielle sound
So sweetly, both day and night,
About a sweet thought which rouses me
From the things I used to treasure.
Courtly and wise,
Of bright countenance —
My eyes never saw a more beautiful one —
If your love
Does not give me ease,
I will not forsake you.

Loyal Friend

They say that love is a sweet thing,
But I do not know its sweetness.
All joy is bound up in it,
But I've never felt any good from love.
Alas! my suffering is not eased
by lamenting and loud complaining:
He is wretched indeed who when beaten dares not
Weep, nor in weeping to speak his pain.
*He who dares lament drives off his grief:
He can douse his pain the sooner.*

I complain because he has betrayed me:
It has hurt me so very much
That I, who am a faithful lover,
Do not find love in my beloved.
Once I was kissed by him,
And I made him the master of my love;
But some people kiss without loving at all:
Kisses have betrayed many a lover.
*He who dares lament drives off his grief:
He can douse his pain the sooner.*

I thought he loved me
When he held me in his arms;
When I was most undone by love
He made me whole again with his words.
By his voice I was healed
Just like Piramus as he lay dying:
Wounded in the side by his sword,
At the name of Thisbe, he opened his eyes!
*He who dares lament drives off his grief:
He can douse his pain the sooner.*

Margot, Margot, great are the pains of love,
.....sweet Margot.
Margot went to the seashore;
.....Margot, Margot, great are the pains of love.
In her arms, she is holding her drowned friend,
...her drowned friend.
.....Margot, Margot, great are the pains of love,
.....sweet Margot.

Et el li dist "Ainmi Dieu vos moréz
Margot, Margot, greif sunt li mau d'amer!
A ky lerrés vos borcs et vos cités
Lerrés a Margot."
Margot, Margot, greif sunt li mau d'amer,
treduce Margot.

[Guinevere's Lament on Lancelot's Death]

Novèle qui tost vole et cort
vient au roi que ses genz ont pris
Lancelot et si l'ont ocis. [...]
Ceste novele par tot vait;
a la reine fu retrait. [...]

Ha! Lasse! De coi me sovint
quant mes amis devant moi vint
que je nel deignai conjoir,
ne ne le vos onques oir!
Quant mon esgart et ma parole
li veai, ne fis je que fole?
Que fole? Ainz fis, si m'aist Dex,
que felensse et que cruex!
Et sel cuidai ge feire a gas,
mes ensi nel cuida il pas,
se nel m'a mie pardone.
Nus fors moi ne li a done
le mortel cop, mien esciant.
Quant il vint devant moi riant
et cuida que je li feisse
grant joie, et que je le veisse,
et onques veoir ne le vois –
ne li fu ce donc mortex cos? [...]

Ha! Lasse! Con fusse garie
et con me fust granz reconforz
se une foiz, ainz qu'il fust morz,
l'eusse antre mes bras tenu.
Comant? Certes, tot nu a nu,
por ce que plus an fusse a eise.
Quant il est morz, molt sui malveise
que je ne faz tant que je muire.
Don ne me doit ma vie nuire,
se je sui vive apres sa mort,
quant je a rien ne me deport
s'es max non que je traï por lui?
Quant apres sa mort m'i dedui
certes molt fust dolz a sa vie
li max don j'ai or grant anvie.
Malveise est qui mialz vialt morir
que mal por son ami sofrir.
Mes certes, il m'est molt pleisant
que j'en aille lonc duel feisant;
mialz voel vivre et sofrir les cos
que morir et estre an repos.

And she said: "Friend you are dying
Margot, Margot, great are the pains of love!
Who will inherit your towns and cities,
.....Will you give them to Margot?"
Margot, Margot, great are the pains of love,
sweet Margot.

[Guinevere's Lament on Lancelot's Death]

The news which quickly flies at court
reached the king that his people had seized
Lancelot and killed him.
This news traveled everywhere;
it was repeated to the queen.

“Ah, wretch! When I remember
that my beloved came before me
and I would not deign to be with him,
or even to see him!
When I refused to see or speak to him,
did I not act like a fickle woman?
Fickle? No, so help me God, rather
like a cruel harpy!
And although I meant it in jest,
he did not take it so,
nor did he forgive me for it.
No one but I gave him
the death blow, I know it.
For when he came to me smiling,
sure that I would give him
great joy, and receive him,
and I would not see him –
was that not his death blow?
[...]
Ah, wretch! I could bear it,
and it would be such a comfort to me
if just once, before he died,
I had held him in my arms.
More than that: truly, skin to skin,
so that we would have been happiest.
When he is dead, I am a coward indeed
if I do not see to it that I die as well.
No, I must not resent my life,
if I am alive after his death,
when I find pleasure in nothing
but the pain that I bear for him.
If I take pleasure after his death
certainly it would be sweet tribute to his life,
the pain which I now desire greatly.
She is a coward who would sooner die
than suffer pain for her beloved.
But certainly, I would find it sweet
to live in lengthy mourning for him;
I would sooner live and endure the blows
than die and be at peace.”

[Iseult's Lament]

Li solaus luist et clers et biaux

Et j'oi le dous chant des oisiaus
Ki cantent par ces arbrisiaus,
Entour moi font lour cans noviaus.

De ma mort que voi aprochier
Fais un lai ki sera mout chier
Bien devra tous amans touchier
C'amours me fait a mort couchier.

Ne fist pas tel perte jadis
Adans, quant perdi paradis
Com a fait Yseut et, tans dis
Com muert, fenist cans plus le dis.

Tristran, amis, amis, amis
Ichelui cuer que je ja mis
En vus amer, iert or mal mis
Et par vostre espee a mort mis.

Tristran, amis, amis, amis,
Tant fache diex de mon avis
Qu'en enfer ou en paradis
Demeurt m'ame les vostre vis.

Cil lais est fait por vos

[Et tous ces gens] font feste moult grant
Harpes et giges, et jongleurs chantant
En lor chansons vont les lais vielant
Que en bretagne fi rent jali amant
Del chevrefoil vont le sonet disant
Que Tristans fist que Iseut ama tant.

Lai del Kievrefuel

Par cortoisie despuel
Vilonie et tot orguel,
Car che k'ont chascie mi oel
Le me fait metre sur fuell,
.I. lai en acuel,
C'est del kievrefuel.

La note del kievrefuel
Par amors comencier vuel,
Com cil ki mais ne me duel
Des maus dont doloir me suel,
Mais chi en recuel
D'amors bel acuel.

Amie, je vos salu
Ens mon lai premierement.
Doce amie, mon salu
Prendes au comencement,
Car molt m'a vers vos valu
Ke si deboinairement
Vos a de m'amor chalu:
Je fuisse mors autrement.

Faite m'aves grant bonte,
Doce amie, deboinaire riens,
Dont j'ai vostre cuer donte
Si ke vestres est li cuers et miens.

[Isolde's Lament]

The sun shines clear and fair,

and I hear the sweet singing of the birds,
that sing in the trees,
around me they make their new songs.

I make a precious lay (song)
of my approaching death,
to touch all lovers as love
makes me lie down in death.

Adam losing paradise
was not as bereaved
as Iseult, who,
dying, can say no more.

Tristan, my friend, my friend, my friend!
Here is my heart which I gave
in love to you, and which will now perish
by your sword.

Tristan, my friend, my friend, my friend!
Even if God is angered by my wish,
may my soul dwell with yours,
whether in heaven or in hell.

This song was made for you

[And all the people] make merry,
harps and fiddles and minstrels singing,
in their songs they play on the vielle the lays
that lovers composed long ago in Brittany;
they perform the song of the honeysuckle,
written by Tristan who loved Isolde so dearly.

The Lay of the Honeysuckle

Through courtliness I strip away
low behavior and all pride,
for what my eyes have pursued
I am moved to commit to paper;
I begin a lay about it,
the Lay of the Honeysuckle.

Sustained by love, I wish to begin
the melody of the honeysuckle;
no longer do I lament
over the ills which usually distress me,
but now I receive
a generous welcome from love.

My friend, I greet you
first in my lay.
Sweet friend, accept my salutation
at the beginning,
for it has served me well
since, so graciously,
you have set store by my love;
otherwise, I would have died.

You have shown me great goodness,
sweet friend, gracious being,
and so I have tamed your heart,
so that the heart is both yours and mine.

Or ne seront mais conte
Li mal dont j'ai tant este empriens,
K'a grant bien me sont monte:
Je ne quier mais plus de tos les biens.
Je ne quier nule autre joie,
N'autre bien, n'autre deduit
Mais ke tos jors de vos j'oise,
K'a nule rien tant ne luit
K'a cou ke plaie vous doie,
Et ke ja ne vos anuit.
Je sui, ou ke j'onques soie,
Avoc vos et jor et nuit.

Ja mes cuers ne se partira
De vos mais ens ma vie,
Et s'il s'em part, quel part ira?
Saichies, ma doce amie,
Ke s'il s'em part, il partira:
De ce ne dotes mie.
Honis soit ki departira
Si doce compaignie!

Ne fait mie a departir;
Diex nos en deffende!
Ains puisse li miens partir
Que li vostres tende,
Doce amie, au resortir.
A m'amor entende!
Faice l'on de moi martir
Ancois que c'atende!

Amie, entre vos et moi
N'ait ne guerre ne descort;
Doce amie, par la foi
Ke jo, vostre amis, vos port,
Et port et porter vos doi,
Ja, par moi ne par mon tort
Ne por rien ke je foloi,
Ne ferai de vos resort.

Ja ens moi ne pechera
Ke j'aie vostre corous:
Tuit li bien ke mes cuers a
Puissent ancois estre rous !
Les biens ai je tos a ja
Et les delis ai je tous
Quanques Damedieux cria,
La desus et cha desous.

Onques a home vivant
N'avint mais si bien d'amer,
Tant com ventent tuit li vent
De la et de ca la mer.
Dame, merci vos en rent,
De par cui se puet clamer
Cil ki mais nul mal ne sent,
Ne en qui n'a point d'amer.

A nului ne port envie
De rien ki soit en cest mont
Ja ne quier plus ens ma vie
De tos les biens ki i sont

Now there will be no recounting
of the ills which have so distressed me,
for they have turned into great good for me;
of all blessings I seek only this one.
I seek no other joy,
no other good nor other pleasure
except that each day I may hear of you,
for I aspire to nothing so much as
that I should always please you,
and that I should never vex you.
I am, wherever I may be,
with you day and night.

Never more will my heart depart
From you for as long as I may live,
and, if it does leave, where will it go?
Be sure, sweet friend,
that, if it did leave, it would break;
Have no doubt about this.
Cursed would be the one who would
leave such sweet company!

We must never separate:
God protect us from that!
Rather should mine break
than that yours should think,
sweet friend, of saying goodbye.
Think of my love!
Let me become a martyr
before this could ever come about!

Friend, let there be neither war nor dispute
between us;
sweet friend, by the faith
that I, your friend, bear you,
bore and must bear you,
never, through myself or through my fault
or for any act of madness,
will I ever accuse you.

Never may my sin be such
that I arouse your anger;
may all the good things which my heart feels
rather be destroyed!
I possess all benefits forever
and I have all the pleasures,
as many as the Lord God created,
in heaven above and on earth below.

Never has a living man
loved so well
for as long as all the winds
blow the sea this way and that.
Lady, for this I give you thanks,
you through whom I declare myself
to be the one who no longer feels pain
nor any bitterness.

I bear no one envy
for anything in this world;
never more do I wish in my life
of all the benefits to be found there

Fors ke vostre amor, amie,
La dont viegnent et ou vont
Mi penser sans felonie,
Ki font par vos kank'il font.

Doce, plus doce ke mieaus,
Cil lais, ki est boins et beaux,
Est faits por vos tos nouveaus,
Et s'il enviesist, seviaus
Tos jors plaira mais
As clers et as lais.

Ce saicent jouenes et viaus
Ke, por cou ke kievrefi aus
Est plus dous et fl aire mieaus
K'erbe ke l'en voie as gaus,
A non chis dous lais
Kievrefex le jais.

En ce dous tens d'esté

Ce fu en mai
Au douz tens gai,
Que la seson est bele;
Main me levai,
Joer m'alai
Lez une fontenele.

En un vergier
Clos d'esglentier
Oï une viele;
La vi dancier
Un chevalier
Et une damoisele.

Cors orent gent
Et avenant,
Et Deus! tant biau dancoient!
En acolant
Et en besant,
Mult biau se deduisoient.

En un destour,
Au chief du tor,
Dui et dui s'en aloient;
Desor la flor,
Le gieu d'amor
A lor plesir fesoient.

J'alai avant,
Trop redoutant
Que nus d'aus ne me voie,
Maz et pensant
Et desirant
D'avoir autretel joie.

Lors vi lever
Un de lor per,
De si loign con g'estoie,
A apeler,
A demander
Qui sui et que queroie

to have anything except your love, dear friend,
you from whom my purest thoughts come
and to whom they go
and accomplish all through you.

Sweet one, sweeter than honey,
this lay, which is good and fine,
is newly composed for you,
and, if it grows old, at least
each day it will become more pleasing
to clerks and lay folk.

Let young and old know
that, because the honeysuckle
is sweeter and smells better
than any plant discovered in the woods,
this sweet lay is called
the joyous honeysuckle.

In that Sweet Summer Time

It was in May
in that sweet time of joy
when the weather is fine;
I rose early,
and went to seek pleasure
near a spring.

In an orchard
enclosed by wild rose bushes,
I heard a vielle;
there I saw dancing
a knight
and a damsel.

They had gracious
and pleasing bodies,
and, goodness! how well they danced!
Embracing
and kissing each other,
they took very sweet pleasure.

To a hidden spot,
at the end,
they went off, hand in hand;
on a bed of flowers
they played the game of love,
as they pleased.

I went on,
greatly fearing
that one of them might see me,
downcast and pensive
and desirous
to know such joy.

Then I saw one
of the pair arise
and, although I was far off,
he called me
and asked me
who I was and what I sought.

J'alai vers aus,
Dis lor mes maus :
Que une dame amoie
A qui loiaus,
Sanz estre faus
Tout mon vivant seroie,

Por qui plus trai
Paine et esmai
Que dire ne porroie.
Las, or morrai,
Car bien le sai,
S'ele ne mi ravoie.

Cortoisement
Et gentement
Chascun d'aus me ravoie
Et dient tant
Que Deus briement
M'envoie de cele joie

Por qui je sent
Grant marrement;
Et je lor en rendoie
Merciz mult grant
Et, en plorant,
A Deu lez commandoie.

Entre moi et mon amin,
En un bois k'est leis Betune,
Alainmes juwant mairdi
Toute lai nuit a la lune,
Tant k'il ajornait
Et ke l'alowe chantait
Ke dit: "Amins, alons an."
Et il respont doucement:
Il n'est mie jours,
Saverouze au cors gent;
Si m'ait Amors,
L'alowette nos mant

Bien se lace
Qui embrace
D'Amors la jolie trace.
C'est la bouche, et quant amis
Son cuer a mis
En desirer amie,
Faite de cors et de vis
A son devis
Voire, il n'est plus de vie,
Si tant face
Amor par grace
Que baise sa douce face.
Bien se lace
Qui embrace
D'Amors la jolie trace

I went to them
and told them my troubles:
that I loved a lady
to whom I would remain
loyal and faithful
all my life.

For her I suffer
more pain and torment
than I could say.
Alas! now I shall die,
I know it well,
if she does not console me.

Courteously
and kindly,
each one of them consoles me
and wishes
that God may soon
send me of that joy

for which I feel
great sorrow;
and I give them
a thousand thanks
and, weeping,
commend them to God.

My love and I,
in a wood near Béthune,
went wandering Tuesday
all night by moonlight
until dawn came
And the lark sang,
saying, "Beloved, let us go!"
And he answered tenderly,
"It is not yet day,
beloved of the fair body;
So help me Love,
the little lark is lying to us!"

He becomes bound indeed
Who follows
The pretty path of Love.
It is through the mouth, and when a lover
Has his heart set
On desire for his lady
Fashioned in body and face
To his liking, in truth,
He no longer has a life,
Unless love acts
So graciously
That he may kiss her sweet face.
He who follows
The pretty path of Love
Becomes bound indeed.

Le Lai des Hellequines, *Roman de Fauvel*

En ce dous temps d'esté, tout droit au mois de may
Q'amours met par pensé maint cueur en grant esmay,
Firent les herlequines ce descort dous e gay

Je, la blanche princesse de cuer les em priaï
Et vous qu'em le faisant dëissent leur penser
Si c'est sens ou folie de faire tel essay
Com de mettre son cuer en par amours amer.

Je, qui sui leur mestresse, avant le commençai
Et en le faisant non de descort li donnay,
Quar selon la matere ce non si li est vrai
Puis leur dis :” mes pucelles moult tres grant desirai
Qu'en fesant ce descort puissions tant bien parler
Qu'on n'i truis que reprendre pour verité sai
Que pluseurs le voudront et oïr et chanter.” [...]

“Bien doi parler d'amour”, ce a dit la daufine
“Quar j'ai non Bien Amee et ce non me destine
Que je doie savoir auques de son couvine. [...]
Leur honneur et leur bien acroist monteplioie
Et de leur desirrer acomplir les avoie
Qui est de tout ce mont la souverainne joie.”

Le Vrai Combat

Monosceros est beste,
Un cor at en la teste,
Pur ço issi a num,
De bucket at façun.
Par pulcele est prise;
Or oyez en quel guise:
Quant om le volt chacier
Et prendre et enginier,
Si vient (en la) forest
U sis repaires est,
La met une pulcele,
Hors del sein sa mamele;
Et par l'odurement
Monosceros la sent;
Dunc vient a la pulcele
Si baise sa mamele,
En sun devant se dort,
Issi vient a sa mort.

Ausi comme unicorne sui

Qui s'ebahit en regardant
Quand la pucelle va mirant.
Tant est liee de son ennui,
Pasmee chiet en son giron;
Lors l'ocit on en traison.
Et moi ont mort d'autel semblant
Amors et ma dame, por voir;
Mont cuer ont, n'en puis point ravoir.

The Song of the Fairy Ladies, *Roman de Fauvel*

In this lovely summer time, right in the month of May,
when the thought of love brings dismay to many a heart,
the fairy ladies composed this sweet and gay *descort*
("discord" — a lyric with unequal stanzas).

I, the White Princess, invited them to do so
and wished them, as they went, to express their opinion
on whether it is wise or foolish to attempt such a thing
as devoting one's heart to being in love.

I, who am their mistress, began the composition
and in doing so I gave it the name of *descort*,
for, given the subject, that name was appropriate.
Then I said to them: “My girls, I greatly desire
that in composing this *descort* we can speak so well
that no one could find a flaw in it, for I know for a truth
that many people will want to hear and to sing it.”

“I must speak of love,” said the Dauphine,
“for my name is Well-Loved and this name destines
me to know something about love's business. [...]
It enhances and increases their honor and their welfare
and leads them to achieve what they desire,
which is the highest bliss in the whole world.”

The Final Fight

Monosceros [Greek for unicorn] is an animal,
He has a horn on his head,
For which he got his name,
And the body of a little he-goat.
By a maid he is captured,
Now hear how it is done:
When one wants to hunt
And trap him,
One should go to his dwelling
In the forest.
There, one should place a virgin
Her breast exposed,
And by the fragrance
The unicorn takes her scent;
Then he comes to the maiden,
Kisses her breast,
And falls asleep on her lap;
This is how he comes to his death.

I am like the unicorn

Who is drowsed (stupefied) in gazing
When he goes looking upon the maiden.
Lost in his reverie
He falls in her lap.
This is how he is killed, by treachery.
And they have killed me in the same manner,
Love and my lady, for gazing;
They have my heart. I cannot get it back.

Dame, quant je devant vos fui
Et je vos vi premierement,
Mes cuers aloit si tresailant
Qu'il vos remest quant je m'en mui.
Lors fu menes sanz reançon
En la douce chartre en prison,
Dont li piler sont de talent
Et li huis sont de biau veoir
Et li anel de bon espoir. [...]

Qui pourroit souffrir la tristor
Et les assaus de ces hussiers?
Onque Rollans ne Oliviers
Ne vainquirent so fors estors;
Il vainquirent en combattant,
Mais ceus vaint on humiliant.
Souffirs en est gonfanoniers;
En cest estor dont je vos di,
N'a nul secors que de merci.

Dame, je ne dout mes riens plus
Fors tant que faille a vos amer.
Tant ai appris a endurer
Que je suis vostres tout par us;
Et se il vos en pesoit bien,
Ne m'en puis je partir por rien
Que je n'aie le remembrer
Et que mes cuers ne soit pas ades
En la prison et de moi pres.

Dame, quant je ne sais guiler,
Merciz seroit de saison mes
De soutenir si grevain fes.

Se par force de merci

ne descent Amors coraux
en la moillour de loiaus,
ja ne m'en verrai saisi
de bien qui ne me soit maus;

mais se pities avec aux
par lor douz comandement
un petit desforcement
meïssent en lor pover,
alors porroie joie avoir.

Beau Deus, que ne fu ensi
l'amors fine comunaus,
que haut et has fust igaus!
Mais ce qu'ennors est en li
tiennent a honte li faus,
Deus, qui les orroit entr'aus
conter et dire sovent
lor faus adevinement
de faire mençonge voir
por fins amanz decevoir.

Lady, when I was before you,
And I saw you for the first time,
My heart leapt so
That it remained with you when I departed.
Then it was taken, without ransom,
Into the sweet prison,
whose pillars are of desire,
and the doors of gentle looks,
and the ring of good hope.[...]

Who could suffer the horror
And the assaults of these door-keepers?
Never did Roland nor Oliver
Win such a hard fight;
They won fighting,
But these, one overcomes by humiliating them.
Sufferings are the standard-bearers
And, in the fight of which I tell you,
There is no other help but mercy.

Lady, I fear nothing more
Than that I should fail in the love I bear you.
I have so learnt to suffer
That I am quite completely yours out of habit;
And if it causes you pain,
I could not leave you for anything in the world
Without my having a memory of it
And my heart being always
In the prison and near me.

Lady, since I do not know how to deceive,
Mercy would be opportune
To help me to bear such a heavy load.

If the power of mercy

Does not make true love descend
Upon the most fair of all
I will never be endowed
With any good that is not loss [harm] to me.

But if pity with them
By their sweet command
Should place a little expropriation
Into their power,
Then I could have joy!

Fair God, why was noble love
Never so universal
That high and low were equal?
But what is honorable in it
The false ones hold to be shame.
God, you should hear them talking
Among themselves, often relating
Their false conjectures
To spread lies
To deceive noble lovers.

Ne tieng pais a fin amin
ki s'esmaie riens por eaus,
por teils felons deloiaus.
Tant on jangleit et menti
ke j'ai n'en serait uns saus.
Franche riens esperitaus,
ce celestiaus present
sont vostre amerous samblant,
ke nuls ne vos puet veoir,
ki jai s'en kesist movoir.

De vos remirer ensi
c'es m'uevre chascun jornal;
et la colors naturaous
de la face que je vi
c'est fins rubiz et cristiaux;
li sorciz semblent esmaous
en or assis finement
par devin comandement;
et li huil me font, por voir,
l'estoile jornal paroir.

C'est la fins,
Koi que nus die,
J'amerai!
C'est la jus enmi les prés,
C'est la fin je veul amer!
Just et baus i a levés,
Bele amie ai,
C'est la fins
Koi que nus die,
J'amerai.

Coda

Dame, faites cortoisie!
Plaise vos que en me vie
Iceste parole die:
"Ma bele, tres douce amie
Vos os nommer,
C'onques n'or envie
D'autrui amer."
Valara!

I do not consider a noble lover
One who is at all daunted
By such treacherous villains.
They have gossiped and lied so much
That no one is safe from them.
Noble spiritual creature,
Your lovely looks
Are like heaven,
For no one who can see you
ever wished to leave you.

Daily I gaze
Upon you,
And the natural tint
Of the face that I see
Is fine ruby and crystal;
Your brows seem enamel
Set finely into gold
By divine command,
And truly your eyes make
The day star appear to me.

That's it—
No matter what anyone says,
I will love!
Down there in the meadows,
That's it, I want to love!
They've started games and dancing,
I have a beautiful beloved.
That's it—
No matter what anyone says,
I will love!

Coda

Lady, please be courteous!
So that I can, in my life
Utter these words:
"My beauty, I dare call you
My very sweet friend,
As I never had the desire
To love any other."
Valara!

Translations: Anne Azéma, Pierre Bec, Regina F. Psaki, Christopher Callahan and Samuel Rosenberg