

A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH ROMANCE

# Silence



A FACING-PAGE TRANSLATION BY

SARAH ROCHE-MAHDI

MEDIEVAL TEXTS AND STUDIES

*General Editor*

John A. Alford



The child Silence between her nurse and a seneschal (from MS Mi .LM.6, folio 203 recto A, courtesy of the University of Nottingham, with the kind permission of Lord Middleton).

# *Silence*

A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH ROMANCE

Newly Edited and Translated

with Introduction and Notes

by

SARAH ROCHE-MAHDI

Michigan State University Press  
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For Rachel and Rebekah,  
mulieribus fortissimis



## PREFACE

THE TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS had its origins in the sheer delight I experienced in discovering *Silence* during Joan Ferrante's 1981 NEH Summer Seminar on "Woman in Life and Literature in the Middle Ages." All of us participants were dismayed that an Arthurian romance so intrinsically significant and so undeservedly neglected was practically unknown even among specialists in medieval literature. It seemed imperative to make it available in a better edition and also accessible to more than the few who can read a relatively difficult Old French text. The bilingual format that follows is meant to do both. The Old French text has been newly edited on the basis of the latest scholarship and careful reexamination of the unique manuscript. The facing translation is meant to serve as an aid to those learning Old French or to be read on its own. *Silence* should be of particular interest to teachers and students of medieval and comparative literature and women's studies, as well as to anyone who loves a first-rate story. I have attempted to keep introduction and notes brief and yet indicate the literary-historical questions and philological problems raised by the work. For those interested in a comparison of motifs, I have included a plot summary of "Grisandole," the major analogue and likely source for the final episode of *Silence*, since *L'Estoire Merlin* is not yet available in translation.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Prof. Anne Iker-Gittleman of Vassar College, who gave so generously of her time and expertise in Old French at an early stage in this endeavor. The mistakes that remain in this version are mine alone. Thanks to Rebekah Gerstein for her proof-reading and valuable stylistic suggestions, to Jane Lindfors and Jane Spickett, who gave me friendship, refuge, and solace, and to Michele, Bee, Beth, Betsy, Charlene, Diane, Jane, Myke, Laura and Lilybeth, without whose collective and individual support I would never have finished this project. I wish to thank the staff of the Library of the University of Nottingham, who have been unfailingly cordial and helpful. I am most grateful to the Keeper of Manuscripts, Dr. Dorothy Johnston, and I owe special thanks to Lord Middleton, the very generous owner of the manuscript of *Silence*.



## INTRODUCTION

SINCE THIS ROMANCE is only beginning to recover its voice after a silence of more than seven hundred years,<sup>1</sup> it seems appropriate to introduce the text and briefly summarize its contents before discussing its literary sources, linguistic play and ideological stance. The very existence of the manuscript containing *Silence*—a well-worn anthology that must have been the property of a professional entertainer—was unknown to the scholarly world until 1911, when it was discovered in the manor house of a British nobleman in a box marked “old papers—no value,” together with letters from Henry VIII and other documents (Cowper 1959, 17). The poem itself, ignored after that except for Gelzer’s brief treatments (1917, 1925, 1927), was edited for the first time by Lewis Thorpe in the 1960s and first published separately in 1972. This volume is now out of print. The language, Old French with many Picard features, is of the second half of the thirteenth century. The author, Heldris of Cornwall, is otherwise unknown.<sup>2</sup>

The plot, reduced to a minimum, is that Silence, daughter of Cador and Eufemie of Cornwall, is raised as a boy because Eban, king of England, will not allow women to inherit. When she reaches adolescence, Nature and Nurture appear as vituperative allegorical figures who torment her. Reason tells her to

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<sup>1</sup> In the face of the dearth of secondary literature on *Silence* in general and the almost total lack of rigorous literary analysis (but cf. Bloch 1983, 1986), the discussion that follows owes much to the feminist issue of *Yale French Studies* (1981), especially Felman’s article, and to conversations with Maria-Eugenia Lacarra during the NEH Summer Seminar (1981). Thanks also to Kathryn Slott for her insightful linguistic comments. I should also mention that the main points of my linguistic analysis of the women’s names as well as other key portions of this introduction (which is in part a heavily revised version of a paper I wrote in 1981 and presented on a number of public occasions) appear without my permission and without acknowledgment in the afterword to a Spanish version of *Silence* published in 1986—a translation based on, not simply in accord with, earlier drafts of this one, which began, at my invitation, as a collaborative effort.

<sup>2</sup> As Gelzer (1927, 99) has convincingly argued, “Master Heldris” seems to be a name picked from the pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth because of its connection with Cornwall: Cheldricus, a Saxon leader defeated and slain by Cador, duke of Cornwall (*History of the Kings of Britain* 9:1–5). Is this *Lokalpatriotismus* (as Gelzer suggests), the desire to please a patron (e.g., Richard of Cornwall)? Is the author, like the heroine, a transvestite she? Or does he just want to make us think so?

continue her life as a male. She runs away to learn the art of minstrelsy and then becomes a famous knight. Having repeatedly rejected the advances of Eban's highly sexed wife, Eufeme (who fakes a bloody rape attempt), Silence is sent on a supposedly hopeless quest: the capture of Merlin, who has prophesied that he can be taken only by a woman's trick. She succeeds, but is unmasked by Merlin, as is the queen and the queen's latest lover, disguised as a nun. Justice is done, women's right to inherit is restored, and Silence becomes queen of England through marriage with Eban.

### *Major Sources and Analogues*

Thorpe took the story of the warrior maiden "Grisandole" in *L'Estoire Merlin* (Sommer 2:281–92) to be the "only real literary source" (14) for *Silence*, assuming more or less free invention for the rest, with details gleaned mainly from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace (17, 32–34). Gelzer (1927) and Lecoy (1978) have stressed that "Grisandole" fails to provide the Potiphar's wife motif as a motive for the disguised maiden's quest for Merlin; they note that Lucy Paton (1907), in a study published before the discovery of *Silence* and apparently unknown to Thorpe, posited that both "Grisandole" and a group of later tales that include the satisfyingly ironic motif of the vengeful queen who insists on the quest that will undo her derived from a more complete earlier source. Gelzer, after a tabulated comparison of motifs, concluded that *Silence* must derive from something like Paton's X; Lecoy sees *Silence* as providing striking confirmation of Paton's hypothesis.

I would argue that "Grisandole," with its imperfections and prejudices, is as likely a source as any hypothetically more complete X for an author as spirited and original as Heldris to have used, greatly improved upon, and reacted against. But "Grisandole" (or X) is hardly the only major source. At least two other romances are important: the *Roman d'Eneas* and some version(s) of the "Seven Sages of Rome."<sup>3</sup> Alain de Lille is everywhere, as is the matter of Tristan. Saints' lives, other tales and ballads<sup>4</sup> of warrior maidens and women musicians also deserve mention. Here again, what is interesting is how Heldris reworked existing material for his/her own purpose: to refute the definition of woman as

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<sup>3</sup> Whether the author could have known the *Roman de la Rose* of Jean de Meun is uncertain. We cannot date the manuscript of *Silence* with sufficient accuracy, let alone determine the actual date of Heldris's composition. But whether the fact that both Oiseuse and Eufeme are called *huissiere* indicates literary influence—to cite only one example—it is certainly important to note the coincidence and the negative implications the word has for women.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the very popular Spanish ballad "La doncella guerrera," certainly old (although not attested in the standard *cancioneros*), which survived into the twentieth century in more than a hundred versions (Menendez-Pidal 1939, 221; 1973, 71).

defective male and to challenge the allegedly “natural” foundations of the social order.

To begin with the *Roman d'Eneas*, it seems clear that the three female characters in *Silence* owe a good deal to Dido, Lavine, and Camille (Lasry 1985). Eufeme is far inferior to Dido, sharing her passion and scheming, but possessing none of her nobility and dignity—nor her pangs of guilt. Eufemie is far superior to Lavine, but equally emboldened by and subject to love. But most importantly, Camille, the warrior queen of Vulcane, serves as both model for and contrast to Silence:

She was marvellously beautiful and of very great strength. There was no other woman of her wisdom. She was very wise, brave and courteous and possessed great wealth and ruled her land wonderfully well. She had been raised always amid warfare, so that she loved chivalry greatly and upheld it her whole life. She had no interest in women's work, neither spinning nor sewing, but preferred the bearing of arms, tourneying and jousting, striking with the sword and the lance: there was no other woman of her bravery. During the day she was king, but at night, queen. No chambermaid or handmaid went about her during the day, nor ever in the night did any man enter the chamber where she was. She governed herself so wisely, both early and late, that no one could detect any folly in her, either in deed or in appearance, or feel any envy toward her.

(Yunck 1974, 3959–86)

Both Silence and Camille are noble, loyal and courageous warriors, but Camille is queen in her own right and feels no tension between womanhood and the practice of chivalry. Both are also beautiful blondes, described (as Dido, Lavine, Eufeme and Eufemie are not) according to the tradition of *effictio* (Lasry 1985). But again, the contrast is significant: while Camille's blonde beauty is depicted in a military context (just as the beauty of a male warrior might be described to heighten the pathos of his death), Heldris stresses Silence's tension by separating the description of her as lovely maiden, Nature's masterpiece, from the scene in which she is armed for battle. Similarly, Silence's internal conflict, expressed by Nature's admonitions and her own self-examination echoes the external verbal and ideological confrontation of Camille with a Trojan warrior in battle. He taunts her:

Enough of this arrogance: put down the shield and lance and hauberk, which cuts into you too much, and stop exhibiting your prowess. That is not your calling; you must spin, sew, and clip. The place to do battle with a maiden like you is in a beautiful chamber, behind the bed-hangings. Did you come here to show off?

(7081–89)

And he ends by offering to pay for her sexual services, even though, he says, a hundred Trojans couldn't satisfy her lust. Camille retorts—after killing him:

I did not come her to show off or indulge in debauchery, but to practice chivalry. I want none of your deniers: you have made a very foolish bargain. I know better how to strike down a knight than to embrace him or make love to him; I do not know how to do battle on my back. (7117–25)

Silence reflects, after Reason has persuaded her to remain a man:

I have a mouth too hard for kisses  
and arms too rough for embraces.  
One could easily make a fool of me  
in any game played under the covers.  
(2646–49)

Camille, who represents an ideal that Silence, through no fault of her own, achieves but is unable to sustain, dies a hero's death in battle. As Heldris makes painfully clear, Silence is not so fortunate: our *mulier fortis* must dwindle into a wife.

The third major vernacular literary source for *Silence*, the very popular story of "Dolopathos" ("he who suffers sorrow") or the "Seven Sages of Rome," offers a cluster of essential motifs: the question of inheritance, the vow of silence, the lustful queen, the accusation of rape, and the theme of nature and nurture. (The indecisiveness of the king, who shifts the responsibility for a judgment of life or death onto his advisers, is transferred to the French king in *Silence*.) In the best-told version, Herbert's *Dolopathos* (Brunet and Montaiglon 1856), the king sends his heir, Lucemien, to the great sage Virgil, who is head of an exclusive private school outside of Rome. The boy, favored by heredity and environment, learns the seven arts so well that his schoolmates are jealous and try to poison him (just as the minstrels plot to kill Silence). He reads in the stars that his mother is dead and his father has remarried. He swears to Virgil as an act of unquestioning obedience that he will not speak until he sees him again. Naturally, his silence destroys the *joie* of the court. There is much involved play with speech and silence; Dolopathos speaks as King David: "my harp is rent and broken." The queen tries everything to break the boy's silence, including seduction. One of her ladies gives evil counsel: Lucemien is her enemy because he is heir; she should stage a rape scene. The queen appears before the court all bloody and her dress torn to the waist. The prince's guilt seems obvious, and of course he does not speak to defend himself. No one wants to pronounce sentence, but the king insists justice must be done. Lucemien is stripped naked and about to be burned at the stake when a rider from afar appears—a distinguished old man, the first of the seven sages—to begin the process of storytelling that saves the hero's life. (Similarly, when Silence, disguised as a minstrel, is in danger of being executed by her father, a wise old man, Merlin in disguise, appears as rescuer.) The tales include warnings against too hasty judgment, incidents of rescue, and examples of the treachery of women. Finally Virgil appears (with a story as well) and Lucemien can speak. The queen is suitably punished: she and her damsels are burnt. Lucemien becomes a model ruler, a

philosopher king, and is finally converted to Christianity by a wandering preacher.

The "Seven Sages" undoubtedly goes back to a story of the education and temptation of an Eastern ascetic (Roloff 1973), however much the original spiritual purpose may be obscured in certain variants; it remains fundamentally misogynist in all its extant versions. Speech and sensuality are identified with woman; the final test on the path to virtue is the command or vow of silence. The stories told (in other versions the queen gets a chance to reply) are of the deceitful deeds of women. Attacks on women abound, from two-liners to full-blown tirades.<sup>5</sup> The queen and her ladies, described as a nest of serpents, are

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<sup>5</sup> One or two examples from Herbert's version — by no means the most virulent — will suffice to demonstrate the misogyny of the tradition:

Crois tu chose ke fame die?  
 Certes, tu fais trop grant folleie.  
 C'onkes, par mon cors ne par m'arme,  
 N'oi parler de saige dame;  
 Mal savoir n'est pas ciance.  
 Mais je vos dis tot en fiance,  
 Et bien saichiez ke je di voir,  
 Que de mal puet fame savoir  
 Plus ke nule autre criature.  
 Teilz est ses sanz et sa nature.  
 Je sai aikes de lor covine.

(10,238–48)

(Do you believe anything a woman says?  
 Then you are truly stark, raving mad.  
 For never, upon my body and soul,  
 have I heard of a wise woman.  
 Knowledge of evil is not wisdom.  
 But I tell you this confidently,  
 and know well that I speak the truth,  
 that a woman can know more of evil  
 than any other creature alive.  
 That is her essence and her nature.  
 This I know about the way they are.)

Virgil's attack on the queen leaves no doubt that she stands for woman:

. . . . . Folle criature,  
 Farsie de mal et d'ordure,  
 Plainne de grant forsenerie  
 Et d'outrage et de lecherie,  
 La plus desloial riens ki vive. . .

(10,252–56)

(Lascivious creature,  
 bloated with evil and corruption,  
 bursting with fury,  
 outrage and lechery,  
 the most disloyal thing  
 on the face of the earth.)

Neither walls nor towers nor war machines can prevail against her, in short,  
 N'est malx ke par feme ne vegne.

(10,292)

(There is no evil that does not come from women.)

hardly counterbalanced by the first good queen. And as the tale spreads in Europe, titles such as the thirteenth-century Spanish *Libro de los engaños y los asayamientos de las mugeres* ("Book of the Treachery and Cunning of Women") focus not on the wise men, but on the evil stepmother wanting to do in her stepson for the inheritance.

Heldris transforms both motif and message, chiefly, of course, by making the pure and silent hero a she. The question of inheritance becomes a case of sex discrimination: the king's unjust and irrational decision to punish women for the greed of men. The wise and just monarch becomes the shallow, scheming Eban, who rules by terror and distribution of political favors, disloyal to his wife and to his most faithful vassal and rescuer, Silence. Certain graphic details of the "rape" scene are followed closely, but the accusation takes place in private, and the king covers up the entire incident. Considering the boy's social status, Eban explains to Eufeme (4234–36), this is to everyone's advantage. After all, boys will be boys—what Silence did was due to the impetuous nature of youth (4237). A pity to spoil the lad's good record. Besides, it will look bad if word gets around that the king found him in the queen's chamber. To pacify her, he promises to have the boy killed abroad, but he is lying. Statements regarding nature and nurture, now applied to a woman disguised as a man, go beyond social convention to ask what is really natural. But this last point needs to be discussed separately.

The chaste female in male dress who does not reveal her sex recalls many popular accounts of holy virgins, saints and martyrs. The "lives" of saints Marina and Eugenia are particularly relevant: both are blameless, as opposed to the "reformed prostitute" type, and both are accused of crimes that, given their sex, they could not have committed.<sup>6</sup> Marina, whose father disguised her sex, is raised in his monastery as the monk Marinus and accused of fathering a child; her sex is discovered only after her death. Eugenia runs away to a monastery, becomes abbot, is accused of adultery, comes before the judge, who is her father, rends her garments to show she is a woman, converts her father and is eventually martyred. Saints Apollinaris, Euphrosyne, Pelagia, and Theodora are other examples of disguised females. And as Bloch (1987) suggests, the life of the male saint Alexis, son of Euphemia, may have influenced the names of characters as well as provided another example of disguise. Again, however, the contrast is striking: Silence's reward for her loyalty, purity and perseverance is an all-too-earthly crown.

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<sup>6</sup> For this and related motifs, see Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index*, e.g., K 2113 (princess disguised as man accused of illicit relations with Queen); K 1837 (disguising of women in men's clothes); also K 310, 514, 1321, 1836.

As for the theme of girl as minstrel,<sup>7</sup> Thorpe suggested (1972, 33) that the idea came from Geoffrey of Monmouth (IX:1), where the Saxon leader Badulf, defeated by Cadur, enters York dressed as a minstrel. This is certainly possible, since many other details seem to come from these few pages concerning Cadur; yet the closest parallel is Nicolette, who dyes her face, disguises herself as male minstrel, and seeks passage on a ship. There is also Tharsia, daughter of Apollonius of Tyre (Tarsiana *la juglaresca* in the thirteenth-century Spanish version, the *Libro de Apolonio*), who saves her chastity by persuasive speech and by performing as a street musician, whose father thinks she is dead and with whom there is a moving scene of recognition. And when she tells her brothel-keeper, “studiis liberalibus erudita sum et in genere musicali possum modulari. Duc me in forum!” (Singer 1895, 93 [the *Gesta Romanorum* version]), she is, as it were, a combination of Euphémie and Silence. Like the people of Cornwall, all come running to hear the gifted musician (omnis populus cucurrit ad virginem videndam). The Spanish version includes a good deal of verbal play with the contrast of speech and silence. Yet Silence acts out of loyalty and devotion to family, not romantic love or the need to preserve her maidenly virtue. And she experiences intense inner conflict between her womanhood and her male upbringing.

### *Nature and Nurture*

Nature appears frequently in Old French romance as creator of the most beautiful girl in the world (for example, Gelzer 1917, Malkiel 1977, Lasry 1985). As such, and so she first appears in *Silence*, she is clearly a trivialized version of the goddess Nature in Alain de Lille’s *Anticlaudianus*, the *vicaria Dei*, *artifex* and arbiter of morals who wants to create the perfect human being. And when she appears to complain and nag Silence about the perversion of her work, she is an obvious parody of Alain’s heroine in *De planctu Naturae*, who laments the unnatural behavior of humans and the degeneration of the world. Nature, as *procreatrix*, abhors the transvestite: misuse of the organs of generation threatens the survival of the species. “The association of sophistry and sodomy which lies at the core of Alain’s thought” (Bloch 1987, 86) pervades Heldris’s witty and sophisticated play with linguistic forms and sexual perversion.

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<sup>7</sup> The article by Rokseth (1935), despite its title, is disappointing in general and does not mention Silence.

"Nature passe noretur" (and, rarely, the contrary) is a common Old French proverb (Gelzer 1917, 56; cf. Tobler-Lommatzsch 6,2:807–8, *norreture*); for example:

Et par tant, ce dist l'escripture  
 Nature passe nourreture.  
 Voirs est, nourreture vilaine  
 Souvent bonne nature amaine  
 A ordure et a vilenie,  
 Dont ele est destruite et hounie.  
 Et si revoit on le contraire.<sup>8</sup>

(And thus, as Scripture says,  
 does nature surpass nurture.  
 It is true that a bad upbringing  
 often leads a good nature astray  
 into vileness and base conduct,  
 by which it is dishonored and destroyed.  
 And one also sees the opposite.)

Herbert says of Lucemien (*Dolopathos* 1367–78):

Moult fu de bone norreture  
 Et de bon sens fu par nature;  
 Par lui se semont et esmuet  
 Li biens qui de nature muet;  
 Li hons puet a peine endurer  
 Qu'on li puist desnaturer;  
 Nature sormonte et trespasse  
 Tout ce ke norreture amasse,  
 Et quant la bonne norreture  
 S'aconpaigne a bone nature  
 Dont est bone la conpaignie;  
 Li uns biens fet a l'autre aie.

(He had a very good upbringing  
 and was intelligent and prudent by nature;  
 environment arouses and stimulates  
 natural endowments;  
 the human being can scarcely

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<sup>8</sup> Tobler-Lommatzsch 6,2:808 cites A. Scheler, ed. *Dits et contes de Baudoin de Conde et de son fils Jean de Conde*, Brussels 1836, 2:264,83.

be dis-natured;  
 nature overcomes and surmounts  
 everything that nurture can mass against it,  
 and when a good upbringing  
 is harmoniously combined  
 with good character,  
 one good reinforces the other.)

Another formulation, “Nature et noretur mainent grant tencon” (Gelzer 1917, 57), is lively personification bordering on more. It seems to have been Heldris’s original idea to allegorize this tension into a lively debate. But beyond that, the author is asking a much more profound and difficult question than which counts more, heredity or environment: what is “natural” and what is acquired male or female behavior? With exquisite irony, Heldris has Nature employ deviant speech (sophistry) and argue precisely from a conventional view of what is natural in both her major and minor debate with Nurture, as well as in lesser textual skirmishes. In the major debate (2500–64), Nature tells Silence that sex determines one’s social role: give up romping in the woods (it’s bad for the complexion); go to a chamber and learn to sew. Nurture wins with the help of Reason, a personification of Silence’s inner voice, who demonstrates that no one in their right mind would choose to live as a woman. Masculinity means freedom of movement, having a voice, being on top. Silence concludes, “I’m on top; why should I step down?” (2641). In the second debate (5996–6090), Nature argues that man is naturally carnivorous, and wins when Merlin abandons nuts and roots for a large roast of prime rib. But if Nature is arguing in terms of acquired characteristics, that is, environmental determinism, Nurture’s argument is perverse as well: she claims to be able to dis-nature people permanently, to change supposedly innate characteristics through remedial training. Each blames the other for Adam’s fall (note that Eve’s guilt is underplayed here). Nature triumphs by means of a theological argument: God created man entirely good; snake and apple were environmental factors. In contrast to their sophistry, a key authorial intrusion (2295–2342) argues that one’s true nature is one’s moral nature (the heart). Innate proclivity for evil can be only temporarily and superficially modified by Nurture for the good, but her capacity for harm is enormous. The harm done to a good nature by even a small amount of bad upbringing far outweighs the good that any amount of good upbringing can impose upon a bad nature. This lays the foundation for the provocative statements with which the author concludes the poem: women who do bad things are less culpable than men; given their circumstances, it is a wonder there are any good women at all. Woman’s upbringing gives her no motivation to be good—indeed, she rarely has a chance to choose.

## *Euphemism and Silence*

Whatever the constellation of female characters may owe to the *Eneas*, it is Heldris who wittily and tellingly makes them into figures of speech. And whatever the equation of grammatical and sexual deviation may owe to Alain de Lille, only Heldris raises such profound questions, predicated on the primary opposition of speech and silence, concerning women's voice and men's discourse, women's place in or absence from the social contract, whether verbal, economic or political — matters that the modern reader might reasonably expect to find expressed so explicitly and with such emphasis on linguistic play in French feminist criticism of the 1970s rather than in a medieval romance. To be sure, the question of women's speech and silence is a commonplace of medieval literature but mainly in misogynistic utterances, and the moral issues raised by Enide's silence in *Erec* are quite different (Roloff 1973, Ruberg 1978, McConeghy 1987).<sup>9</sup>

The women's names are examples of liminal language with a not-so-subliminal message.<sup>10</sup> Eufeme ("Alas! Woman!") represents the female as socially defined: the object of male lust and male barter, with no voice in determining her fate. Her body ends a war. Her name hardly conceals *feme*; she embodies all the negative stereotypes traditionally associated with her sex: she is lustful, scheming, disloyal, and vengeful; she speaks only to deceive. Eufemie ("use of good speech") is also defined by convention: as typical romance heroine, she sustains the linguistic and ideological code of courtly ideals. Despite the medieval equivalent of the best private schools, Ph.D. and M.D., she, too, is defined by desire. To be sure, hers is a reciprocated *grande passion* for an eminently suitable beloved, rather than the crude and undiscriminating sexuality of Eufeme. She makes good use of her powers of speech to communicate with Cador until the language of the body can take over. But if she is the initiator of dialogue before her marriage, she speaks only to acquiesce

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<sup>9</sup> Briefly, Enide has failed to speak out of fear: her atonement consists in being forbidden to speak and having to find the courage to break silence when appropriate. A wife must demonstrate not blind obedience but sound judgment; she must act not out of fear, but love. Good marriage is a partnership. This is a laudable position (very much like Cador's in *Silence*), particularly in contrast to the wife-beating of Oringles. *Erec's* stress on the need for integration of public and private spheres and also its essentially conservative if positive view of woman's place are typical of courtly romance.

<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the men's names, except for some obvious Arthurian associations, seem to yield no particular significance for this text. Cador is of course prominent in the Arthurian material; besides slaying the Saxon leader, he raises Guinevere at his court. Evan's name may have been inspired by that of King Evrain in *Erec et Enide*. I suggest that the names Renaut and Beghes are simply lifted from the *Quatre Fils Aymon*, where Renaut de Montauban defeats "Beges li Sarrazin" (note the reference to Aimon, lines 5892–94). Thorpe tried unsuccessfully to trace Silence's three French knights with convincingly realistic names. Gelzer (1927, 98) notes that the form 'Fortigierne' for Vortigern otherwise occurs only in the English *Arthour and Merlin*.

afterwards. Good speech, temporarily denied Cador by the torments of love, is now his characteristic, while the brilliant and articulate Eufemie is reduced to a silent spouse, subsumed under Cador's identity ("the countess, his wife"). Only one letter separates one euphemism from the other, "bad" *femme* from ideal *femme*; in fact, Eufemie is once called Eufemie for the sake of rhyme (5206), but also to indicate their interchangeability.

Euphemia/Euphemism gives birth to Silence, who transcends both real-life role and literary convention, whose naming and upbringing challenge the very foundations of the social order: by engaging in deviant naming, her parents subvert the cultural procedure that normally assures propriety and property: the naming by the father of the male with a name signifying male. She is a live metaphor that opens up revolutionary possibilities for the redefinition of male and female. As human metaphor, Silence experiences a semantic and personal clash within herself at puberty, the time in life when the human being becomes aware of sexuality and of the possibilities of metaphorical language—a double loss of innocence that precipitates the perverse debate between heredity and environment.

The narrator engages in highly complex play with the rhetorical possibilities and social implications of the "boy" named Silence, not the least of which is the consistent use of grammatical inconsistency: masculine pronouns to refer to a being we know to be female. The text itself thus interferes with the functioning of language as a code that upholds conventional distinctions, constantly challenges the legitimacy of social classification by gender. As linguistic counterpart to Silence's transvestism, this usage exposes a supposedly essential, natural distinction as one of social role-playing. Heldris's punning on *-us* and *us* usage (noted by Gelzer 1917, Bloch 1986) emphasizes that societal norms are masculine. The play with Silentius/Silentia demonstrates that woman cannot be seen as a minus of man: the root is the same, the endings are grammatically (if not socially) equivalent. This indicates an unsettling proximity, the possibility of a unity so fundamental that the metaphor will collapse. When male and female are reduced to an arbitrary gender distinction marked by minute grammatical suffixes, what does a minute difference in the genitalia signify? The narrator plays with these questions most explicitly in lines 2476–79:

Il a us d'ome tant use,  
Et cel de feme refuse,  
Que poi en falt que il n'est malles.  
Quanke on en voit est trestot malles.

(He was so used to men's usage  
and had so rejected women's ways  
that little was lacking for him to be a man.  
Whatever one could see was certainly male!)

By revealing that relations between the sexes are based on masking, the author has undercut the surface contrast between Silence and Eufeme as heroine and villainess before their ultimate confrontation. The king's praise of Silence as a "good woman" (6631–34) and his patriarchal admonition to Eufeme, "a woman should keep silent" (6398), are equally distasteful. If a good woman is hard to find, the reason lies in convention, not in the innate wickedness of the female sex—nurture, not nature.<sup>11</sup>

### *Merlin's Laughter*

In reality, Silence has proved that a woman can hold her tongue; figuratively, she is speaking loudly: Silence as *sprechender Name* evokes the idea of woman. It evokes popular and clerical "wisdom" regarding women (they have no right to a public voice/the last thing they ever are is silent). Silence herself is a refutation of this tradition, a statement concerning women's very real silence: their exclusion from language and culture. She has unmasked the problem of women's silence in a man's world. The contrast between the opening up of revolutionary possibilities and the narrative closure (justice is done, evil queen and lover are executed, girl gets king), which sustains the conventions of romance, is deeply disturbing.

Weary of trifling with mortal fools, bored with his roles of friendly helper and buffoon, Merlin takes command of the story. Under the control of the great magician, supreme trickster and shapeshifter, the denouement takes the ironic form of *tricheur/euse triché(e)*. Merlin, in *Silence* as elsewhere, "knows very well how the story will turn out" (6160). Here as elsewhere, he is, as Bloch has so incisively put it, the "spoiler of family fictions" (1983, 213). In one sense, Eufeme has the last laugh, as Silence states in her final interior monologue (6457–60):

I thought I was tricking Merlin,  
but I tricked myself. I thought  
to abandon woman's ways forever,  
but Eufeme has ruined any chance of that.

Yet Merlin laughs more than anyone,<sup>12</sup> and he has the last laugh after all.

<sup>11</sup> As Natalie Zemon Davis has noted, "defects of the males were [traditionally] thought to stem not so much from nature as from nurture," whereas "female disorderliness" went back to the Garden of Eden (1975, 124).

<sup>12</sup> The incidents of laughter on the way to court (peasant, leper, burial) are traditional; cf., e.g., Paton (1907), Gelzer (1927), Lecoy (1978).

At the close of his *Etymologies and Genealogies*, Bloch says that medieval romance

serves as a virtual guidebook, a manual of instruction for the integration of the hidden self within the public sphere. The romance hero is precisely he who, having lived through a series of internal crises, either achieves—like Erec, Yvain, Cliges—a balance between personal desire and social necessity, or who—like Tristan—is excluded from society altogether. . . . Medieval poetry served to found a vision of man that will for centuries to come inform his notion of of what he is and govern his rapport with others. (1983, 226)

But if this serves as a good working definition of standard romances, one must ask how it applies to *Silence*. The story of the woman called Silence offers no solution, despite the narrative resolution. We are left with Merlin's mocking laughter.

### *Note on the Text and Translation*

The only extant copy of *Silence* is contained in folios 188 recto to 223 recto of what is now MS. Mi.LM.6 of the University of Nottingham. Because the manuscript has been thoroughly described by Thorpe in the introduction to his edition, I will briefly summarize here. Before it ended up forgotten in its box, the manuscript may have been copied for a noble lady, Beatrice de Gavre, on the occasion of her marriage to Guy IX de Laval, ca. 1286 (Cowper 1959, 6). It undoubtedly fell into the hands of the English during the Hundred Years' War, when town and castle were sacked in 1428. It ended up as the property of Lord Middleton at Wollaton Hall, where W. H. Stevenson discovered it. The text of *Silence* seems to be the work of a single, rather careless scribe. There are fourteen endearingly clumsy miniatures, eleven of which appear to be the work of one artist. The language, a mixture of francien and picard, includes several unusual vocabulary items.<sup>13</sup>

Lewis Thorpe must be congratulated for being the first to have undertaken and accomplished the challenging task of editing the unique manuscript of *Silence*. However, like most pioneer efforts, his work stands in need of considerable revision. It is particularly marred by faulty morpheme boundaries and an inadequate and frequently fanciful glossary. I have corrected Thorpe's printed

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<sup>13</sup> Lecoy (1978) has listed most of them. Several are not in Godefroy or Tobler-Lommatzsch, e.g., *fural* 5946 "flint." In the same line, *esce*, "tinder," is not in Godefroy. Both are wrong in Thorpe, who glossed the first as "tinder" and failed to recognize the second. Markedly picard are, e.g., *agaise* 5889, *fordine* 790, *pire* 3332, *tercuel* 1822.

text on the basis of a careful comparison with the original manuscript, considered and adopted most of Lecoy's suggestions (1978), and in several cases made my own emendations. In certain instances, my examination of the manuscript itself, in good light and with a magnifying glass, yielded a different reading from that of Lecoy, who relied on a photocopy. I have also adopted several of the astute suggestions made by Prof. Iker-Gittleman of Vassar College, to whom I am very much indebted. Undoubtedly, many problems remain. If, after listing thirteen pages of corrections, Lecoy could say that "the text still offers a good number of difficulties likely to tax the reader's wits," I offer this assessment as a plea for leniency in my own case.

In rendering the text into modern English, I aimed at a reasonably literal version. Three stylistic peculiarities of Old French are particularly challenging: the frequent repetition with variation characteristic of poetry intended for oral recitation, and the syntactic independence and verbal sparseness of the brief poetic line. Because Old French lines generally stand on their own, with relatively rare and sometimes, to the modern reader, baffling use of subordinating conjunctions, the sequence of lines—and thoughts—within a given passage can be determined not so much by logic as by exigencies of rhyme, the use of repetition, or intellectual and aesthetic delight in deliberate interference with, or suspension or interlacing of, ideas. I have on occasion felt it necessary to take liberties with the sequence of phrase or line and to supply subordination. The individual Old French phrase is notoriously spare: this native elegance can sometimes fall flat or cause mystification if rendered literally; yet, on the other hand, expansion or qualification can destroy ambiguity. It is precisely for these reasons that I find a bilingual format so important.

# *Silence*

A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH ROMANCE

[M]aistres Heldris de Cornuälle  
 Escrist ces viers trestolt a talle.\*  
 A çals quis unt conmande et rueve,  
 El conmencier dé suns qu'il trouve,  
 Que cil quis avra ains les arge 5  
 Que il a tels gens les esparge  
 Que,\* quant il oënt un bon conte,  
 Ne sevent preu a quoi il monte.  
 Ne violt qu'espars soiënt par gent  
 Qui proisent mains honor d'argent, 10  
 N'a gent qui tolt voellent oïr  
 Que si n'ont soing c'om puist joïr  
 De gueredon qu'il voellent rendre.  
 Uns clers poroit lonc tans aprendre  
 Por rime trover et por viers, 15  
 Tant par est cis siecles diviers  
 Qu'ançois poroit rime trover  
 Qui peüst en cest mont trover  
 Blos solement un sol princhier  
 U il peüst sol tant pinchier 20  
 Dont il eüst salve sa paine,  
 Ne le travail d'une sesmaine.  
 Volés esprover gent avere?  
 Servés le bien, come vo pere:  
 Dont serés vus li bien venus, 25  
 Bons menestreus bien recheüs.  
 Mais, puis qu'il venra al rover,  
 Savés que i porés trover?  
 Bien laide chiere et une enfrume,  
 Car c'end est tols jors la costume. 30  
 Avere gent, honi et las,  
 Ja n'est cis siecles c'uns trespas.  
 Vos le paravés desjué  
 Q'or n'i a mais ris ne jué,  
 Que vos en vivrés mains assés 35  
 Quant vos, caitif, tant amassés.  
 Jo n'ai preu dit, car n'est pas vivre  
 D'avere gent, car tolt sont ivre,

Master Heldris of Cornwall  
 is writing these verses strictly to measure.  
 As for those who possess them, he commands and requests,  
 right here at the beginning of the work he is creating,  
 that anyone who has them should burn them 5  
 rather than share them with the kind of people  
 who don't know a good story  
 when they hear one.  
 He does not wish to have his verses circulated  
 among those who prize money more than honor, 10  
 or among people who want to hear everything  
 but do not care to make a man happy  
 with some reward they might wish to give.  
 A learned man might study long  
 to fashion rhyme and verse, 15  
 but things are so bad in these times  
 that it's a lot easier to write poetry  
 than to find in this world  
 one single solitary prince  
 from whom he might pinch 20  
 even so little that he might have saved himself the trouble—  
 not a week's wages.  
 Do you want to see how stingy people are?  
 Serve them well, as if they were your father:  
 then you will be most welcome, 25  
 judged a fine minstrel, well-received.  
 But when the time comes to ask for something,  
 do you know what you will find?  
 Very bad cheer and a sour face,  
 that's what you'll always get from them. 30  
 You greedy, nasty, petty people,  
 this world is but a transitory place:  
 you have so robbed it of all pleasure  
 that there is no play or laughter any more.  
 You'll profit far less from it 35  
 while you pile up riches, you fools.  
 No, I haven't got it right—you can't call that living,  
 what stingy folk do; they are all drunk,

Que, enbevré en Avarisse,  
 Qui est lor dame et lor norice, 40  
 Honor lor est si esloignie  
 Que il n'en ont une puignie. /  
 Doner, joster et tornoier,  
 Mances porter et dosnoier  
 Ont torné en fiens entasser; 45  
 Car qui violt avoir amasser,  
 Quant il n'en ist honors ne biens?  
 Assés valt certes mains que fiens.  
 Li fiens encrassce vials la terre,  
 Mais li avoires c'on entreserre 50  
 Honist celui ki l'i entasse.  
 S'il a .m. mars en une masse  
 Trestolt icho tient il a nient,  
 Et neporquant perdre le crient;  
 Et om qui crient n'est pas a ase, 55  
 Ains vit a dol et a mesaase.  
 Li avoires fait l'ome lanier,  
 Et sans preu faire travellier.  
 Il ne fait el fors soi sollier.  
 Si ne croit mie sa mollier: 60  
 Il n'a cure qu'ele le balle,  
 Car s'i faloit une maälle  
 Dont avroit il desparellié  
 Les .m. mars por cui a villié.  
 Ne sai que dire des haïs 65  
 Por cui cis siecles est traïs—  
 De honte ont mais lor cort enclose.  
 Chi n'a mestier metre de glose,  
 Car jo n'i fas nule sofime.  
 Jal savés vus tres bien meïsme: 70  
 Losenge est mais en cort oïe,  
 Amee i est et conjoïe.  
 Ens el prologhe de ma rime  
 Grans volentés me point et lime.  
 Il me prent moult grans maltalens 75  
 Qu'a force se honist la gens.  
 Ainz que jo m'uevre vus commence,  
 M'estuet un petit que jo tence  
 Por moi deduire en bien penser,  
 Car jo me voel tost desivrer, 80  
 Que quant venra al conte dire

intoxicated with Avarice,  
 their sovereign lady and wet nurse. 40  
 Honor is so scarce with them  
 that they haven't a fistful of it.  
 Generosity, jousting and tourneying,  
 wearing ladies' sleeves and making love  
 have turned to heaping up mounds of dung. 45  
 What good does it do one to pile up wealth  
 if no good or honor issues from it?  
 Assets are worth much less than manure:  
 at least dung enriches the soil,  
 but the wealth that is locked away 50  
 is a disgrace to the man who hoards it.  
 If a man amasses a thousand marks,  
 he soon thinks this is nothing,  
 and yet he's afraid of losing it.  
 And a man afraid is not at peace, 55  
 he is miserable and ill at ease.  
 Wealth only makes a man mean-spirited  
 and makes him toil without profit.  
 All he does is soil himself.  
 He doesn't trust his wife any more: 60  
 he doesn't want her to spend any of it,  
 for one missing penny  
 would mar the perfection of  
 those thousand marks he lost sleep over.  
 I don't know what to say of those hateful men 65  
 who thus abuse this earthly life—  
 thye have enclosed their courts with shame forever.  
 There's no need to supply a gloss for this,  
 for I don't deal in sophistry.  
 Indeed, you yourselves know very well 70  
 that False Praise is preferred at court,  
 she is cherished and enjoyed there.  
 In this prologue to my poem  
 I feel tremendously compelled, stung, goaded [into talking  
 about this].  
 It bothers me terribly 75  
 that people are driven to disgrace themselves.  
 Before I begin my story for you,  
 I really have to let it all out a little  
 in order to get into the proper frame of mind.  
 I want to get it all out of my system beforehand, 80  
 so that when it's time to tell the tale,

N'ait en moi rien qui m'uevre empire.  
 Or dirai donques ma gorgie.  
 Mar fust la morjoie\* ainc forgie  
 Dont sont honi tant roi, tant conte, 85  
 Tant chevalier, n'en sai le conte.  
 Avere gent! ahi! ahi!  
 Par Avarisse estes traï!  
 Lassciés ester et dites fi,  
 U, se cho non, jo vos desfi. / 90  
 Formens valt miols de gargherie,  
 Et rosse miols de margerie,  
 Et l'ostoirs de falcon muier,  
 Et li falcons miols del bruhier,  
 Et bons vins miols d'aigue awapie, 95  
 Et li butors miols de la pie:  
 Autant valt povertés honeste  
 Miols de .m. mars sans joie et feste,  
 Et volentés gentils et france  
 Qu'avens a iestre et rois de France. 100  
 Ausi valt miols honors de honte.  
 Dé or revenrai a mon conte  
 De mon prologhe faire point,  
 Car moult grans volentés me point  
 De muevre rime et commencer, 105  
 Sans noise faire, et sans tenchier.

Ebans fu ja rois d'Engletiere,  
 Si maintint bien en pais la terre.  
 Fors solement le roi Artu  
 N'i ot ainc rien de sa vertu 110  
 Ens el roiaime des Englois.  
 Li siens conmans n'ert pas jenglois,  
 Car n'avoit home ens el roiaime,  
 De Wincestre trosqu'a Durame,  
 S'il osast son conmant enfreindre 115  
 Nel fesist en sa cartre enpaindre,  
 Par tel covant n'a droit n'a tort  
 N'en issist point trosqu'a la mort.  
 Il ot justice en sa ballie;  
 La soie gens n'ert pas fallie. 120  
 Il maintenoit chevalerie,  
 Si sostenoit bachelerie  
 Nient par falose mais par dons.  
 Par lor service et en pardons

there'll be nothing left in me to spoil the telling.  
 So now I'm going to get it off my chest!  
 Cursed be the day the strongbox was ever forged,  
 for which so many kings and counts 85  
 have disgraced themselves I can't keep count.  
 O greedy people, alas! alas!  
 You are betrayed by Avarice!  
 Let her be and say fie upon her,  
 for if you don't, I will defy you. 90  
 Just as wheat is worth more than weeds,  
 and rose worth more than daisy,  
 and goshawk more than molted falcon,  
 and falcon more than buzzard,  
 and good wine more than stagnant water, 95  
 and bittern more than magpie,  
 so honest poverty is of greater worth  
 than a thousand marks without joy and festivity,  
 and it's better to be gracious and frank  
 than to be stingy and King of France. 100  
 Just so is honor worth more than shame.  
 Now I will return to my tale  
 and end my prologue at this point,  
 for I feel a tremendous urge  
 to begin to tell my story 105  
 without a lot of fuss and bother.

Once upon a time Evan was king of England.  
 He maintained peace in his land;  
 with the sole exeption of King Arthur,  
 there never was his equal 110  
 in the land of the English.  
 His rules were not just idle talk—  
 there wasn't a man in his kingdom,  
 from Winchester to Durham,  
 whom he wouldn't have thrown in jail 115  
 if he dared to break his law,  
 on such terms that, right or wrong,  
 he wouldn't get out till he was dead.  
 He upheld justice in his realm;  
 his people were no criminals. 120  
 He maintained chivalry  
 and sustained young warriors  
 by gifts, not empty promises.  
 For their service and gratuitously

Lor dona il tols jors assés. 125  
 N'ert pas de bien faire lassés:  
 Son cho qu'il erent de valoir  
 Les honera et dona loir.  
 Del sien lor donoit liëment  
 Et moult apparelliëment; 130  
 Car cho doit cascuns prodome faire:  
*Doner et garder\** cui retraire.  
 Si violt doner moult liëment,  
 Car ki done derriänment  
 Il n'i a gré, ains piert son don 135  
 Et plus avoec, son los, son non:  
 Si venroit il miols escondire,  
 Mais en prodome n'a que dire. /

Moult ot prodome en roi Ebain  
 Ki ot les Englois en se main. 140  
 Il ensauça tols ses amis.  
 A grant anor si les a mis  
 Et quant cho vint al grant besoing  
 Sel misent moult bien fors del soing.  
 Cho parut moult bien al roi Bege 145  
 Ki tint la tiere de Norwege.\*  
 De lui et del roi d'Engletiere  
 Dura moult longues une guerre,  
 Et sorst par petite oquoison.  
 Puis en arst on mainte maison, 150  
 Tante vile en fu mise en flamme,  
 Et colpé tant pié, tante hance,  
 Et tante gens caitive espars  
 Dont la contreë en est arse  
 Que nel vos puis demi conter. 155  
 Li mals se prist si a monter  
 Que Norouege en fu priés gaste,  
 Atainte de fain et de laste.  
 Et morte en fu la gens menue  
 Et li autre priés confundue 160  
 Quant des prodomes li plus sage  
 Esgarderent un mariäge  
 D'Ebain, qu'il ont trové felon,  
 Et de la fille al roi Begon.  
 La fille Beghe ot non Enfeme: 165  
 El mont n'avoit plus bieles gemmes.  
 Dient [al roi] qu'ont esgardé.

he gave them plenty every day. 125  
 He never tired of doing the right thing.  
 Aside from any question of their worth,  
 he honored them and gave them gifts.  
 He gave freely and unstintingly  
 of his possessions, 130  
 and that is what every wise man should do:  
 give and be careful about taking things back.  
 He must be willing to give gladly,  
 for he who hesitates to give  
 receives no thanks; on the contrary, he loses his gift 135  
 and more than that—his fame and reputation:  
 he would do better to refuse.  
 But a wise man is above reproach.

This King Evan who ruled over the English  
 was a very wise man indeed. 140  
 He enriched all his friends  
 and placed them in positions of great honor,  
 so that when the hour of greatest need came,  
 they got him out of any trouble.  
 This was quite clear to King Begon,\* 145  
 who held the realm of Norway.  
 Between him and the king of England  
 a war had lasted a very long time.  
 It began over something trivial;  
 then many houses were set on fire, 150  
 and so many cities were put to the torch,  
 and so many feet and haunches sliced,  
 and so many people wretchedly scattered,  
 that the country was so devastated  
 I can't tell you the half of it. 155  
 The damage began to mount up so  
 that Norway was nearly destroyed,  
 afflicted with hunger and misery.  
 The lower classes had died of it,  
 and the others were almost finished off, 160  
 when the wisest of the counselors  
 thought of arranging a marriage  
 between Evan, whom they had found a dreadful foe,  
 and the daughter of King Begon.  
 Begon's daughter was named Eufeme: 165  
 the world never held such a beautiful gem.  
 They told the king what they had in mind.

Il lor respont: "Segnor, par Dé,  
 Par vostre conseil li donrai,  
 Ma fille; et si l'en somonrai,  
 Por acorde et por aliãce, 170  
 Qe la pais soië a fiãce."

Rois Beghes fait Ebain savoir  
 S'il violt qu'il puet sa fille avoir  
 Por acordance de la guerre, 175  
 Et qu'il ait mis en pais la terre.  
 Quant il l'entent, si est haitiës.  
 Respont as mës com afaitiës:  
 "Or ai ge moult bien guerriïé  
 Et bien mon travail emploïé 180  
 Se jo a feme puis avoir;  
 Il n'a el mont si chier avoir,  
 Que jo tant aim et tant desir  
 Par us d'eglise od li gesir.  
 Piece a l'amors de li me point." 185  
 Dient si home: "Dex le doinst/  
 Qu'encor l'aiës en vo saisine,  
 Car moult est franche la mescine."  
 "Et voire soi," cho dist Ebains,  
 "Ne ruis el mont ne plus ne mains." 190

Li rois ne s'est pas atargiës.  
 Ses briës a ses cot/iüs\* cargiës.  
 Envoie por .ii. archevesques,  
 Por son clergië, por ses evesques;  
 Mande barons, contes palais, 195  
 Car il ne finera jamais  
 S'ara esposé la puciele  
 Dont a oïe la noviele.  
 Il fait apparellier ses nës,  
 Ses mas, ses sigles et ses trës; 200  
 Et mettre i fait et amasser  
 Quanqu'est mestiers por mer passer,  
 Que quant cil venront que il mande  
 Es nës truissent preste viãde.  
 Atant s'i viennent li mandé, 205  
 Car li rois l'avoit comandé.  
 Et quant il furent tolt emsanble,  
 Li rois lor dist cho que lui samble  
 Qu'a mollier prendra la Noroise.

He replied to them, "Lords, by God,  
 I'll follow your advice and give him my daughter,  
 and I will tell him I'm ready to do so, 170  
 in exchange for accord and alliance,  
 so that peace may be guaranteed."

King Begon let King Evan know  
 that he could have his daughter if he wished,  
 on condition that he end the war 175  
 and leave the land in peace.

When Evan heard this, he was overjoyed,  
 and replied to the messengers like the well-bred man he was,  
 "Now I have fought a good fight indeed: 180  
 it was well worth the hard work

if I can have this woman to wife,  
 for there is no greater treasure on earth;  
 I want and desire above all  
 to wed her and bed her properly.

I have suffered long for love of her." 185

His men said, "May God grant  
 that you get possession of her,  
 for the girl comes from a very good family."  
 "And may it be so," said Evan,  
 "That is the only thing in the world I want." 190

The king didn't delay.  
 He charged his messengers with letters.  
 He sent for two archbishops,  
 for his clergy, for his bishops;  
 he sent for barons, counts of the palace, 195  
 for he would never be at rest

until he married the girl  
 he has had such welcome news of.

He had his ships made ready,  
 masts and sails and spars, 200  
 and had collected and placed there

whatever was needed for an ocean voyage,  
 so that when those he had summoned arrived,  
 they would find provisions ready aboard the ships.  
 Then those whom the king had summoned came, 205  
 for he had so commanded.

And when they were all assembled,  
 the king told then he was planning  
 to marry the Norwegian princess.

Il n'i a celui cui en poise, 210  
 Qu'avoir en cuident grant redos  
 Et de la guerre estre en repos  
 Ains dient: "Sire, bien sarons  
 Ains .xv. dis se nos l'arons."  
 "Vostre merchi," li rois a dit. 215  
 "Vos en avrés moult grant porfit.  
 Apparelliés vos donc en oïre,  
 Car bien matin tenrés vostre oïre.  
 Atornés vos endementiers."  
 Cil li respondent: "Volentiers." 220

Al matinet .ii. archevesque  
 Entrent es nés et .iiii. evesque,  
 .ii. duc avoec et .iiii. conte.  
 Que valt, segnor, d'aslongier conte?  
 Li maronier en mer s'espagnent, 225  
 Et de l'exploitier ne se fangnent.  
 Tant font qu'il vienent e[n] Norwege.  
 Contre aus al port fu li rois Bege  
 Et sa fille Enfeme lor charge,  
 C'onques plus longe n'i atarge. 230  
 Cil prennent la fille al Norois  
 Et maint cheval avoec morois,  
 Et ors et ostoïrs et lyons.  
 Ne sai que plus vos en dions./  
 Cange li vens, si s'en retournent, 235  
 C'onques plus longues n'i sojornent.  
 En Engletiere prennent port.  
 Li rois Ebains n'a nient de tort  
 De cho qu'il vint contre sa drue.  
 Quant il le vit, gent le salue; 240  
 Cele li rent moult biel salu,  
 Cho a le roi moult bien valu.  
 Li rois demeure a li baisier  
 Et puis sil fait bien aäsier,  
 Car son cuer ot un poi amer 245  
 De la lasté et de la mer.  
 Tier jor apriés l'a esposee,  
 Car forment l'avoit golosee.  
 Noces i ot grans et plenieres  
 Oð més et daintiés de manieres, 250  
 Ne sai que conte la despende,  
 Car plus i ot que nus ne pense.

No one was opposed to this, 210  
 for they thought they would have great relief  
 and respite from war.  
 And so they said, "Sire, we'll know  
 within two weeks whether she's ours or not."  
 "My thanks to you all," the king said, 215  
 "you shall benefit greatly from this.  
 So now prepare yourselves quickly,  
 for you shall set out early tomorrow morning.  
 In the meantime, get ready."  
 They replied, "Gladly." 220

At the crack of dawn, two archbishops  
 and four bishops boarded the ships,  
 together with two dukes and four counts.  
 My lords, what's the use of prolonging the story?  
 The sailors set out upon the sea, 225  
 and made every effort to make good time,  
 so that they arrived in Norway.  
 King Begon awaited them at the port  
 and entrusted his daughter Eufeme to them  
 without further delay. 230  
 They took the Norwegian king's daughter  
 and many black horses as well,  
 and bears and fowlers and lions, too.  
 I don't know what else to tell you.  
 As soon as the wind changed, they returned; 235  
 they didn't stay there any longer.  
 They reached the English port.  
 King Evan omitted none of the niceties  
 when he came to greet his beloved.  
 When he saw her, he greeted her gallantly; 240  
 she returned his greeting courteously,  
 which was most pleasing to the king.  
 The king lingered to kiss her  
 and then saw to her comfort,  
 for her heart was a little bitter 245  
 from the tiring journey across the sea.  
 Three days later he married her,  
 for he had yearned for her a long time.  
 The wedding was magnificent,  
 with all kinds of elegant and dainty dishes. 250  
 I don't know how much it cost—  
 more than anyone could imagine.

Les noces durent .xii. mois,  
 Car tels estoit adonc lor lois.  
 Entiere avoit adonques joie; 255  
 Mais li aver, cui Dex renoie,  
 Ont enpirie la costume.  
 Grans maltalens m'art et alume  
 Qu'il l'ont cangie et remuee.  
 Car fust la pute gens tuee 260  
 Par cui honors est abascie,  
 Et li plus halt [qui] l'ont lascie —  
 Si ne vivent mais c'un poi d'eure,  
 Mais li diâbles lor cort seure!  
 Il vivent mais que faire suelent, 265  
 Et por quant com plus ont plus welent.  
 Certes, j'en ai moult grant engagne.  
 Ausi est d'auls com de l'aragne:  
 El ordist tel,\* painne et labore;  
 Et si se point ne voit on l'ore 270  
 Enmi sa toile qu'a ordi,  
 Si font li pusnais esdordi  
 Et clerc et lai et conte et duc  
 S'enprendre, mois ne altre buc.  
 Cui caut? Car trop i a a dire: 275  
 Repairier voel a ma matyre.  
 Grans fu la fieste en Engletiere.  
 Atant vint uns cuens en la tiere  
 Ki avoit .iii. filles jumieles.  
 .jj. conte esposent les puchieles. 280  
 Cho dist cascuns qu'il\* a l'ainsnee;  
 Por quant li uns a la mainsnee./  
 Mellee i ot por son avoir,  
 Car cascuns [violt] la terre avoir.  
 Li uns le violt par mi partir; 285  
 Li autres dist qu'il iert martyr  
 Et vis recreäns en batalle  
 Ançois qu'il a plain pié i falle.  
 Cui caut? Li plais a tant alé  
 Que jor ont pris de camp malé. 290  
 Par l'esgart de cels del païs,  
 Del roi, de ses barons naïs,  
 A Cestre fu li jors només:  
 La sera li plais assomés.  
 Li jors fu d'ambes pars tenus, 295  
 Car cascuns i est bel venus.

The wedding festivities went on for a year:  
 that was the custom in those days,  
 they lived life to the fullest then. 255  
 But avaricious men—God curse them—  
 have spoiled the old ways.  
 I'm really incensed  
 to think they've changed things so!  
 I'd really like to kill the bastards 260  
 who have so abased honor.  
 And as for those of highest rank who have abandoned it—  
 they only live a short time anyhow,  
 and with the devil always on their tail at that!  
 They live less well than they used to, 265  
 and yet the more they have, the more they want.  
 This really makes me very angry.  
 It's as if they were caught by a spider:  
 thus she stretches her web, labors and works;  
 and just as one doesn't see the design 270  
 that she has worked into her web,  
 the dazzled stinking fools are trapped,  
 cleric and layman and count and duke,  
 no less than any other dupe.  
 What's the use? There's too much too say. 275  
 I want to get back to my story.  
 The festivities in England were magnificent.  
 Then a count with twin daughters  
 came to the land.  
 Two counts married the girls. 280  
 Each one claimed to have the older,  
 but one of the two must have had the younger.  
 There was a quarrel over the inheritance,  
 for both of them wanted to have the land.  
 One wanted to share it equally; 285  
 the other said he would be a martyr  
 and vile coward in battle  
 before he would yield an inch of it.  
 Why say more? The case went so far  
 that they set a date for hand-to-hand combat 290  
 to be judged by the nobles of the country,  
 the king and his native barons.  
 The trial was set for Chester;  
 there the case would be decided.  
 The appointed date was kept by both parties; 295  
 each arrived in good time.

Li rois, li baron s'entremettent  
 Del acorder et painne i mettent.  
 Mais cil s'aficent d'ambes pars,  
 Que niënt ne valt lor esgars. 300  
 Et sunt andoi par lor pechié  
 En la batalle si blecié  
 Qu'il en sunt mort par lor verté.  
 Ne cil ne cil ne l'oï reté.  
 Ki donc veïst duel enforcier! 305  
 Alquant se voelent esgrocier  
 Por duel des contes et ocire.  
 Or a li rois Ebayns grant ire.  
 "Ahi! ahi!" fait il. "Chaïeles!  
 Quel duel por .ii. orphenes pucies! 310  
 Que mes barons en ai perdus  
 J'en sui certes moult esperdus:  
 Mais, par le foi que doi Saint Pere,  
 Ja feme n'iert mais iretere  
 Ens el roïame s'Engletiere, 315  
 Por tant com j'aie a tenir tiere.  
 Et c'en iert ore la venjance  
 De ceste nostre mezestance."  
 L'asise fait a tols jurer  
 Por bien le sairement durer. 320  
 Alquant le font ireëment  
 Et li plusor moult liëment,  
 Qui n'en donroïent une tille.  
 Mais cil qui n'a mais une fille  
 Et a ballier grant teneüre, 325  
 Cuidiés qu'il n'ait al cuer rancure?  
 Li rois fait les mors enterrer,  
 En .ii. sarqus bien enserrer.  
 Ecrire i fait: "Par covoitise  
 Tolt a maint home sa francise, / 330  
 Et plus avoec — quant s'i amort  
 Troter le fait jusque a la mort."  
 Li rois n'i violt plus demorer.  
 Li vif lasscent les mors ester,  
 Qu'autre confort n'en puet on faire. 335  
 Cascuns s'en vait a son repaire.

Li rois Ebayns se part de Cestre  
 Et si s'en vint viers Eurincestre.  
 Dont ert castials, or est cités.

The king and his barons did their best  
 to arbitrate and reach an agreement,  
 but both parties were adamant,  
 so negotiations came to nothing. 300  
 Each one had the bad luck  
 to be so severely wounded in the fight  
 that they both died trying to prove themselves right.  
 Neither one nor the other could prove his claim.  
 Then one could see sorrow increased! 305  
 Some wanted to start fights and do more killing  
 out of grief at the counts' death.  
 Then King Evan flew into a terrible rage.  
 "Oh! Oh!" he cried, "Great heavens!  
 What a loss on account of two orphaned girls! 310  
 What a way to lose good men —  
 I am certainly very upset about this.  
 But by the faith I owe Saint Peter,  
 no woman shall ever inherit again  
 in the kingdom of England 315  
 as long as I reign over the land.  
 And this will be the penalty  
 for the loss we have suffered."  
 He had everyone swear to uphold the decree,  
 to confirm the validity of the oath. 320  
 Some did it in anger,  
 but most did it quite gladly —  
 the ones who had nothing to lose.  
 But as for those who had only daughters  
 and huge holdings to bequeath, 325  
 don't you think their hearts were filled with rancor?  
 The king had the dead men properly buried,  
 laid to rest in two solid tombs.  
 On each of them he had inscribed:  
 "Greed has robbed many a man of his freedom, 330  
 and more than that if he gets hooked —  
 she makes him trot till he is dead."  
 The king didn't want to stay any longer;  
 the living left the dead in peace,  
 since they could give them no other comfort, 335  
 and everyone left for home.

King Evan left Chester  
 and headed for Winchester.  
 Winchester was a castle then; now it is a city.

Forjes i a d'antiquités. 340  
 Illuec sojorne la roïne,  
 Od li mainte france mescine.  
 Li rois i vait grant aleüre.  
 Oiés mervellose aventure!  
 A cho qu'il passent par le bos, 345  
 Si vint uns serpens grans et gros  
 Par le foriest viers als siflant,  
 Et li alquant s'en vont ciflant,  
 Tant qu'il se fiert ens en la rote  
 Et point les o sa choe et tolte.\* 350  
 Geite venim parmi la bouche:  
 Honist et tue quanque touche.  
 Li serpens vole entor a rue.  
 N'i a un qui estordre en pue  
 Se Dex quis forma nes garist. 355  
 L[i] rois Ebayns fort s'esmarist.  
 Li serpens vole tolt entor,  
 Et, quant il a parfait son tor,  
 Fu lor espant par les narines  
 Ki des chevaux bruist les eschines. 360  
 Apriés le fu geite fumiere  
 Ki lor encombre le lumiere,  
 Si qu'il ne pueënt veïr goute.  
 Or a li rois Ebains grant doute.  
 Li serpens lor en tue .xxx. 365  
 Li rois se trait viers une sente  
 Amont el bos, deviers le vent,  
 Por le bruïne quis soprent.  
 Li altre vont apriés batant,  
 Et li serpens remest atant: 370  
 Manguë les mors, sis devore.  
 Et li rois Ebayns plaint et plore.  
  
 Li .xxx. sunt el bos estraint,\*  
 Et li rois a son duel estraint.  
 Dist a sa gent: "Quel le feron? 375  
 S'a tant remaint, honi seron  
 Se nos ensi nos en tornomes.  
 Mais s'il i a nul de mes homes  
 Ki le serpent osast requerre,  
 Si le peüst vaintre et conquerre, 380  
 Qu'en lui eüst tant de bonté,  
 Jo li donroie une conté:

There are smithies there from ancient times. 340  
 The queen was in residence there,  
 and with her many noble damsels.  
 The king was traveling there at top speed.  
 But wait till you hear the amazing thing that happened then!  
 While they were passing through the woods, 345  
 a great big dragon came  
 whistling through the forest towards them.  
 They were ambling along, joking and chatting,  
 when it rushed into the midst of their company  
 and stung them with its tail and grabbed them. 350  
 It spewed forth venom from its mouth  
 that harmed and killed whomever it touched.  
 The dragon flew about in circles.  
 Not one of them will be able to escape  
 unless God who made them saves them! 355  
 King Evan was greatly disconcerted.  
 The dragon flew around and around,  
 and when it had finished its rounds,  
 it threw forth flames from its nostrils  
 that charred the horses' backs. 360  
 After the flames it breathed clouds of smoke  
 that hid the light from view,  
 so that they could scarcely see a thing.  
 Now King Evan was really worried.  
 The dragon killed thirty of his men. 365  
 The king headed for a path  
 that led above the woods, upwind,  
 because of the fumes that were stifling them.  
 The others followed him, still fighting.  
 Then the dragon stopped and took a break: 370  
 it ate the dead, gobbled them up.  
 And King Evan wept and lamented.  
  
 Those thirty men in the woods were done for.  
 The king restrained his grief somewhat  
 and said to his men, "What shall we do? 375  
 If things stay like this, we shall be disgraced  
 if we return home in such a state.  
 But if there is any man among you  
 who dares to take on the dragon.  
 and if he overcomes and kills it, 380  
 if he is valiant enough to do this,  
 I will give him a county

Et feme li lairai coisir  
 En mon roïame par loisir. 385  
 Ki miols li plaira, celi prengne,  
 Mais solement soit sans calenge."  
 N'i a nul ki ost mot soner,  
 Por quanque il promet a doner,  
 Por quanque il sot dire et canter,  
 Qui del envaïr s'ost vanter. 390  
 Un vallet o le roi avoit,  
 Cador le preu, ki moult savoit.  
 Il ert li plus vallans de tols,  
 Li plus amés et li plus prols.  
 Cil amoit moult une meschine 395  
 Ki venue ert a la roïne.  
 Fille ert Renalt de Cornuälle.  
 N'a feme el regne qui li valle.  
 Li cuens n'avoit enfant que li:  
 Tols ses païs en abeli, 400  
 Qu'el mont n'avoit plus bele mie,  
 Et si l'apielent Eufemie.  
 Des .vii. ars ert moult bien aprise,  
 D'amer Cador forment esprise.  
 Cil l'aime et dire ne li oze, 405  
 Ainz a s'amor si fort encloze  
 Que nuz ne l'aperçoit en lui.  
 Tant suefre Cador fortre anui.  
 Li fus sans flame bruïst plus  
 Que se flame en issçoit u fus: 410  
 Si fait amors, que li covierte  
 Agoisse plus que li aperte.  
 Amors tolt Cador l'esmaier:  
 Il se volra ja assaier.  
 Del roi se part moult bielement: 415  
 El bos se pert isnielement.  
 Un escuier qu'a plus sené  
 A son cheval od lui mené:  
 Ne violt qu'altres fors Deu le sace.  
 Descent el bos en une place. 420  
 Il fait ses armes apporter,  
 Qu'il ne s'en puet preu deporter.  
 Arme soi tost et kiolt aïr,  
 Car le serpent volt envaïr.  
 Ne violt la longues demorer; 425  
 Comence Deu moult a orer. /

and I will let him have his choice  
 of any woman in the kingdom.  
 Let him take the one he likes best, 385  
 except, of course, if she's already pledged."  
 Nobody dared to utter a word,  
 no matter how much he promised to give,  
 no matter how much he cajoled and wheedled,  
 nobody dared boast that he would attack it. 390  
 But the king had a young follower,  
 Cador the brave, an accomplished youth.  
 He was the bravest knight of all,  
 the best-loved and most valiant.  
 He was very much in love with a girl 395  
 who had come to serve the queen.  
 She was the daughter of Renald of Cornwall.  
 Not a woman in the realm was her equal.  
 She was the count's only child,  
 the crowning glory of his estates, 400  
 the most beautiful girl in the world,  
 and they called her Eufemie.  
 She was well versed in the seven arts,  
 and she was deeply in love with Cador,  
 who loved her and did not dare to say it. 405  
 He hid his love so deep inside  
 that no one could perceive it in him.  
 Cador suffered anguish all the more,  
 for fire without flame burns more fiercely  
 than if flame and fire issue from it. 410  
 That is the nature of covert love:  
 it hurts much worse than when out in the open.  
 Love took Cador's fear from him.  
 He would be ready to prove himself immediately.  
 He contrived to disappear from the king's sight 415  
 and vanished into the woods at once.  
 A squire more seasoned than most  
 brought him his horse:  
 he didn't want anyone but God to know.  
 He went to a certain spot in the woods, 420  
 and had his arms brought to him there,  
 for he could hardly fight without them.  
 At once he was armed and ready to do battle,  
 for he wanted to attack the dragon.  
 He didn't want to wait around for long. 425  
 He began to pray fervently to God:\*

“Bials sire Dex, ki formas home,  
 Ki peça por mangier la pome;  
 Et del tien saint avenement  
 Fesis par angele anoncement; 430  
 Et en le Virgene te mesis,  
 Humanité en li presis;  
 Por nos, bials Sire, te bassas.  
 Com ains fu, virgene le lassas;  
 Et circoncis fus tu apriés, 435  
 Que Judeu font encor adiés;  
 Et el flum Jordan baptiziés,  
 Li cresmes i fu envoiés  
 Del ciel, tés fu ta volentés.  
 Puis fus el temple presentés, 440  
 Et geūnas por nos pechiés,  
 Car enemis nos ot bleciés;  
 Des Juïs fus vilment penés,  
 Et en le crois a mort penés,  
 Car nostre lois est tels escrite 445  
 Que tu en as la mort eslite  
 Por faire satisfatiōn  
 Contre nostre dampnatiōn.  
 Angeles nel puet faire a delivre  
 Car prendre, morir et puis vivre, 450  
 Et s'angeles eüst, bials dols sire,  
 Por nos sofiert en crois martyre,  
 (Mais jo sai bien cho ne puet estre)  
 Qui seroit donques nostre miestre,\*  
 Et volroit avoir signorie 455  
 Sor nos et grant avoërie.  
 Et tu avoies dit que hom  
 Seroit d'altresi grant renom  
 Come li plus haus de tes anges  
 Et qu'il seroit pers as archa[n]geles, 460  
 Et home et angele en un leu  
 T'aoërroiënt come Deu.  
 Por cho t'estiūt nos rachater,  
 Morir et puis resusciter:  
 Cho ne puet nus faire sans toi. 465  
 Ta vertus soit hui dedens moi!  
 Tolt cho fesis tu sans dotance.  
 Si com c'est, Sire, me creānce,  
 Issi me soies tu aidiere  
 Encontre ceste beste fiere! 470

"Dearest Lord God, who made mankind,  
 who sinned through eating the apple,  
 and announced your blessed coming  
 by means of an angel, 430  
 and placed yourself within the Virgin,  
 taking on human form in her—  
 for us, sweet Lord, you humbled yourself.  
 Virgin she was, virgin you left her;  
 and you were circumcized thereafter, 435  
 as the Jews still do today,  
 and baptized in the river Jordan,  
 for which the chrism was sent  
 from heaven, such was your will.  
 Then you were presented in the temple. 440  
 You did penance for our sins,  
 for our enemy had wounded us.  
 You were vilely misused by the Jews  
 and put to death on the cross,  
 for it is written in our law 445  
 that you elected to suffer death  
 to make satisfaction  
 for our damnation.  
 An angel couldn't have done it freely—  
 become flesh, die and live again— 450  
 and if an angel had, dear Lord,  
 suffered martyrdom on the cross for us,  
 (but I know this cannot be)  
 he would then be our master,  
 and would wish to have power 455  
 and complete dominion over us.  
 But you had said that man  
 would have such renown  
 as the highest of your angels  
 and would be equal to the archangels, 460  
 and man and angel would adore  
 you as God on equal footing.  
 For that reason you had to redeem us,  
 die and be resurrected:  
 no one but you could do it. 465  
 May your strength be within me today!  
 All this you did without hesitation.  
 As truly as this is my belief, Lord,  
 be my aid in like manner  
 against this ferocious beast. 470

Sainiés soie de vertu Deu!  
 N'est pas creānce de Judeu!"  
 Saut el cheval, moult bien a armes  
 Et prent l'escu par les enarmes. /  
 Çainte a l'espee ki bien talle, 475  
 Reciut son dart, dist: "Dex i valle!"  
 Li chevals saut entre les cesnes.  
 Il li a acorcié les resnes.  
 Viers le serpent vint une voie  
 Tolt coiēment que il ne l'oie, 480  
 Car ne li violt pas faire cuivre  
 Ainz qu'il le voīs[t] del sanc ivre.  
 Il voit le serpent ja si fars  
 De ces mors homes demis ars  
 Qu'il vait ja faisant un dangier 485  
 De boivre sanc, de car mangier.  
 Anchois qu'il ait Cadors veü  
 L'a Cadors de son dart feru  
 Que l'une joë li desserre.  
 Li serpens vint Cadors requere. 490  
 Fiert le ceval u il sist sus  
 Qu'il l'esboiele. Cil chiet jus  
 Sor le serpent, por poi nel crieve.  
 Et Cadors d'autre part se lieve,  
 Recuevre en meësme l'eure. 495  
 Trait a le blanc, se li cort seure,  
 Trence l'eschine par mi oltre.  
 Et li serpens el sanc se woltre,  
 Et brait et crie; et li rois l'ot,  
 Et dist adonc un cortois mot: 500  
 "Ba! Ust Cadors li amorols?  
 Set le, va! nus? ne vos, ne nols?"  
 Cho dist li rois: "Sainte Marie!  
 Com est ma gens hui esmarie!  
 Com ele est hui mal atornee! 505  
 Las! com ai fait pesme jornee!  
 Se Cadors perc ensorquetolt,  
 Dont sui jo bien honis del tolt!"  
 L'escuiers Cadors dist: "Bials sire,  
 Se jo le vos osoie dire, 510  
 Au serpent est alés, par foi,  
 Cadors li pros, mais nient par moi."  
 Li rois le cheval esporone  
 E les resnes li abandone.

May I be strengthened by God's power!  
 This is not the creed of a Jew."  
 He leapt to his horse, he was well armed,  
 he took his shield by both its straps,  
 he girt his sword that strikes so well, 475  
 he took his lance and said, "God prevail!"  
 The horse leapt forward between the oaks,  
 he drew the reins up short.  
 He made his way toward the dragon  
 very quietly, so that it wouldn't hear him, 480  
 for he didn't want to attack it  
 until he saw it drunk with blood.  
 He saw the dragon already so stuffed  
 with those half-charred dead men  
 that it was already having trouble 485  
 drinking blood and eating flesh.  
 Before it caught sight of Cador,  
 he had struck it with his lance  
 so that one jowl was torn open.  
 The dragon came after Cador. 490  
 It struck the horse on which he sat  
 and disemboweled it. Cador fell right  
 near the dragon, who nearly skewered him.  
 But Cador got right up again  
 and rallied at once. 495  
 He drew his sword, rushed at the dragon,  
 and sliced its spine completely through.  
 The dragon weltered in its blood  
 and brayed and shrieked. The king heard this  
 and then exclaimed in a courtly manner: 500  
 "Oh! Where is my beloved Cador?  
 Who knows? No one? Nobody at all?"  
 (thus the king spoke) "Holy Mary!  
 How distraught my men are today!  
 How badly things have turned out for them! 505  
 Lord, I've had a dreadful day.  
 If I lose Cador on top of everything,  
 that will be the absolute height of misfortune."  
 Cador's squire said, "Good Sir,  
 if I may make so bold as to tell you, 510  
 truly, Cador the brave has gone to seek the dragon,  
 but it isn't my fault."  
 The king spurred his horse onward  
 and gave it free rein.

U soit a vivre u a morir 515  
 Cadors verra qu'il fist norir.  
 Trestolt est ja fait del serpent.  
 Li rois est a demi arpent,  
 Se li escrie: "Amis! amis!  
 Com ceste beste vos a mis 520  
 A grant torment, ma gent et toi!  
 Ne sai que faire, las, de moi!"  
 Cadors l'entent et dist: "Venés,  
 Et vostre gent i amenés."  
 Li rois i vint avoec sa gent; 525  
 Et Cadors, qui le cors a gent,  
 De son serpent suivre la tieste.  
 Cil criement moult le morte bieste.  
 La tiest met en son sa lance.  
 Al roi a dit: "Me covenance, 530  
 Car li serpens est mors par moi!"  
 "Et vos l'arés, bials niés, par foi."

Del serpent moult grant joie funt.  
 La tieste o auls porté en ont.  
 Li rois a puis tant exploitié 535  
 Et tant alé et tant coitié  
 Que al quart jor qu'il mut de Cestre  
 Vint de halte hore a Herincestre.  
 Tuit s'esmervellent de la tieste;  
 Del roi et des siens font grant fieste. 540  
 Cadors est forment bien venus  
 De cho que si est contenus.  
 Li rois en vint a la roïne  
 Et Cadors vait a la mescine  
 Por cui amors a travellié 545  
 Et mainte nuit longe vellié.  
 Entre la roïne et le roi  
 Mainnent grant joie et ont de quoi.  
 Cadors parole a Eufemie  
 Ki pas ne li est enemie, 550  
 Car se il li osast proier  
 Bien se lairoit amoloier.  
 Tost venroit a l'amor doner,  
 Mais n'i pensast de viloner.  
 El l'ainme moult, mais ne set pas. 555  
 Et het l'il dont de rien? Het? las!  
 Ja n'a il cose en nule terre

Whether he lives or dies, 515  
 he will seek Cador, whom he brought up.  
 The dragon was already dead.  
 The king was halfway down the slope.  
 He shouted to Cador, "My friend! My friend!  
 What terrible suffering this beast 520  
 has caused you and my men!  
 I don't know what to do, alas!"  
 Cador heard him and shouted, "Come here,  
 and bring your men with you."  
 The king came there with his men, 525  
 and Cador the handsome  
 severed the head of his dragon.  
 The others were very much afraid of the dead beast.  
 He put the head on the tip of his lance,  
 and said to the king, "Grant me a boon, 530  
 for I'm the one who killed the dragon."  
 "And you shall have it, dear nephew, upon my word."

All rejoiced greatly at the dragon's death.  
 They carried its head away with them.  
 Then the king made such haste 535  
 and traveled and pushed on so quickly  
 that on the fourth day after he had left Chester  
 he arrived in good time at Winchester.  
 Everyone marveled at the head.  
 They prepared a great feast for the king and his men. 540  
 Cador was given a very warm welcome  
 because of his valiant conduct.  
 The king went in to greet the queen  
 and Cador went to see the maiden 545  
 for whose love he had suffered so  
 and lain awake many a long night.  
 The king and queen are delighted,  
 and they have reason to be.  
 Cador speaks to Eufemie,  
 who is certainly not his enemy, 550  
 for if he dared to ask her,  
 she would let her heart be softened.  
 She would give herself at once,  
 provided that his intentions were honorable.  
 She loved him dearly, but he didn't know it. 555  
 And did he hate her at all? Hate? Alas!  
 There is nothing in the whole world

Qu'il amast tant, s'il l'osast quere.  
 Cho parut el bos de Malroi;  
 Et s'il nel rueve donc al roi 560  
 Puis qu'il puet feme prendre a choi,  
 Nel puet on bien tenir a mois?  
 Rover al roi? Ainme donc si?  
 La u se siet dejoste li,  
 Pense en son cuer que par halsage 565  
 Ne venra ja a mariäge;  
 Mais s'il s'aperçoit qu'el\* l'ait chier,  
 Et que son cuer n'ait viers lui fier,  
 Et que l'amor i quist trover,  
 Dont le volra al roi rover. / 570  
 Acointier le violt sans trestor  
 Que por s'amor sofrir estor;  
 Dont se porpense n'osera  
 Si tost, mais un poi soferra.

Li rois se colce quist lassés 575  
 Quant a mangié et but assés;  
 Et li pros Cador s'est colciés.  
 Grans mals li est al cuer tociés.  
 .j. petitet devant le jor  
 Il taint et plaint, mue color, 580  
 Par le venim, par le fumiere,  
 Que li gieta la bieste fiere.  
 Uns camberlens, qui a non Ades,  
 A dit al roi qu'il est malades.  
 Il n'oï noviele en l'an nule 585  
 Dont tant li pesast. Tost s'afulle  
 Et vint corant ens en la sale  
 Et voit Cador et taint et pale.  
 Quant il le vit issi ataint  
 D'ansdeus ses bras l'acole et çaint. 590  
 Fiert soi el pis, ses mains detuert,  
 Si a tel dol por poi ne muert.  
 Envoie lués por Eufemie:  
 El país n'a si sage mie.  
 Et ele i vint moult tost en haste. 595  
 Ses bras manie, son pols taste,  
 Puis dist al roi qu'el\* le garra  
 Ainz .xv. jors qu'il n'i parra.  
 "Et jo vos donrai riche don,  
 Amie, et moult gent gueredon." 600

he would love more, if only he dared to ask.  
 This was clear in the woods of Malroi.  
 And if he doesn't ask her of the king, 560  
 now that he has his choice of wife,  
 won't he look the perfect fool!  
 Ask her of the king? Is this how he loves her?  
 There, seated beside her,  
 he thought in his heart that such haughty behavior 565  
 would never persuade her to marry him.  
 But if he perceives that she likes him,  
 and that her heart is not proud toward him,  
 and that he might find love in there,  
 he will ask her of the king. 570  
 He wants to tell her without delay  
 that he is suffering terribly for love of her.  
 But he won't do this right away:  
 he still has to suffer a little, first.

The king retired, all tired out, 575  
 after he had eaten and drunk his fill,  
 and valiant Cador retired, too,  
 his heart afflicted with terrible pain.  
 A little bit before daybreak,  
 he moaned and groaned and changed color 580  
 because of the venom and the fumes  
 that the fierce beast had spewed at him.  
 A chamberlain named Ades  
 told the king that Cador was ill.  
 He never in a whole year heard news 585  
 that upset him more. Immediately, he got dressed  
 and came running into the room  
 and saw Cador lying there all pale and wan.  
 When he saw him stricken thus,  
 he took him and held him in his arms. 590  
 He beat his breast and wrung his hands,  
 he suffered so he nearly died.  
 At once he sent for Eufemie: \*  
 she was the wisest doctor in the land.  
 She arrived in the greatest haste. 595  
 She took his arm and felt his pulse,  
 then she told the king she would cure him  
 within two weeks, so well that there would be no trace of illness.  
 "And I will give you a rich gift,  
 my friend, and a fine reward." 600

.iii. barons mande isnielement,  
 Si lor a dit moult bielement  
 Qu[e] en tote se regiön,  
 U il a mainte legiön,  
 N'i a prince si riche mie 605  
 Qu'a baron ne l'ait Eufemie  
 Celui que miols desire et ainme,  
 Por c'altres forçor droit n'i clainme,  
 Mais que son neveu li garisse  
 Que il de dol ne se marisse. 610  
 Cele l'en merchie et encline.  
 Un lit fait faire li mescine  
 En une des plus maistres canbres.  
 Li pavemens estoit fins lambres:  
 Selonc le cambre ert li vergiës 615  
 U li mie et li clergiës  
 Ont fait planter erbes moult chieres  
 Qui viertus orent de manieres./  
 Bials est li viergiës les les estres.  
 Entre l'odors par les fenestres 620  
 Ki plus sœef iolt de piument.  
 La ne gira il pas vilment.  
 Li lis est fais, Cador s'i colce.  
 Por noise faire nus n'i touce,  
 Ne mais li meschine et li sien; 625  
 Et ele le parfait si biem,  
 Que dedens .viii. jors par verté  
 L'a si gari de s'enferté  
 Par le grasse nostre Segnor.  
 Mais ele l'a mis en gregnor, 630  
 Car li alers et li venirs,  
 Li maniiers et li tenirs  
 Qu'ele i a fait, com a malage,  
 A fait l'amor en li plus sage.  
 Amors l'æsiet\* plus que ne siolt: 635  
 Com plus le voit et plus le violt,  
 Et el voloir de li veïr,  
 Puis que cho vient al voir jehir,  
 Sent il son cuer forment amer.  
 "E las!" fait il. "Vient cho d'amer, 640  
 Si grans mals et tels amertume?  
 Or est malvaise sa costume,  
 De primes bien et puis mal faire.  
 Trestolt cho fait il por atraire.

He quickly sent for three barons,  
 and announced to them most solemnly  
 that in his entire kingdom,  
 where he had legions of followers,  
 there was no prince so rich 605  
 that Eufemie couldn't have as lord and husband  
 the one she most desired and loved,  
 as long as there was no prior claim,  
 provided that she cure his nephew,  
 so that he, the king, wouldn't die of sorrow. 610  
 She thanked him for this and bowed low.  
 The girl had a bed prepared  
 in one of the very finest chambers.  
 The pavement was made of beautiful marble.  
 Next to the room was the garden, 615  
 where both physicians and clerics  
 had planted many precious herbs  
 with many healing virtues.  
 The garden outside the room is beautiful.  
 Through the windows comes the scent of perfume 620  
 that smells sweeter than nectar.  
 Cadore will rest most pleasantly there!  
 The bed was made ready; he was placed in it.  
 For fear of doing him harm, no one touched him  
 except the girl and her own servants. 625  
 And she did her work so perfectly,  
 that within a week, truly,  
 she had cured him of his infirmity,  
 by the grace of our Lord.  
 But she had made him worse as well, 630  
 for her comings and goings,  
 the way she handled and held him  
 when he was sick,  
 made love for her grow stronger in him.  
 Love laid siege to him more than before. 635  
 The more he saw of her, the more he wanted to.  
 And from his desire to see her,  
 to tell the truth,  
 he felt his heart grow very bitter.  
 "Alas!" he said. "Is that what comes of love? 640  
 Such dreadful pain and such bitterness?  
 Then Love's ways are truly wicked—  
 first to do good and then to do evil.  
 All this he does to manipulate lovers.

Li mals que li serpens me fist 645  
 N'ert pas si gregnor comme cist.  
 Il n'ert pas honteus a veïr.  
 Cestui n'os jo nului jehir.  
 Amors m'a moult acoârdi  
 Viers une feme, fait hardi 650  
 Por reprendre grant fais por soi.  
 Cis mals se tient moult entor moi.  
 Jo li puis bien amor rover,  
 Mais or me poroit reprover  
 Son travail et sa medecine, 655  
 Et poroit penser la mescine  
 Que folie ai en li veüe,  
 Que por cho ruis que soit ma drue.  
 Ele m'a fait d'un mal delivre,  
 Mais d'un moult gregnor voir m'enivre, 660  
 Car ivres sui et esmaris  
 Quant jo languis, si sui garis.  
 Ne li os, las! amor rover,  
 Nel taisir ne puis bien trover.  
 Et puet si estre ele ot altre ami 665  
 Ainz qu'ele mesist painne a mi. /  
 Et feme rest de tel afaire,  
 Ne fait pas al miols que puet faire,  
 Sa volenté tient por raison,  
 De soi honir quiert oquoison. 670  
 Son voloir trait contre nature,  
 Contre raison, contre droiture:  
 Ne prent garde u s'amor desploie  
 Et puet sel estre se desroie  
 Que mariër puet a plaisir. 675  
 Mais mioldres pooirs est taisir.  
 Amors m'a mis en marison,  
 Nen ai confort de guarison."  
 Cadon se plaint qu'Amors le grieve.  
 Amors que fait? .i. dart soslieve 680  
 Qui plus est trençans d'alemiele,  
 Si l'a feru sos la mamiele.  
 "H[e]las!" fait il, "qui si me point?"  
 Et Amors priés del cuer se joint  
 Et tant li grieve l'envaïe 685  
 Qu'il gient, et crie: "Aïe! aïe!"  
 Et en l'autre cambre par sontre  
 Estoit li rois illuec encontre.

The hurt the dragon gave me\* 645  
 wasn't as serious as this;  
 it wasn't shameful to see.  
 But I don't dare reveal this one to anybody.  
 Love has made a mighty coward of me  
 before a woman, when it had given me 650  
 the courage to perform a mighty deed for her.  
 This hurt has a strong hold on me.  
 I could reveal my love to her,  
 but her efforts and her medicines  
 might then be a reproach to me: 655  
 the girl might think  
 that I had found her behavior unseemly,  
 and that I want her for my mistress.  
 She has saved me from one malady,  
 but now, truly, a much worse one poisons me, 660  
 for I must be drunk or mad  
 if I still languish now that I am cured.  
 Alas, I do not dare reveal my love to her,  
 but I don't think it's a good idea to conceal it, either.  
 And maybe she had another friend 665  
 before she started taking care of me.  
 Yes, that's the way a woman is:  
 she doesn't do the best she can,  
 she holds her will to be reason,  
 she seeks occasion to dishonor herself; 670  
 her will works contrary to nature,  
 contrary to reason and to convention.  
 She doesn't care where she deploys her love,  
 and can easily stray out of bounds  
 if allowed to marry where she pleases. 675  
 But it's better to be silent.  
 Love has caused me great distress;  
 I have no hope of being cured."  
 Thus Cador complained that Love was giving him grief.  
 And what did Love do? He took up a dart 680  
 sharper than a lance's point,  
 and struck Cador just beneath the breast.  
 "Alas!" he cried. "What has pierced me so?"  
 And then Love pressed him close to the heart,  
 and this attack hurt him so 685  
 that he moaned and cried, "Ah! ah!"  
 The king was close by,  
 in the next chamber.

Quant ot la vois Cadore le preu  
 Moult tost en vint a son neveu. 690  
 Se li a dit: "Bials niés, qu'avés?"  
 "Sire," fait il, "vos ne savés?"  
 Jo me dormoie meriane,  
 Si sonjai qu'ens el bos d'Ardane  
 Estoie alés por deporter. 695  
 Ne vol nule arme o moi porter,  
 Ne vol ne lance ne escu:  
 Si vi mon serpent revescu  
 Que jo par pieces esmiây.  
 Il me chaça et jo criây. 700  
 Sire, or vos ai jo dit mon songe,  
 Mais Dex le me tort a mençoigge."  
 "Bials niés, cho dist ne plus ne mains  
 Mais que foibles estes et vains,  
 Car vos avés moult wit le cieff, 705  
 Et en dormant vient derecieff  
 Devant tolt cho que vos fesistes  
 Ainz que ceste enferté presistes."  
 Li rois son neveu moult enorte  
 Qu'il se rehait et reconforte; 710  
 Mais ne set u li mals li tient  
 Ne de l'enferté qui li vient  
 Dont nen avra la medecine  
 Se Dex nel fait et la mescine/  
 Qu'il gari de l'autre enferté. 715  
 Volés vos oïr la verté?  
 Quant il parvint a l'anuitier  
 Adonc estut Cadore luitier,  
 Vellier la nuit, jaindre, pener,  
 Qu'Amors le prent a demener, 720  
 Fai le fremir, suer, tranbler.  
 Pis que fievre li puet sambler:  
 Car fievre est lués de tel nature  
 C'om le piert sovent par froidure  
 U par bien durement suer; 725  
 Mais Amor ne violt remuer  
 Ne por grant froit, ne por calor;  
 Ne n'espargne home por valor,  
 Ne por fierté, ne por promesse.  
 Ne li est plus d'une contesse 730  
 Que d'une soie camberiere.  
 A Cadore pert bien qu'ele est fiere.

When he heard the voice of Cador the brave,  
 he went to his nephew at once. 690  
 He said to him, "Dear nephew, what's wrong?"  
 "Sire," he said, "don't you know?  
 I was taking a noonday nap.  
 I dreamt I went riding  
 in the forest of Arden,\* 695  
 simply for pleasure. I had no wish to wear weapons,  
 neither lance nor shield.  
 Then I saw my dragon revived—  
 the one I had hacked to pieces.  
 It was chasing me and I cried out. 700  
 Sire, now I have told you my dream,  
 but may God keep it from coming true!"  
 "Dear nephew, this means no more and no less  
 than that you are frail and weak,  
 for you are still very light-headed, 705  
 and when you sleep,  
 everything you did  
 before you got sick comes back to you."  
 The king exhorted his nephew  
 to take heart and be comforted, 710  
 but he didn't know where the malady had struck  
 or that he had succumbed to an illness  
 for which there is no cure  
 except from God and the girl  
 who healed him of his other hurt. 715  
 Do you want to hear the truth?  
 Every night, when it grew dark,  
 that's when Cador's struggle began.  
 He was awake all night, suffering, groaning,  
 for Love had seized control of him, 720  
 made him shiver, sweat and tremble.  
 It was worse than the symptoms of a fever,  
 for fever is such that  
 a man often loses it through chill  
 or by sweating copiously. 725  
 But Love refuses to give way  
 to extreme heat or cold;  
 he doesn't spare a man for valor  
 or yield to threats or promises.  
 A countess is the same to him 730  
 as any of her chambermaids.  
 Love seemed very fierce to Cador.

De la meschine vus voel dire.  
 Esté li ot en liu de mire.  
 Sovent rala, sovent revint 735  
 Por veïr com li mals li tint.  
 S'anchois l'ama, or l'ainme plus,  
 Ne mervalt ja de cho nus.  
 Vos avés veü bien sovent  
 Fus et estoppe avoec le vent 740  
 Vient assés tos a esprendre  
 Que n'i estuet ja painne rendre.  
 Altretels est d'Amor l'orine.  
 Puis qu'ele aferme une rachine  
 Que puist amans nes tant doter 745  
 Que lor soit boin d'oïr conter  
 L'uns d'als a l'autre cho que fait?  
 Tres donques croist l'Amors a fait  
 Par bien la parolle asseïr,  
 Et par sovent entreveïr. 750  
 Se plus i a a volenté  
 Tant croist l'Amor plus a plenté,  
 Car puis qu'en parler ont delit  
 Si croist l'Amors moult de petit  
 Por cho que il ensamble soient. 755  
 Mais amant\* qui ne s'entrevoient  
 Et forssalent que d'an en an,  
 N'ont mie d'assés tel ahan  
 Que d'iestre apriés et consirrer.  
 Car cho fait Eufemie irer, 760  
 Que cascun jor voit que desire  
 Et de son desir se consire./  
 Ele desire qu'il seüst  
 Qu'ele altre ami que lui n'eüst:  
 Mais qu'en li tant de cuer n'a mie 765  
 Que die a lui qu'ele est s'amie.  
 Dirai jo dont qu'ele ait delit  
 Quant el ne fait, grant ne petit,  
 De quanque li siens cuers desire,  
 Fors lui amer sans ozer dire? 770  
 S'ele a delit en son amer  
 En la sofrance a tant d'amer  
 Que jo nen os nomer delit.  
 S'ele en a rien, cho est petit.  
 De la dolor qui dont le tient 775  
 Et de l'amor dont li sovient

Now I want to tell you about the girl  
 who served as his physician.  
 She came and went often 735  
 to see how the patient was doing.  
 If she loved him before, she loved him more now —  
 no one should be surprised at this!  
 You've seen so many times before  
 how embers and stubble can catch fire 740  
 without the slightest effort,  
 where there is wind.  
 Such is Love's origin.  
 As soon as he takes root,  
 how can lovers possibly doubt 745  
 that it is good for both of them  
 to tell each other what they are doing?  
 Then love grows very quickly,  
 through well-chosen words,  
 by keeping frequent company. 750  
 The more there is mutual consent,  
 the more luxuriantly love grows.  
 For where there is delight in speech,  
 love grows from very small beginnings,  
 as long as lovers are together. 755  
 But lovers who don't see each other  
 or arrange to meet, except from year to year,  
 never have enough of that sweet labor  
 of being close and observing each other.  
 As for Eufemie, she is driven wild, 760  
 seeing each day what she desires  
 and being deprived of her desire.  
 She desires him to know  
 that she would have no other lover but him,  
 but she doesn't have the courage 765  
 to tell him that she's in love with him.  
 Shall I say that she is happy,  
 when she does absolutely nothing  
 with regard to her heart's desire  
 except love him and not dare to say so? 770  
 If she finds happiness in loving,  
 she finds such bitterness in suffering  
 that I dare not call this happiness.  
 If she's getting any out of it, it's not much!  
 In the grip of sorrow, 775  
 thinking only of love,

Gemist, fremist et dist: "Caitive!  
 Jo ne sui morte, ne bien vive.  
 Par Deu, ai mainte gent sane[e],  
 Al daërrain sui engane[e]; 780  
 Car or sai tres bien par verté  
 Que par Cador ai l'enfeté.  
 Trestolt l'ai par cest damoisiel.  
 Jel vi ersoir si gent, si biel,  
 Sovint moi de son vasselage, 785  
 Si senti plus grief mon malage.

Amors m'a mis en noncaloir,  
 Ars ne engiens n'i puet valoir.  
 Jo doins as autres medecine,  
 Mais moi ne valt une fordine 790  
 Quanque jo sai dire et canter.  
 Mar vi onques icest anter!  
 Mar fust li serpens ainc peüs!  
 Mar fust li venins ainc veüs,  
 Dont Cador fu si atornés! 795  
 Li mals en est sor moi tornés.  
 Ainmi! lasse!" dist Eufemie.  
 "Jo cuit qu'il a alors amie.  
 S'il n'eüst kiuls de feme prendre  
 Jo i peüsce alques atendre. 800  
 S'il n'eüst de feme esliçon —  
 Cho soit a la maleÿçon —  
 Li rois de droit ne me falroit.  
 Ne sai que rover me valdroit,  
 Car cho n'estroit\* pas honestés 805  
 Por cho qu'il a avant les dés;  
 Car s'il me violt, avoir me puet,  
 U se cho non, ne li estuet.  
 E! Dex! com a chi grant anui!  
 S'il violt, n'arai ja part en lui/ 810  
 Et il m'a, voir, sans parçonier.  
 Lasse! Jo vi sa façon ier.  
 Il ert plus bials que n'est la rose.  
 Ne fis jo moult estrange coze  
 Et n'eu jo moult le sens mari 815  
 Quant jo si tenpre le guari!  
 Car j'euc vials ains bone oquaison  
 D'aler sovent en la maison.

she moans and shudders and says, "Wretched me!  
 I am neither dead nor alive.  
 My God, I have cured many a man,  
 but I have been badly repaid by the last one. 780  
 For now I know the truth very well:  
 I caught this disease from Cador.  
 This young man is highly contagious.  
 I saw him last night, so gracious, so handsome;  
 I remembered his brave deed, 785  
 and felt my malady grow worse.

Love has made me incapable of action.  
 Neither my learning nor my native intelligence can help me.  
 I prescribe medicine to others,  
 but all my fancy accomplishments 790  
 aren't helping me one bit.  
 Damn this whole relationship!  
 damn that dragon (whoever raised him!),  
 damn the cursed venom  
 that made Cador so sick! 795  
 The curse has come upon me.  
 Oh my! alas!" said Eufemie.  
 "I think he has another love.  
 If he didn't have his choice of a wife,  
 I might have some slight hope. 800  
 If he couldn't have the wife of his choice —  
 damn that, too —  
 the king wouldn't fail to do me justice.  
 I don't know what good asking would do.  
 That wouldn't be fair, 805  
 for he has first throw of the dice.  
 If he wants me, he can have me,  
 and if not, he doesn't have to.  
 God, what an awful situation!  
 If it's his wish, I'll have no part of him, 810  
 but he can, if he wants, take all of me.  
 Alas! I saw the way he looked yesterday.  
 He was lovelier than a rose.  
 Wasn't that a crazy thing to do,  
 wasn't I completely out of my mind 815  
 to cure him so fast?  
 I had ample opportunity  
 to visit him frequently.

Que il langui! Mais moi que calle,  
 Mais qu'il guarisse et qu'il valle, 820  
 Por tolte ma male aventure  
 Qu'il sofrist longues tel ardure?"\*  
 C'ert un petit devant le jor.  
 De paine traire n'a sejour.  
 Nue s'estent desos le lambre; 825  
 Et Cadors ert en l'altre cambre.  
 Ne puet la nuit repos avoir,  
 Ne son pooir ne puet savoir,  
 Car s'il son pooir vials seüst,  
 Qu'il Eufemie avoir peüst, 830  
 De grant dolor fust alegiés,  
 Et ses travals fust abregiés.  
 Et s'Eufemie resust\* certe  
 Qu'il tel paine a por li sofierte,  
 El li feroit jo cuit dangier. 835  
 Mais ne\* set pas qu'ains le mengier  
 Li volra dire sa destrece,  
 Com Amors le castie et blece.

Ançois que l'aube soit veüe,  
 S'en est la mescine meüe. 840  
 Viers son ami s'en violt aler,  
 Mais as degrés al devaler  
 Revient en soi meïsmes toute.  
 L'aler avant crient et redoute,  
 Blasme son cuer et sel castie 845  
 Et dist: "Quelle m'avés bastie!  
 Fel cuers, tres donc que vos creï,  
 Honors ne biens ne me tehi,  
 Mais moult grans hontes et fors blasmes,  
 Cuers, car me viols [tu] que tu asmes! 850  
 Veuls me tu avoir parhonie?  
 Folie m'est trop enbonie  
 Quant de ma cambre m'en issi  
 Por home a ceste hore enissi.  
 De honte ai aficiet mon sain. 855  
 Bien pert que j'ai ronpu mon frain.  
 Cuers, jo t'acorcerai les resnes.  
 Ja fus tu ja plus durs que cesnes,  
 Or te lasse si amolir,  
 Tolte m'onoir me viols tolir. 860

So he would have been sick a little longer! Why should I have  
 cared,  
 as long as he eventually recovered his health, 820  
 if he suffered such torment longer,  
 considering all my misery?"  
 It was a little before daybreak.  
 She had had no respite from her pain.  
 She lay naked in her ornate room, 825  
 and Cador was in the chamber below.  
 He had had no rest that night, either,  
 nor did he know his power;  
 for if he had only known  
 that he could have Eufemie, 830  
 his great sorrow would have been assuaged,  
 and his sufferings shortened.  
 And if Eufemie had known for certain  
 that he was suffering such pain for her,  
 she would have granted him all he desired, I'm sure. 835  
 He didn't know that before breakfast  
 she would tell him of her distress,\*  
 how Love was tormenting and wounding her.

It was still before dawn  
 when the girl made her move. 840  
 She was on her way to her beloved,  
 but halfway down the stairs  
 she came to her senses.  
 She dreaded and feared the thought of advancing.  
 She blamed her heart and chastised it, saying, 845  
 "You really got me into a mess,  
 traitorous heart! Ever since I trusted you,  
 you have brought me nothing good or honorable,  
 only tremendous shame and dishonor,  
 heart, for you want to make my decisions for me. 850  
 Do you want me to be completely dishonored?  
 I was overcome by madness  
 when I left my room  
 at such an hour for the sake of a man.  
 I have transfixed my own breast with shame. 855  
 I'm obviously completely out of control.  
 Heart, I'm going to rein you in tightly.  
 You always used to be harder than oak,  
 now you've gone completely soft;  
 you want to strip me of all my honor. 860

Viuls cuers fait home aler a rage.  
 Miols valt hals cuers en bas parage  
 Que ne fait home estre balli  
 D'un grant roïame a cuer falli.  
 Viuls cuers, cho me fais tu de gré." 865  
 Atant se ciet sor le degré.  
 .ii. fois se pasme en un tenant.  
 Et quant puet parler, maintenant  
 Apiele Cadore et si nome.  
 En tols ses mos est cil la some. 870  
 Cadore languist, se n'i puet estre,  
 Et l'un et l'autre Amors adestre.  
 S'il voelent garison avoir  
 Dont covient il par estavoir  
 Et lui garir par la mescine 875  
 Et li avoir par lui mecine.  
 U cascuns d'als son per garra,  
 U la mecine n'i parra.

Li jors apert et Eufemie  
 Saut sus que ne s'atarja mie. 880  
 Vient en la cambre a son ami.  
 Dist li: "Amis, parlés, haymmi!"  
 Dire li dut: "Parlés a moi,"  
 Mais l'Amors li fist tel anoi  
 Que dire dut: "Parlés a mi," 885  
 Se li a dit: "Parlés, haymmi!"  
 "Parlés a mi" dire li dut,  
 Mais "haymmi!" sor le cuer li jut.  
 Si tost com ele ot dit "amis,"  
 En la clauze "haymmi!" a mis. 890  
 "A mi" dut dire, et "haymmi!" dist,  
 Por la dolor qui en li gist.  
 Grant esperance li a fait  
 Que li a dit "haymmi!" a trait,  
 Car el l'ot ains "ami" nommé. 895  
 Or cuide avoir tolt asomé.  
 Cist doi mor "haymmi!" et "amis"  
 Li ont moult grant confort tramis.  
 Cis mos "amis" mostre l'amor,  
 Cis mos "haymmi!" fait le clamor. 900  
 Or a Cadors joie a voloir,  
 Qu'Amors le painne et fait doloir.  
 Cis mos "amis" fait esperer

A vile heart makes a man go mad.  
 A noble heart in one of low rank  
 is worth more than if a man is master  
 of a great kingdom and has a faulty heart.  
 Vile heart, you are doing this on purpose." 865  
 Then she sat down on the steps  
 and fainted twice in a row,  
 and when she was able to speak again,  
 she called Cador by name.  
 He was the substance of all her speech. 870  
 But Cador was languishing, so he couldn't be there.  
 Love has both of them in hand.  
 If they want to be cured,  
 then it will be necessary  
 for him to be cured by the girl, 875  
 and for her to take her medicine from him.  
 Either each of them will cure the other,  
 or there will be no curing.

Day breaks, and Eufemie  
 delays no longer. She jumps to her feet, 880  
 comes into her lover's room  
 and says to him, "Ami, speak, ah me!"\*  
 She should have said, "Speak to me,"  
 but Love has tricked her:  
 she should have said, "Speak to me," 885  
 but she says, "Speak, ah me."  
 "Speak to me," she should have said,  
 but "ah me!" is in her heart.  
 As soon as she said, "ami,"  
 Love put "ah me!" into the sentence. 890  
 She should have said "to me" and she said "ah me,"  
 because of the terrible sorrow within her.  
 She gives him a great deal of hope  
 when she clearly says "ah me!" —  
 for thus she calls him "ami." 895  
 Now he thinks he has figured the whole thing out.  
 These two utterances, "ah me" and "ami,"  
 have brought him great comfort.  
 The word "ami" is evidence of love,  
 the words "ah me" say it loud and clear. 900  
 Now Cador has joy to his liking,  
 after Love has given him pain and grief.  
 The word ami gives Cador cause to hope

Cador qu'or pora averer  
 Cho qu'il plus convoite et desirre. 905  
 "Aimmi!" demostre le martyre, /  
 Le paine d'amor qu'a sofierte  
 Mais que li parole est covierte,  
 Car ja soit cho qu'ami le claimme  
 N'est pas provance qu'ele l'ainme, 910  
 Car tels hom est "amis" clamés  
 Ki de fin cuer n'est pas amés.  
 Por cho est Cador en dotance,  
 Por quant sin a grant esperance  
 Quant l'apiele "ami" u li "amie." 915  
 Or savés qu'il nel laira mie  
 Ne parolt ensi qu'ele l'oie, —  
 Car tres bien l'a mis en la voie, —  
 Et dist: "Dolce, li vostre plainte  
 M'a grant dolor el cuer enpainte. 920  
 La vostre grans bontés m'ensengne  
 Se vos plagniés que jo me plague.  
 Se vos plagniés, bien le sarai,  
 Se mal avrés, le mal avrai.  
 De vostre joie doi joïr, 925  
 Car vostre sens me fait joïr,  
 Aler, et parler, et veïr,  
 Et en tols sens me fait tehir.  
 Se nule cose avés averse,  
 Ma vie doi mener enverse: 930  
 Plorer de vostre aversité,  
 Rire en vostre prosperité.  
 Tolt mon pooir vos doi voloir  
 Se mal avés, bien doi doloïr.  
 Car si fesistes vos del mien, 935  
 Del mal me mesistes el bien."  
 "Cho est li voirs," dist Eufemie,  
 "Qu'esté vos ai en liu de mie.  
 Del venim vos ai fait delivre,  
 Dont vos envenima la guivre. 940  
 Et jo m'en sui si enivree,  
 Ja n'en cuic estre delivree.  
 L'enfertés est sor moi venue  
 Que entor vos me sui tenue.  
 Si siolt malages\* sovent faire: 945  
 Ki a malade gent repaire,  
 Moult li va bien s'il n'a sa part.

that he will now be able to attain  
 what he covets and desires most. 905  
 "Ah me" is proof of martyrdom,  
 the pain of love that she has suffered—  
 except that the word is ambiguous,  
 for the fact that she calls him "ami"  
 is no proof that she loves him. 910  
 A man may be called "ami"  
 and not be loved with a noble heart.  
 That is why Cadot is uncertain,  
 however much hope it gives him  
 when they call each other "ami(e)." 915  
 Now you know that he will not fail  
 to speak so that she can hear him—  
 for she has very much put him on the right track—  
 and he says, "Sweetheart, your lament  
 has filled my heart with great sorrow. 920  
 Your great goodness is an example to me.  
 If you complain, then I will, too;  
 if you are afflicted, then I will be, too.  
 If you suffer, I will bear that pain.  
 I will rejoice in your joy, 925  
 for everything about you fills me with joy—  
 the way you look and walk and talk—  
 it elevates me in every way.  
 If you encounter adversity,  
 I will have to change my life accordingly: 930  
 I want to weep at your adversities,  
 delight in your prosperity,  
 I want to devote myself completely to you.  
 If you are hurt, I owe it to you to suffer,  
 for that's the way you were with me; 935  
 you gave me good for bad."  
 "That's the truth," said Eufemie.  
 "I served you as physician,  
 I saved you from the venom  
 with which the dragon poisoned you. 940  
 And from that I became so delirious  
 I don't think I can be cured.  
 I caught the disease  
 from being around you.  
 It's often that way with illness: 945  
 he who keeps sick people company  
 will be very lucky not to share the illness.

Jo n'i sui pas venue a tart.  
 Mais que que soit de m'enferté,  
 Acreäntés me par verté, 950  
 Por cho qu'adonques vive soie  
 Et qu'enfertés ne vos deloie,  
 Quel mois devant a moi vendrés  
 Et que vos, amis, me prendrés\*/  
 En gueredon de mon service. 955  
 Bials amis, s'onors vos justice  
 Et le francise vos castie,  
 Si bone le vos ai bastie,  
 Se valors vos a en destrece  
 Et se gentils cuers vos adrece, 960  
 Dont ferés vos que dit vos ai.  
 Et jo certes cortois vos sai,  
 Et bien ensegniet, et moult sage —  
 Mais ch'onors mue trop corage.  
 Bials dols amis, ne vos en poise: 965  
 Mes cuers ne porrist en richoize.  
 Com la richoise plus engragne,  
 Tant frit plus malvais hom et gragne;  
 Com plus a vils cuers plus empire.  
 Amis, jo l'ai bien oï dire 970  
 Del serpent que vos ocesistes —  
 Dont vos grant hardement fesistes —  
 Que li rois fist tele bonté  
 Qu'il vos a otroié conté  
 Et feme a prendre avoic a cois 975  
 A an, a posan u a mois.”  
 Et Cador li respont en oïre:  
 “Ma damoisiele, c'est la voire;  
 Et li rois m'en a fait fiance  
 Et bien me tenra covenan[n]ce 980  
 D'une conté, de feme a quois.  
 Mais el roïame n'en a trois  
 Dont la mellor presisse mie  
 S'une m'en faut, bele Eufemie.”  
 Biele Eufemie, cho est l'une 985  
 A cui li cuers Cador s'aüne!  
 De l'une est Eufemie gloze,  
 Mais que sor li prendre ne l'oze,  
 Qu'en li n'en a pas tant d'ozer  
 Qu'ele sor li l'oze glozer. 990  
 Doute qu'il ait dit autrement

It didn't take me long to catch it.  
 But whatever illness I contracted,  
 swear to me by all that's true, 950  
 in order to keep me alive,  
 and you from being sick,  
 that this very month you will come to me  
 and take me, beloved,  
 as a reward for my services. 955  
 Sweet love, if honor governs your actions,  
 and noble character keeps you in check,  
 if what I propose appeals to you,  
 if manly virtue constrains you,  
 and a noble heart guides you, 960  
 you will do what I have told you.  
 And truly, I know you to be courteous,  
 well-bred and very wise—  
 unless 'honor changes a man' too much.\*  
 Dear sweet friend, don't worry; 965  
 my heart cannot be corrupted by wealth.  
 As riches breed more riches,  
 a wicked man burns more and grinds his teeth;  
 the worse his heart, the worse he gets.  
 My love, I have heard 970  
 with regard to the dragon you killed  
 (a most courageous deed)  
 that the king gave you a fine reward;  
 that he granted you a county  
 and whomever you wish for a wife, 975  
 in a year, next year, or next month."  
 And Cador replied at once,  
 "Mademoiselle, that is so.  
 The king swore an oath to me,  
 and he will certainly keep his pledge 980  
 of the land and a wife of my choice.  
 But I wouldn't take the best  
 of the top three in the kingdom  
 if one were denied me, belle Eufemie."  
 Belle Eufemie, she's the "one" 985  
 who is the choice of Cador's heart.  
 Eufemie is the gloss of "one."  
 But she doesn't dare take it as a reference to herself;  
 there's not enough daring in her  
 to gloss it as referring to herself. 990  
 She thinks he has said something else,

Et respondi isnielement:

“Sire, estes vos de tel dangier?”

“Nai jo, mais cuers ne puet cangier.

Franche puciele debonaire, 995

Vos me jabés, sel poés faire,

Qu'a mon vivant vos doi servisce.

Jo parlerai par amendise.

Vos parlés de mon mariäge:

Ne vos en poist, amie sage, 1000

Que jel vos di tolt a larron.

Altressi tost prendrés baron, /

Con jo, amie, feme a per.

Mais ne me puet pas escaper

Qu'a vos nocés ne vus adestre, 1005

Quar se jo vif g'i volrai estre.

Li rois vos fist pieça le don

Por moi guarir en gueredon

Qu'a vostre kius prendrés mari

Si tost com vus m'avrés guarì. 1010

Or avrés vus vostre voloìr,

Et moi covenra, las! doloìr

De grant enferté ki me vient.”

“Cis mals coment, sire, vos tient?”

“Biele, j'ai calt et froit ensamble. 1015

Ne puis garir, si com moi samble;

Si grans cals ne puet vaintre mie

Le froit que j'ai, bele Eufemie.

Li frois ne puet avoir valor

Ki puisse vaintre ma calor. 1020

Anbedoi sunt ivel en force;

Li uns enviers l'autre s'esforce,

Ne puet l'uns l'autre sormonter.

Oïstes vos ainc mais conter

De calt, de froit, qui sunt contrarie, 1025

Que en un cors peüscent faire?

S'en moi peüst valoir Nature,

Ja voir si estrange aventure

A mon las cors n'en avenist;

L'uns viers l'autre ne se tenist. 1030

Mais jo sui tols desnaturés

Et si cuic estre enfaiturés.

Jo voel mangier et si ne puis;

Tant de nature en moi ne truis

Que puisse mon mengier joìr, 1035

and replies quickly,  
 "Sir, are you saying this lightly?"  
 "No, my heart can never change.  
 Gentle, noble girl, 995  
 your words mock me, and you have the right,  
 for I owe you service for my life.  
 I will speak to make amends.  
 You have mentioned my marriage;  
 don't be offended, wise friend, 1000  
 if I speak so as to obscure the meaning.  
 You shall take a noble husband  
 precisely when I take a wife who is my peer.  
 But it will not be possible  
 for me not to be beside you at your wedding, 1005  
 for if I am alive, I will be there.  
 A while ago, the king granted you,  
 as a reward for curing me,  
 the husband of your choice,  
 as soon as you had cured me. 1010  
 Now you shall have your wish,  
 and I, alas, will have to suffer  
 from this terrible sickness that comes over me."  
 "Sir, what are the symptoms of this disease?"  
 "Dearest, I am hot and cold at once. 1015  
 It seems to me I can't be cured.  
 There is no heat hot enough to conquer  
 the cold I feel, belle Eufemie.  
 There is no cold that has the strength  
 to overcome my heat. 1020  
 Both are equal in strength;  
 one contends with the other;  
 neither can overcome the other.  
 Have you ever heard tell  
 what the opposition of heat and cold 1025  
 can do inside one body?  
 If Nature could assert her strength in me,  
 this strange state of affairs  
 could not occur in my weary body;  
 the one would not struggle with the other. 1030  
 But I am totally dis-natured;  
 I think I am bewitched.  
 I want to eat and yet I can't;  
 I can't find enough nature in me  
 to be able to enjoy my food, 1035

Ne men las cors avoec norir.  
 Quant jo somel dont m'esperis  
 Si griément por poi ne peris."  
 "Bials dols amis," dist la meschine,  
 "Nos convenroit une mechine, 1040  
 Car nos avons une enferté.  
 Mais or me dites verité.  
 Coment cis mals est apielés?  
 Se vos savés nel me celés."  
 "Bele, jo sui de jovene eé 1045  
 Mais que j'ai oï maint sené  
 Ki dient que cil ki se painnent  
 En amer u en amors mainnent  
 En sont al loing moult adamé  
 S'il aiment et ne sunt amé. / 1050  
 Mais s'il doi sunt qui s'entr'acuellent,  
 Por cho qu'il andoi bien se vuellent,  
 Puis que verté vos doi jehir,  
 D'un\* bazier pueënt plus tehir  
 Que n'aient en un an pené, 1055  
 Car cho me dient li sené."  
 "Amis, or m'avés vos aprise:  
 Or sai qu'Amors m'a en justisce.  
 S'estre puis d'un baisier sanee  
 Dont sui jo certes enganee 1060  
 Se mes dols amis ne me baise,  
 Se jo par tant puis estre a ase."  
 "Quele, Eufemie! A Deu pleüst  
 Cascuns de nos çaiens eüst  
 Cho qu'il plus covoite et desirre, 1065  
 Et dont li ozast son bon dire!"  
 "Amis, que valt a soshaidier?  
 Sohais ne puet nul home aidier!  
 Jo ne vi onques par sohait  
 Plus tost venir u biel u lait. 1070  
 Mais or me dites, bials amis,  
 N'est voirs que li rois nos a mis  
 A nostre kius de mariäge,  
 Moi por garir vostre malage,  
 Et vos por le serpent ocirre? 1075  
 Or poriens nos nostre bœn dire  
 Tolt coiemment, chi a larron,  
 Quel feme amés, jo quel baron.  
 Car en faisons chi l'afiānce

not to speak of nourishing my weary body.  
 When I sleep, I wake up in such pain  
 that I am nearly perishing."  
 "Dear, sweet friend," said the girl,  
 "we really need some medicine, 1040  
 for we both have the same disease.  
 But now tell me, truly,  
 what is the name of this malady?  
 If you know, don't keep it from me."  
 "Lovely one, I am still quite young, 1045  
 but I have heard many older men say  
 that those who suffer  
 the bitter pangs of love  
 are greatly harmed in the long run  
 if they love and are not loved in return. 1050  
 But if there are two who are in accord,  
 so that each loves the other,  
 since I'm supposed to tell you the truth,  
 they can benefit more from one kiss  
 than they have suffered in a year— 1055  
 that's what experienced men have said to me."  
 "Friend, now that you have told me that,  
 I shall let you know that Love has captured me.  
 If I can be cured by a kiss,  
 then I am certainly being cheated 1060  
 if my sweet friend doesn't kiss me,  
 when I can be cured at such a price."  
 "What, Eufemie! may God grant  
 that each of us here may have  
 what he most wishes and desires, 1065  
 and may he dare to name that wish."  
 "Friend, what good does wishing do?  
 Wishing never helped anyone.  
 I never saw anything, good or bad,  
 come to pass sooner through wishing it. 1070  
 But tell me now, dear love,  
 isn't it true that the king  
 has given us a choice of spouses,  
 me for curing your illness,  
 you for killing the dragon? 1075  
 Now we can make our wishes known  
 in secret and in private—  
 what woman you love, and I, what man.  
 Why don't we swear an oath right here and now

Del bien celer, et l'aliânce 1080  
 Que nel dites, se n'est par moi,  
 Ne jo, se par vos non, par foi.  
 Primes dirés et puis dirai,  
 Que ja de rien n'en mentirai.  
 Vos estes hom, ains devés dire, 1085  
 Se devés ains de moi eslire."  
 "Tolt si l'otroi," Cadore le dist,  
 "Or l'afions, car cho i gist,  
 Que nos dirons trestolt nostre estre."  
 Li uns prent l'autre par la destre, 1090  
 Et escalfent si del tenir  
 Qu'il ne se pueënt abstenir  
 Ne mecent les boces ensamble.  
 Sans dire font, si com moi sanble,  
 De fine amor moult bone enseigne, 1095  
 Car li baisiers bien lor enseigne, /  
 Et li qu'il trait paine et martire,  
 Et lui qu'ele l'aime et desire,  
 Car n'est pas baisier de conpere,  
 De mere a fil, de fil a pere: 1100  
 Ainz est baisiers de tel savor  
 Que bien savore fine amor.  
 Et se vus verté m'en querés,  
 Ja par moi sage n'en serés  
 Se dunques baisierent sovent, 1105  
 Se cho fu uns baisiers, u .c.  
 Mais j'os bien verté aficier,  
 Tolt sans mentir et sans trecier,  
 Qu'anchois que de baisier cessassent,  
 Ne qu'il onques un mot sonassent, — 1110  
 Peüst on une liue aler.  
 Bon keu ot al mangier saler:  
 N'i ot ne peu ne trop de sel,  
 Ne ne savore point de mel.  
 Car si l'amer lor savorast, 1115  
 Ja nus d'als tant ne demorast.  
 Tant com li savors est plus dolce  
 Del baisier ki lor cuer atolce,  
 Tant croist lor amors plus adés.  
 Et por cho qu'il sont ore a és 1120  
 De cho qu'il onques plus desirent  
 Et il de lor bon se consirent,  
 Si est doublee lor dolours.

to hide it well, and make a pact 1080  
 that you won't say it except to me,  
 nor I, upon my faith, except to you.  
 First you tell and then I will,  
 and I won't lie about anything.  
 You're the man, so you go first; 1085  
 you should choose before I do."  
 "I agree to all this," Cador said to her.  
 "Now let's swear, since things are so,  
 to speak our minds right now."  
 Each takes the other by the hand— 1090  
 they are so carried away by this  
 that they cannot prevent themselves  
 from putting their mouths together.  
 It seems to me that, without speaking,  
 they are giving a fine demonstration of courtly love, 1095  
 for kissing teaches them both a good lesson,  
 both her who causes him pain and torment,  
 and him whom she loves and desires.  
 For this is not a comradely kiss  
 of mother to son, of son to father; 1100  
 no, it is a kiss of such savor  
 that it savors much of courtly love.  
 And if you want to know the truth,  
 you'll never hear it from me—  
 whether they kissed often then, 1105  
 or whether it was one kiss or one hundred.  
 But I will venture to confirm this much,  
 without any lying or cheating:  
 before they stopped kissing  
 and before a single word was spoken, 1110  
 you could have traveled a mile.  
 A good chef had seasoned the dish:  
 there wasn't too much or too little salt,  
 nor did it taste bad to them at all,  
 for if it had tasted bitter to either of them, 1115  
 they wouldn't have stayed at table so long.  
 Just as the savor of the kiss  
 that touched their hearts grew sweeter,  
 just so their love grew after that.  
 And because they are now so close to obtaining 1120  
 what they have most desired,  
 and yet are deprived of what they want,  
 their pain is also doubled.

Moult mue et cange lor colors.  
 Bone sanblance en puis mostrer: 1125  
 Ki faim a dont n'oze goster  
 De cel mangier qu'il tient as mainz,  
 De tant l'agoisse plus li fainz.  
 El baisier dont ont lor voloir  
 Gist moult de cho quis fait doloir, 1130  
 Ki les tormente, et qui les paine.  
 Mais si sont lié de cele estraine  
 Qu'il claimment bien la painne cuite  
 Por lor baisier ki lor delite.  
 Li baisiers forment les avance, 1135  
 Si les met plus en esperance.  
 Si ont tolt mis en bel deport,  
 D'esperance ont fait contrefort,  
 Por cho qu'or cuident averer  
 Lor bien qu'il pueënt esperer, 1140  
 Ne pueënt le mal consentir.  
 Cel saciés vos tolt sans mentir: /  
 Longement baisent et acolent;  
 Quant pueënt parler, si parolent.  
 Il l'aparoie, ele respont, 1145  
 Et lor error illuec deffunt.  
 "Amie, jo sui vostre amis.  
 Li vostre cors le mien a mis  
 Moult longement en grant bataille."  
 "Amis, cho saciés vos sans falle, 1150  
 Qu'ai[n]si sui jo l[a] vostre amie  
 Et qu'el mont fors [vos] nen a mie  
 Qui ma dolor puist estancier,  
 Ma santé rendre, n'avancier."  
  
 Il n'ont mais entr'als nule error; 1155  
 Ainz sevent ore la verroir,  
 Qu'il est amis et ele amie.  
 N'i a cel d'als qui ja laist mie  
 Ne voist son don al roi rover,  
 Car or le volront esprover 1160  
 Com lor ami al grant besoing.  
 Tols ont les cols cargiés de soing  
 Qu'il ne truisent le roi estable,  
 Ne sa parolle veritable.  
 Car ki bien aime n'est sans dote, 1165  
 Ne ne puet tenir droite rote,

Their color changes profoundly.  
 I can give you a good analogy for this: 1125  
 he who is hungry and dares not taste  
 of the food he has in his hands  
 is all the more tormented by hunger.  
 From the kiss they both desired  
 comes much of their sorrow, 1130  
 their torment and their pain.  
 But they are so delighted by this gift  
 that they would call it an even exchange: their pain  
 for this kissing that fills them with such delight.  
 The kissing has furthered their cause considerably; 1135  
 it gives them greater hope.  
 They have given themselves over to delight;  
 they have fortified themselves with hope.  
 Since now they think they can attain  
 happiness, now that they can hope for the good, 1140  
 they cannot feel the pain.  
 And this I'll tell you truly:  
 they kissed and hugged a long time,  
 and when they were able to speak, they spoke.  
 He spoke to her, and she replied, 1145  
 and any misunderstandings vanished on the spot.  
 "Beloved, I am your lover.  
 Your own sweet self has vanquished me  
 after a long and mighty battle."  
 "Beloved, I want you to know 1150  
 that I love you truly,  
 and that there is no one else in the whole world  
 who could assuage my grief,  
 restore me to health, promote my well-being."

There is no longer any misunderstanding between them; 1155  
 from now on they know the truth,  
 that they are friends and lovers.  
 Now they are both more eager than ever  
 to demand their reward of the king.  
 Now they want to test him 1160  
 as their friend in time of great need.  
 Both are burdened with the fear  
 that the king will prove false,  
 and his word unreliable.  
 A person deeply in love is filled with doubt 1165  
 and cannot keep things straight.

Ne cho qu'il set ne puet savoir.  
 Bone provance en puis avoir:  
 Escriziés moi ens en le cire  
 Letres que om bien puisse lire. 1170  
 Faites le cire dont remettre.  
 Enne perist donques la lettre?  
 Oïl, par Deu! par le calor.  
 Nient plus n'a cuers d'amant valor  
 De bien retenir s[a] mimorie 1175  
 Que cire encontre fu victorie  
 De retenir la lettre escrete.  
 Qu'angoisse d'amor n'est petite,  
 Car cho qu'est voirs cho fait mescroire,  
 Et tenir fause coze a voire; 1180  
 Et met por poi en esperance.  
 Amans est por nient en dotance.  
 Or saciés que cil sunt en painne  
 Et que griés tormens les demainne,  
 Qu'il ont le baisier trovet tel 1185  
 Qu'il n'i a trop ne peu de sel.  
 Si en sunt moult en grant batalle  
 Que al sorplus ne facent falle. /  
 Dont devisent que il iront  
 Al roi, et lor bon li diront. 1190  
 Donques rebaisent altre fois:  
 Tant sunt il en gregnor destrois.  
 Ne pueënt de baizier retraire  
 Quant esperance lor fait faire,  
 Qui lor promet sans demorer 1195  
 Plus que baisiers puist savorer.  
 Et par itant li baisiers fine,  
 Congié ont pris, l'uns l'autre encline.

Cadour remaint, cele s'en torne,  
 Et il et ele bien s'atorne. 1200  
 Que valt alongier trop se rime?  
 Andoi viennent a ore prime  
 Al roi por rover lor promesse.  
 Encor n'avoit oïe messe.  
 Ne parloient pas a laron, 1205  
 Ainz les oïrent .c. baron  
 Ki o le roi la messe atendent.  
 Li home i sunt qu'a lui apendent.  
 Cadour li pros parla devant

He doesn't know what he knows.  
 I'll give you a good example of this:  
 just write clearly and legibly  
 on a piece of wax; 1170  
 then melt the wax.  
 Don't the letters vanish?  
 Of course, by God! because of the heat!  
 The heart of a lover is no more able  
 to retain its memory 1175  
 than a piece of wax its victory  
 over the written letter.  
 Love's anguish is no trifling matter,  
 for that which is true is not believed,  
 while false things are taken to be true. 1180  
 A lover hopes with scant cause,  
 and doubts for very little reason.  
 Now I must tell you they are suffering,  
 and grievous torments are their lot,  
 because they found their kiss so well-seasoned — 1185  
 neither too much nor too little salt.  
 They are in agony for fear  
 of missing the next course.  
 Therefore, they agree to go to the king  
 and tell him of their desire. 1190  
 And so they kiss once more.  
 This only worsens their distress:  
 they can't stop kissing  
 because it gives them such hopes  
 and promises 1195  
 of soon savoring more than kisses,  
 and that is why the kissing ceases.  
 They bowed to each other, and took their leave.

Cador remained, she returned to her room,  
 and both took pains with their attire. 1200  
 Why prolong the suspense?  
 They both came at a very early hour  
 to ask the king to fulfill his promise.  
 He had not yet heard mass.  
 They did not speak privately; 1205  
 on the contrary, they were heard by a hundred barons  
 who were waiting to attend the king at mass.  
 All his vassals were gathered there.  
 Valiant Cador spoke first

Et dist al roi: "Le don demant 1210  
 Qu'a celui promesistes, sire,  
 Qui le serpent iroit ocire.  
 Jo l'ocis: chi n'a cel nel sache  
 De quanque en a en ceste plache."  
 "Et vos avrés," li rois li dist, 1215  
 Vostre demant, car cho i gist.  
 Jo vos donrai une conté  
 Et feme de moult grant bonté.  
 Il n'i a nule sans calenge,  
 Se vos volés, qui ne vus prenge. 1220  
 C'est par raison, si com moi samble."  
 "C'est moult," cho dient tuit ensamble.  
 "Et bien ait sire qui cho done  
 Et ki les siens si abandone."  
 Atant si parla la puchiele, 1225  
 En cui joie d'amors reviele,  
 Et est tolte d'itel faiture  
 Com la sot miols faire Nature.  
 Dés l'ortel trosqu'ens en la face  
 N'a sor li rien qu'a blasmer face. 1230  
 Et dist al roi par avenant:  
 "Sire, tenés moi covenant  
 De vostre parent qu'ai guari  
 Dont jo vos vi moult esmari./  
 Or ai ma painne despendue 1235  
 Et la vie li ai rendue."  
 Li rois li dist: "Ma bele amie,  
 Por vos ne mentirai jo mie.  
 Mentir a roi n'est mie gius.  
 Baron avrés a v[ost]re kius. 1240  
 Uns sans calenge m'en trovés:  
 Quels que il soit, sil me rovés.  
 Amie, ne vus esmaïés:  
 Ja n'iert si haus que nel aiés,  
 Soit cuens, u dus, u castelains." 1245  
 "Ne vos ruis, sire, plus ne mains,"  
 Cho li respondi la puchiele.  
 Li rois ses barons en apiele  
 A un conseil moult bielement,  
 Et cil i vont isnielement. 1250  
 Cador remaint et la mescine,  
 Sor cui li consals pent et cline.  
 Remés sunt andoi en la place.

and said to the king, "I request the reward 1210  
 that you promised, Sire.  
 to the one who killed the dragon.  
 I killed it: who is there of all those gathered here  
 who doesn't know that?"  
 "And you shall," the king said to him, 1215  
 have your reward, as is right.  
 I will give you a county  
 and a wife of high degree.  
 There is none free to marry  
 who will not accept you if you wish. 1220  
 This is reasonable, it seems to me."  
 "That's a lot!" said all his men together.  
 "Good fortune to a lord who gives so freely  
 and is so liberal with his possessions!"  
 And now the girl speaks, 1225  
 in whom *joi d'amors* is revealed.\*  
 She is absolutely of the highest quality  
 that Nature could produce.  
 She had no defect in her person,  
 from her toes to her head. 1230  
 She spoke to the king as was fitting:  
 "Sire, keep your promise to me  
 for having cured your nephew,  
 about whom you were so distressed.  
 I took great pains with him 1235  
 and saved his life."  
 The king answered her, "My lovely friend,  
 I will never lie to you.  
 A king must never lie.  
 You shall have the lord of your choice. 1240  
 Just find me one who is free:  
 whoever it is, ask him of me.  
 Friend, don't hesitate;  
 none is so highly placed that you can't have him,  
 be he count or duke or keeper of castle." 1245  
 "I ask of you, Sire, no more and no less."  
 Thus the girl answered him.  
 The king summoned his barons  
 to a formal council,  
 and they assembled quickly, 1250  
 leaving Cadore and the girl,  
 who were the reason for the council.  
 Both remained there.

Nus d'als ne set preu que il face:  
 Criement cil consals ne lor nuise, 1255  
 Et li rois okison ne truisse  
 De lor proiere deporter.  
 Mais ne lor esteüst doter:  
 S'il seüssent la covenance,  
 Il fuscent tuit lors fors d'errance. 1260  
 Li rois parole. Oiés qu'a dit.  
 "Segnor, entendés me .i. petit.  
 Jo ne vus quïier un point celer:  
 De le feme et del baceler  
 Cador voel faire aliëment. 1265  
 Si estevroit castiëment  
 Al conseil descouvrir tel home  
 Ki lor seüst montrer la some,  
 Die lor qu'il sunt d'un eäge,  
 D'une bialté, de halt parage, 1270  
 Et quant eäges les ivuelle,  
 Et bialtés, n'estroit pas merveille  
 S'andoi quesisent l'aparel  
 Qu'il en amor fuscent parel.

Segnor, jo voel que Cador ait 1275  
 Iceste mescine entresait.  
 Jes voel ensamble marier  
 Tolt sans respit, sans detrier,  
 Por cho qu'andoi le vollent faire,  
 U, se non, nen puis a chief traire, 1280  
 Se jo ne me voel desmentir,  
 Ainz me doinst Dex la mort sentir./  
 Nes voel mener oltre raison,  
 Ne querre viers els oquison  
 Qu'il n'aient lor plain anbedoi. 1285  
 Ferai lor bien que faire doi.  
 Mais il puet a tel feme tendre,  
 Et ele a tel baron entendre,  
 Qu'il m'en covenra moult pener  
 Ains que les puisse a chief mener: 1290  
 Et tols jors le m'estera faire.  
 Segnor, et por iceste afaire,  
 S'il s'acordassent ore ensamble,  
 C'estroit moult bien, si com moi samble.  
 Si lor donroie l'an .m. livres, 1295  
 Car j'en seroie donc delivres:

Neither was sure what would happen:  
 they were afraid that this council might harm their cause  
 and that the king might find some way 1255  
 to deny their request.  
 But they had nothing to worry about:  
 if they had known the king's intention,  
 they would have stopped worrying. 1260  
 The king was speaking. Listen to what he said:  
 "Lords, hear me out.  
 I do not wish to conceal from you  
 that I want to make an alliance  
 between Cador and the maiden. 1265  
 It would be a good thing  
 if there were someone at this council  
 who could explain the advantages to them,  
 tell them that they are similar in age,  
 beauty and high lineage, 1270  
 and since they are equal in youth  
 and beauty, it would not be surprising,  
 since both are seeking their like,  
 that they might be alike in love.

Lords, I want Cador 1275  
 to have this girl immediately.  
 I want to marry them  
 without any delay or hesitation —  
 that is, if they are willing.  
 If they are not, I cannot accomplish this, 1280  
 unless I want to prove myself a liar —  
 I would rather God struck me dead.  
 I don't want to put unreasonable pressure on them,  
 nor do I seek anything for them  
 except that both should have their due. 1285  
 I will do what is best for them, as I ought.  
 But he might choose such a woman  
 and she such a man  
 that I might have to work very hard  
 to convince them, 1290  
 and yet I would have to do my duty.  
 Lords, with regard to the matter before us,  
 if they were to reach an agreement at this time,  
 it would be a very good idea, it seems to me,  
 to give them a thousand pounds a year, 1295  
 I would grant them this myself,

Et la tiere de Cornuälle  
 Apriés la mort Renalt sans falle.  
 Ceste est sa fille, il est ses pere,  
 N'ont plus d'enfans, il ne la mere." 1300  
 Cho dient tuit: "Bien dist li rois.  
 N'est pas irouis, a fuer d'Irois:  
 Anchois a dit com hom loials.  
 Li siens covens est bien roials,  
 Car il ne menti ainc a home 1305  
 U voir dut dire, c'est la some.  
 A lui se doit on bien froter,  
 Car chi puet on grant bien noter."

Li cuens de Cestre a lui s'atrait  
 Et dist li bielement a trait: 1310  
 "Sire, jo nel vos quier celer  
 D'Eufemie et del baceler.  
 Jovente et folie les tensent.

Cuident voirs soit quanque il pensent.  
 Il cuident plus en .i. mois faire 1315  
 Qu'en lor vivant puissent atraire.

Alcuns i voist qui cors les tiegne  
 Et del bien monstrar li soviegne:  
 S'il ne font vostre volenté  
 N'aront la lor pas a plenté." 1320

Cho dist li rois: "Bials dols amis,  
 De ma part i serés tramis.  
 Alés i: jo vos i envoi.  
 A cest besoing mellor n'i voi  
 Ki miols les sace amoloier, 1325  
 Se vos les veés foloier."

Li cuens li dist: "Moult volentiers:  
 Et vos estés chi dementiers."  
 Atant s'en vait viers les amans  
 Et prie moult que Sains Amans/ 1330  
 Meiche entr'als si grant amor

Que on n'en oie mais clamor.  
 Mais [ne] li esteüst proier,  
 Qu'il s'en lairont bien amoier.  
 Se sa proiere fust si voire 1335  
 Tols jors, et il m'en volsist croire,  
 Ne fineroit de proier donques;  
 Car il ne cuident veïr onques  
 Eure ne tans c'on les espouse.

and the territory of Cornwall  
upon the death of Renald, without fail.  
She is his daughter, he is her father;  
she is her parents' only child." 1300  
They all said, "The king speaks well.  
He is no crazy Irishman;  
he has spoken like an honest man.  
His plan is most royal.  
He has never lied to anyone 1305  
when he was supposed to tell the truth, that's a fact.  
One should really pay careful attention to him,  
for one can learn an important lesson from him."

The count of Chester approached the king  
and spoke courteously and with deliberation: 1310  
"Sire, I do not wish to conceal  
my opinion of Eufemie and the young man.  
They are both prey to youth and folly.  
They think whatever they think is true.  
They think they can do more in a month 1315  
than they could accomplish in a lifetime.  
They need someone to set them straight  
and show them where their interests lie:  
if they do not do your will,  
they are only cheating themselves." 1320  
The king said, "Dear, good friend,  
you shall be sent on my behalf.  
Go to it! You shall be my envoy.  
I can't think of anyone more suitable,  
or who could persuade them better, 1325  
if you see that they are being foolish."  
The count said, "I'd be delighted!  
You just wait here in the meantime."  
So then he went to the lovers,  
praying fervently that Saint Amant 1330  
would cause the greatest love ever heard of  
to spring up between the two.  
But he really didn't have to pray;  
they will easily be persuaded.  
If I could convince him that all his prayers 1335  
would always be so efficacious,  
he would spend all his time praying.  
For they didn't think they would ever see  
the day when they'd be married.

Et l'uns et l'autres le golouse, 1340  
 Et prennent moult a merveille  
 Que li rois a a consellier.  
 Dient que vile et mainte joie  
 Va par conseil a male voie.  
 Cador a dit: "Que c'est tolt nient! 1345  
 Se on droiture ne nos tient,  
 Amie, j'en ferai merveille,  
 Car mes corages me conselle  
 Que en essil o vos m'en voise,  
 Tolt a laron, sans faire noise." 1350  
 Ele respont: "Tel n'oi onques!  
 Bials amis, merveilleés vus donques  
 S'essil sofrés por vostre amie,  
 Or voi qu'es homes nen a mie  
 Si grans cuers com g'i ai creü. 1355  
 Amis, or ai jo bien veü  
 Et sai de fi et sui certaine  
 Que del mal dont ne sui pas saine  
 Que vos estes en grant fretel.  
 Mais jo certes ne m'esmervel 1360  
 S'en bos vois o vus u en lande,  
 Car Amors le rueve et conmande  
 Que cascuns doie assés savoir\*  
 Cho qu'aime s'il le puet avoir  
 Certes qu'a cho cil qui bien ainme, 1365  
 S'il sor icho quiert plus et claimme,  
 Il nen est pas bien fins amans.  
 Haymmi! bials sire Sains Amans,  
 Se jo avoie mon ami  
 En un esscil ensamble o mi, 1370  
 Del sorplus voir ne me calroit!  
 Et tols li mons que me valroit,  
 Se cho que j'aim me fasoit falle?  
 Petit u nient, se Dex me valle!  
 Se cho que j'amer puis me faut, 1375  
 Cho que jo n'aim petit me valt.  
 Ki onques n'a cho qu'il desire  
 Que li valt quanque il luite et tire?/  
 Bials dols amis, se jo vos ai,  
 Assés avrai." "Se jo vos ai? 1380  
 O vos, amie, vos m'avés,  
 Tolt de fiänce le savés  
 Et qui vostre amor me tolroit

But both of them were longing for it, 1340  
 and they began to wonder a lot  
 about what was happening at the king's council.  
 They said that charters and many a cause for joy  
 come to a bad end at councils.  
 Cador said, "It doesn't matter 1345  
 if they don't deal fairly with us, love,  
 I'll give them a surprise,  
 for my innermost being counsels me  
 to seek exile with you,  
 in all secrecy, without making a noise." 1350  
 She replied, "I've never heard of such a thing!  
 Dear love, it would certainly be amazing  
 for you to suffer exile for your beloved!  
 Now I see that men's hearts  
 aren't as great as I had thought. 1355  
 Beloved, now it's clear to me,  
 I've seen for certain,  
 that you are profoundly disturbed  
 by that illness from which I suffer, too.  
 As for me, I certainly wouldn't think it strange 1360  
 to wander with you in forest or field,  
 for Love so orders and commands  
 that each should know well  
 that if he can have the one he loves,  
 if the lover has his beloved 1365  
 and seeks and demands more than this,  
 he is surely not a noble lover.  
 Ah me, good Sir Saint Amant!  
 Truly, if I had my beloved  
 in exile with me, 1370  
 I wouldn't ask for anything more.  
 And what would the whole world matter  
 if I didn't have the one I love?  
 Little or nothing, so help me God!  
 If what I love is missing, 1375  
 what I don't love doesn't matter much to me.  
 What good are all the efforts and struggles  
 of one who never has what he wants?  
 Dear sweet love, if I have you,  
 I will have enough." "If I have you?" 1380  
 Beloved, you have me with you,  
 you know it, completely and utterly,  
 and whoever deprived me of your love

- De tolt le mont ne me solroit,  
 Car altre riens ne me delite: 1385  
 Com le clameroie dont cuite?  
 Vie n'est el que deliter.  
 Ki vie tolt puet se acüter?  
 Acüter? nenil, par ma destre!"  
 Atant si vint li cuens de Cestre. 1390  
 Voit les parler et consellier  
 Priveement et orellier;  
 Et lor parole si despendre  
 Que li uns l'autre puet entendre  
 Encor oïssent il bien dur. 1395  
 Car il ont trovet ja moult sur  
 De celer lor penser adés:  
 Por cho parolent prés a prés.
- Li cuens de Cestre est moult voiseus:  
 Ainc nen oïstes mains noiseus. 1400  
 Voit les cluignier et lor esgart:  
 Dés or n'a il mais nul regart  
 Qu'il n'ait trestolt lor vol seü.  
 Fait quanses qu'il ne l'ait veü.\*  
 Estosse. "Eheu!" fait il, qu'il voient, 1405  
 Car cortois est, si violt qu'il l'oient:  
 Ne violt d'als faire pas lonc conte  
 Si sutilment qu'en n'aiente honte,  
 Qu'il ert en amor asociés,  
 Si ot esté moult asociés. 1410  
 Set bien qu'en amor a vergoigne.  
 Cadour l'entent, de li s'eslogne.  
 Muent andoi moult tost color  
 Com cil qui ont al cuer dolor.  
 Cho que viermel fu en la face 1415  
 Devint assés plus pers que glace.  
 Le pers remue en color blanche  
 Plus que n'est nois desor la brance:  
 Et quel verté que on roioigne,\*  
 Por cho qu'il ont si grant vergogne, 1420  
 Si vient del blanc colors vermelle.  
 Et jo si ai moult grant merveille  
 S'ainc fu en terre tainturieres,  
 S'il onques fu nus painturieres,  
 Ki seüst si tost un drap taindre, 1425  
 Ki peüst tant tost un fust paindre/

could not recompense me with all the world.  
 Nothing else delights me: 1385  
 how could I say we were quits?  
 Delight is the essence of life.  
 Can one who deprives me of life be acquitted?  
 Acquitted? No! upon my oath!"  
 And then the count of Chester arrived. 1390  
 He saw them talking and taking counsel  
 privately and whispering  
 and speaking in such low voices  
 that they could hear each other,  
 but not without great difficulty, 1395  
 for they have taken every care  
 to conceal their thoughts until now:  
 that is why they were standing so close while talking.

The count of Chester was very prudent;  
 you never heard of anyone less rash. 1400  
 He saw their lowered eyes, their looks:  
 he didn't need a second glance,  
 he saw at once what they wanted,  
 but he acted as if he hadn't noticed.  
 He coughed. "Ahem," he said, so they would see him, 1405  
 for he was courteous, he wanted them to hear him.  
 He didn't want to observe them for a long time  
 unobserved, so that they would feel ashamed,  
 for he knew much about love;  
 he had had much experience with love. 1410  
 He knew very well that lovers are easily shamed.  
 Cador heard him and moved away from her.  
 They both changed color rapidly,  
 like those whose hearts are filled with sorrow.  
 He whose face was crimson 1415  
 became much bluer than ice.  
 The blue changed to a white  
 whiter than snow upon the branch.  
 However one tunsures the truth,  
 they were so embarrassed 1420  
 that from white they turned to crimson again.  
 And I would be very surprised  
 if there were dyers in the land  
 or if ever there were painters  
 who could dye cloth so quickly 1425  
 or paint a beam so speedily

Tantes colors en si poi d'eure  
 Com li vergoigne a fait ambeure,  
 Primes vermel, puis piers, puis blanc;  
 Et sunt puis plus vermel de sanc. 1430  
 Or sachiés que sans grant dolor  
 N'ont pas mué si tost color.

Li cuens i vint. Dist: "Dex vus salt!  
 Ciertes, mes consals ne vus falt."  
 Puis a parlé com hom senés. 1435  
 Dist: "Jo me sui por vos penés."  
 "Vos, sire, a cui?" "Enviers le roi."  
 "Viers lui, bials sire, et vos, de quoi?"  
 "Cador, ne m'alés fausnoiant.  
 Or le dirai chi, vostre oiant. 1440  
 Que vos amés bieles Eufemie,  
 Et ele voir ne vos het mie  
 Jo m'en sui bien aperceüs,  
 Encor m'en soie jo teüs.  
 Il me sovient que j'amai ja, 1445  
 Si seu bon gré qui m'en aida.  
 Or vos ai jo moult bien aidié.  
 Se vos l'eüsciés soshaidié,  
 S'estroit il bien, se Dex me valle!  
 Car vostre iert tolte Cornuälle 1450  
 Apriés le mort Renalt le conte.  
 Or est il bien que jo vos conte:  
 Cesti\* devoit estre la terre,  
 Mais n'i a droit qu'ele puist estre,  
 Car cho savés par les .ii. contes 1455  
 Ki s'entr'ocisent, cho fu hontes,  
 Par l'oquoison des .iii. jumieles  
 Perdirent femes et puchieles  
 Lor droit de tiere calengier.  
 Or violt li rois cesti engier, 1460  
 Et vos avoec, de la conté.  
 Ene vos fait il grant bonté?"

Il oënt que li cuens de Cestre  
 Voit et entent trestolt lor estre.  
 Dient: "Se nos le seüsciens, 1465  
 Que nos avoir le peüsciens,  
 Et la conté et l'ireté,  
 Dont diriens nos par verité

with so many colors in so short a time  
 as shame has done with the two of them,  
 first red, then blue, then white,  
 and then more red than blood. 1430  
 You should know that without great suffering  
 they wouldn't have changed color so fast.

The count approached them. He said, "God greet you.  
 You certainly don't need my advice."  
 Then he spoke like the politician he was. 1435  
 "I have gone to a lot of trouble for you."  
 "You have, sir? With respect to whom?" "The king."  
 "The king, good sir? And what about?"  
 "Cador, don't play games with me.  
 I'll say it right to your face: 1440  
 you love belle Eufemie,  
 and she obviously doesn't hate you.  
 I've seen it quite clearly all along,  
 but I have kept it quiet until now.  
 I remembered that I have been in love, 1445  
 and I was grateful to him who helped.  
 Now I have helped you a great deal;  
 if you had asked me to help you,  
 it wouldn't have turned out better, so help me God!  
 for all Cornwall will be yours 1450  
 at the death of Count Renald.  
 Now it would be a good idea to explain:  
 the land should have been this lady's,  
 but she no longer has a right to it.  
 For, as you know, because of the two counts 1455  
 who killed each other so disgracefully  
 on account of the twin maidens,  
 women and girls have lost the right  
 to lay claim to land.  
 Now the king wants to bestow the land 1460  
 on this lady and you.  
 Isn't he doing you a tremendous favor?"

They could hear that the count of Chester  
 saw and understood their situation very well.  
 They said, "If we knew 1465  
 that we could have  
 both county and inheritance,  
 then we would indeed say

- Que vos avriiés fait por nos.”  
 “Par Deu! plus ai jo fait por vos, / 1470  
 Car j’ai le roi tant losengié  
 Que vos serés sempres engié  
 De tiere ki valt l’an .m. livres.  
 Li rois en violt estre delivres.  
 Offiert l’a ja, voiant sa gent.” 1475  
 “Chi a,” font il,” bel offre et gent.”  
 “Jo cuit qu’il vos esposera.”  
 Il respondent: “Car fusce ja!”  
*Fait* il: “De par le Creator,  
 Avés vos donc trestolt l’ator?” 1480  
 “Oïl, par Deu, trop en avons.”  
 Li cuens sorríst et dist: “Alons!”  
 Et cil: “En voies!” ki ont haste.\*  
 Li cuens fait sanblant qu’il ait laste.  
 Dist lor: “Alés plus bielement, 1485  
 Car trop alés isnielement.”  
 Cho fait il por auls tariier,  
 Qu’il desirent le mariier  
 Tant nequedent qu’il les amainne  
 Al roi, et dist: “Sire, a grant painne 1490  
 M’ont [il] otroié la requeste;  
 Por quant merciés lé de ceste,  
 Car il l’ont fait por vostre amor,  
 Trestolt sans noise et sans clamor.”  
 Cho dist li rois: “Jes en merci, 1495  
 Et se nus d’aus rien i pert chi,  
 Dont me raés une corone.”  
 La ot le jor mainte persone.
- Li rois a dit, voiant trestols:  
 “Cador, vos n’estes mie estols, 1500  
 Ne vos, biele Eufemie, estolte,  
 Quant ma requeste faites tolte.  
 Par an .m. livres en avrés  
 Et quanque vos sos ciel savrés  
 Que li cuens Renals tint de moi.” 1505  
 Il en merchient moult le roi.  
 Ançois que tierce fust sonée  
 Fu bele Eufemie donee.  
 Cador li preus l’a affiee,  
 Puis l’en ont al mostier menee. 1510  
 Ses esposa uns arcevesques.

that you have done much for us."  
 "By God, I did even more for you: 1470  
 I handled the king so smoothly  
 that you will have in perpetuity  
 land worth a thousand marks a year.  
 The king will award this to you;  
 he has already promised in the presence of his men." 1475  
 "This is a fine and noble offer," they said.  
 "I think he will have the two of you wed."  
 They replied, "If only we were already!"  
 He said, "By the Creator,  
 are you ready to do it right now?" 1480  
 "Yes, by God, we are more than ready!"  
 The count smiled and said, "Let's go!"  
 And they, in a rush, said, "Let's hit the road!"  
 The count pretended to be weary.  
 He said to them, "A little more decorum! 1485  
 You're moving much too fast!"  
 He did it to tease them  
 for wanting to get married.  
 But nevertheless, he brought them to the king  
 and said, "Sire, it took a lot 1490  
 to get them to agree to my request,  
 yet you should thank them for it,  
 because they did it out of love for you,  
 without any fuss or protest."  
 The king said, "I do thank them, 1495  
 and if either of them loses anything by this,  
 may I be tonsured and made monk!"

There were many people present that day.  
 The king said in the presence of everyone,  
 "Cador, you are no fool, 1500  
 and neither are you, belle Eufemie,  
 for fulfilling my request.  
 You shall have a thousand pounds a year,  
 and anything under the sun you can think of  
 that Count Renald holds in fief from me." 1505  
 They thanked the king very much for that.  
 Before tierce was sounded,  
 belle Eufemie was given away;  
 valiant Cador became her fiance.  
 Then they were taken to the cathedral, 1510  
 where an archbishop married them.

Assés i ot abés et vesques,  
 Et dus et barons et princiers.  
 Li rois kis ama et tint ciers  
 Fait nocés faire mervelloses, 1515  
 Poi mains des soies precioses.  
 Or a Cador li preus s'amie.  
 Demander ne lor estuet mie/  
 S'a voloir ont delit adés  
 Tres puis que il sunt mis a es. 1520  
 Ki longement a consirré  
 De cho que plus a desirré  
 Ja nel plaindrai s'il en consire.  
 Li rois fait metre .i. brief en cire  
 Sil tramet dant Renalt le conte. 1525  
 Or oiés que la lettre conte:  
 "Al bon Renalt de Cornuälle  
 Mande li rois qu'il vivie et valle.  
 Vostre fille ai Cador donee  
 Et grant riçoise abandonnee. 1530  
 Par an lor ai doné .m. livres.  
 Bials sire cuens, j'en sui delivres.  
 Se vos volés, venés por li,  
 U vos le lassciés entor mi.  
 Forment l'a chiere la roïne 1535  
 Car ainc n'acointa tel meschine."  
 Li cuens entent ceste noviele.  
 Sachiés de fit moult li est bieie.  
 S'a fait de gent grant assamblee,  
 Qu'aler n'i violt pas a emblee. 1540  
 .d. enmainne o soi de pris,  
 Tels com les a esslis et pris  
 En la tiere de Cornuälle.  
 Vint il al sieme jor sans falle  
 La u rois Ebains tient sa cort. 1545  
 Grans gens point contre lui et cort,  
 Car il ert hom sans vilonie,  
 Larges, cortois, sains felonie:  
 Et tels gens ert adonc amee.  
 Mais or est faintise entamee\* 1550  
 Et Vilonie est aforee.  
 Lozenge a le bouce doree;  
 Et Verités de corte est rese  
 Si qu'ele n'i valt une frese.  
 Et Amors et Valors mendie. 1555

Plenty of abbots and bishops were there,  
 and dukes and barons and princes.  
 The king, who loved them and cherished them,  
 had a marvelous nuptial feast arranged, 1515  
 only slightly less splendid than his own.  
 Now the valiant Cador has his beloved.  
 They didn't have to ask any longer;  
 they could take their pleasure to their hearts' content,  
 now that they were placed in such proximity. 1520  
 Whoever has long been deprived  
 of what he has most desired —  
 I won't pity him if he doesn't help himself to it!  
 The king had a letter sealed  
 and sent to Count Renald. 1525  
 This is what the letter said:  
 "To good Count Renald of Cornwall  
 the King sends greetings: may he live long and prosper!  
 I have given your daughter to Cador  
 and granted them a large fortune. 1530  
 I have given them a thousand pounds a year.  
 Good Sir Count, I have granted it.  
 Come to fetch your daughter, if you wish,  
 or leave her with us, if you so desire,  
 for the Queen is very fond of her; 1535  
 she has never known such a charming girl."  
 When the count received this news,  
 it was very good news to him indeed.  
 He summoned a large number of men —  
 he didn't want this trip to be a secret. 1540  
 He took five hundred worthy men,  
 chosen and selected  
 from the land of Cornwall.  
 On the seventh day he reached the place  
 where King Evan was holding court. 1545  
 Many people hastened to meet him,  
 for he was a man of great nobility.  
 generous, courteous and without treachery,  
 and such men were cherished in those days.  
 But now Deception is silver-plated, 1550  
 and Baseness has a high market value;  
 Flattery has a gilded mouth,  
 and Truth is shaved so close  
 it's not worth a strawberry,  
 while Love and Virtue go a-begging. 1555

Ne sai mais, las! que jo en die.  
 Honors ne valt mais une tille.  
 De Honte ont fait lor ciere fille.  
 Il ne le voelent marier,  
 Por rover ne por tarier, 1560  
 Mais retenir veïr en voel.\*  
 Qu'en puis jo donc, se jo m'en duel?  
 Hontes a trop esté a cort:  
 A cascun mës trote et acort.  
 En li a mais vielle puciele, 1565  
 Il n'a en tiere damoisiele/  
 Se tant se fust a cort tenue  
 Com Hontes est, ne fust kenue,  
 Vils a veïr et a savoir.  
 Et Honte voelent tolt avoir: 1570  
 Honte ont et Honte les maintient,  
 O cui vivre .m. mars sont nient.  
 Miols doi dire morir que vivre  
 Car Hontes est mors, kis enivre.  
 Tans seroit mais de lasscier Honte. 1575  
 Or voel repairier a mon conte.

Li cuens ne se tint mie a lent.  
 Il vient al roi, mercie l'ent  
 De l'onor que sa fille a faite.  
 Acorde soi; et puis afaite 1580  
 A cascun ki del sien li rueve.  
 Ki bien i quiert francise i trueve.  
 Cador l'oneure moult et ainme.  
 De lui desos Deu se reclaime,  
 Devient ses fils, et cil ses pere. 1585  
 "Or voel," cho dist li cuens, "qu'il pere  
 Que pris vos estes a prodome."  
 Al roi l'enmainne, c'est la some,  
 Si l'a illueques ravestu  
 De quanque il tient par un festu, 1590  
 Poruec que sa fille a oir viegne;  
 Se sans oir muert, icil le tiegne  
 Ki doit tenir. Les .m. livreas  
 Ait Cador, com li a livreas.  
 Cil l'en mercie de l'estrainne. 1595  
 Li cuens prent congié, sis enmainne  
 Cador et sa fille Eufemie.  
 De sejour n'i ot parlé mie,

Alas, I don't know what more to say.  
 Honor isn't worth a piece of string.  
 They have made Shame their dear daughter;  
 they don't want to find a husband for her,  
 however much they are asked and nagged. 1560  
 But I can't stand to keep looking at it!  
 What good can my grief possibly do?  
 Shame has been received at court for far too long;  
 she is at everyone's beck and call.  
 She'll always be an old maid. 1565  
 There's no damsel in the world  
 who wouldn't be all shriveled up  
 if she'd been around as long as Shame,  
 vile to know and see.  
 But they all want Shame; 1570  
 Shame they have and by Shame they are sustained,  
 for whom a thousand marks to live on are as nothing.  
 I should say die rather than live,  
 for Shame is death to him who yields to her.  
 But now it's time to leave Shame; 1575  
 I want to return to my story.

The count didn't hesitate.  
 He came to the king and thanked him  
 for the honor he had done his daughter.  
 He gave his consent, and then gave freely 1580  
 of all his possessions to anyone who asked him.  
 Whoever sought generosity found it there.  
 Cador honored and loved him greatly;  
 he prayed to God to protect him;  
 they became like father and son. 1585  
 "Now," said the count, "I want you to see  
 that you are in the hands of a worthy father."  
 In short, he took Cador to the king  
 and invested him then and there  
 with whatever he held in fief, 1590  
 provided his daughter should have an heir.  
 If she died without an heir, it should go  
 to the rightful claimant. The thousand pounds  
 were given to Cador, as had been arranged.  
 Cador thanked him for his generosity. 1595  
 The count took leave; with him he took  
 Cador and his daughter Eufemie.  
 They never spoke of staying;

Si vinrent en lor tiere arriere.  
 Tant vont par sente et par carriere 1600  
 Qu'al sieme jor sans falle [i] sunt.  
 Cil del païs grant fieste i funt,  
 Ainc mais ne vit nus hom gregnor.  
 De Cador fait li cuens segnor  
 Del tolt, sauve sa feëlté. 1605  
 Entr'als nen ot ainc cruelté,  
 Ne male amor, ne felonie.  
 Nus hom n'i vit ainc vilonie.  
 Cador le tient cier com son pere,  
 La contesse ainme com sa mere. 1610  
 Mais la vie Renalt fu poie.  
 Apriés la fieste et cele joie  
 Ne vesqui c'un an et un jor.  
 Car de nos gens n'i a c'um tor:  
 Que que nus engigne u açaigne, 1615  
 U il voelle, u il n'adagne,  
 Morir l'estuet, et nos tretolt,  
 Foibles et fors, humeles, estolt.  
 Tolt alsi fist Renals li buens.  
 Or a Cador grant dol li cuens. 1620  
 Tolte la gens de la contree  
 S'est illuec al cors encontree:  
 Et la plainte qu'il funt commune  
 Nen est fors solement cest'une:  
 "Li mors Renalt, ki nos a mort, 1625  
 Or nos acostume et amort  
 A dolozer, a dol mener,  
 Tant com vivrons et a pener.  
 Quant vos ne poés vivre o nos,  
 Ne nos morir ensamble o vos, 1630  
 Tel compagnie vos tenrons  
 Qu'a nostre vivant dol menrons."  
 Pleure Eufemie, et plaint sa mere  
 Son baron, et ceste son pere,  
 Quant Cador le conforte et dist 1635  
 Que plaindre apriés mort valt petit.  
 Ne voelle mais trop mener joie,  
 Ne plaindre trop por quanque il oie,  
 Ne por joie trop esjoïr,  
 Por rien trop mener dol, n'oïr. 1640  
 Cador le castie et conforte:  
 "Quant li cors est fors de la porte

they returned home to their lands.  
 They traveled so fast by street and way 1600  
 that they arrived on the seventh day.  
 The local people prepared a magnificent feast,  
 no one has ever seen a greater one.  
 The count made Cador overlord of all,  
 without asking his oath of fealty. 1605  
 There never was any discord between them,  
 or bad faith or treachery.  
 No one ever saw the slightest trace of base conduct.  
 Cador held the count as dear as his own father;  
 he loved the countess like a mother. 1610  
 But Count Renald didn't live much longer.  
 After the feasting and this joy  
 he lived only a year and a day.  
 It's the same for all of us:  
 whatever a man's clever schemes or plots,\* 1615  
 whether he wants to or doesn't deign to,  
 he has to die—and so do we all,  
 strong or weak, proud or humble,  
 and that is what Renald the Good did.  
 Cador mourned the count profoundly. 1620  
 All the people in the land  
 gathered around the body,  
 and the common lament they raised  
 was always one and the same:  
 "Renald's death has killed us, 1625  
 it will change our way of life  
 to one of mourning and suffering  
 and bereavement for as long as we live.  
 Since you cannot live among us,  
 and we cannot die with you, 1630  
 we will keep you company  
 by living a life of mourning."  
 Eufemie wept, her mother grieved,  
 one for her lord, one for her father.  
 Cador comforted her and said 1635  
 that grief after death is of little use.  
 One should never rejoice to excess  
 or grieve too much for any reason.  
 One should not rejoice too much from joy  
 or grieve too much, whatever the news. 1640  
 Cador chided and comforted her,  
 "When the body is out the door

Et enfoïs et enterrés,  
 El sarcu mis et enserrés,  
 Si est li diols apetiziés." 1645  
 Cador a fait com hom voisiés,  
 Que anchois que li cuens morust,  
 Que folors n'i entrecorust,  
 En tols les castials mist ses gardes,  
 Tels gens ki ne sunt pas coârdes. 1650

Chi le lairons del mort ester.  
 N'i fait pas trop bon arester:  
 Ki vis est o les vis se tiegne.  
 Deu, se lui plaist, des mors soviegne. 1655  
 Huïmais orrés conte aviver,  
 Sans noise faire et estriver.  
 De Cador, de s'engendreüre  
 Comence chi tels aventure  
 C'ainques n'oïstes tele en livre. 1660  
 Si com l'estorie le nos livre,  
 Qu'en latin escrite lizons,  
 En romans si le vos disons. /  
 Jo ne di pas que n'i ajoigne  
 Avoic le voir sovent mençoigne 1665  
 Por le conte miols acesmer:  
 Mais se jel puis a droit esmer  
 N'i metrai rien qui m'uevre enpire  
 Ne del voir nen iert mos a dire  
 Car la verté ne doi taisir. 1670  
 Avint si par le Deu plaisir  
 Que Eufemie ot conceü.  
 Quant li cuens l'a aperceü,  
 Si prie Deu moult, par sa grasce,  
 Que de cel fruit haitië le face,  
 Si com par lui vint a semence, 1675  
 Par pechië qu'aient fait ne mence:  
 Mais soit l'enfantemens salvables,  
 Et l'enfes ait membres raisnables,  
 Que rien n'i ait mespris Nature  
 Quant molla cel fruit en figure; 1680  
 Et quant la dame en iert delivre  
 Qu'ele ait santé, l'enfes puist vivre.  
 A une part la dame enmainne.  
 Parole moult de cele estrainne  
 Dont Dex lor a fait demostrance: 1685

and in the ground and covered with earth  
 and sealed in the tomb,  
 then it's time for sorrow to diminish." 1645

Cador acted like a prudent man:  
 as soon as the count died,  
 to prevent any rash behavior,  
 he stationed his guards in all the castles,  
 the kind of men who are not cowards. 1650

Let's stop talking of death now;  
 it's not such a good idea to dwell on it.  
 The live are better off among the living;  
 let it please God to be mindful of the dead.  
 From now on you shall hear a lively tale, 1655  
 without any further fuss or ado.

Of Cador and his offspring  
 begins such a tale of adventure  
 as you never heard of in any book.  
 Just as it was written 1660  
 in the Latin version we read,  
 we will tell it to you in French.

I'm not saying that there isn't  
 a good deal of fiction mingled with truth,  
 in order to improve the tale, 1665  
 but if I am any judge of things,  
 I'm not putting in anything that will spoil the work,  
 nor will there be any less truth in it,  
 for truth should not be silenced.

It so happened that it pleased God 1670  
 to have Eufemie conceive a child.

When the count was told of this,  
 he prayed fervently that God in his mercy  
 might make this fruit healthy  
 and let it ripen as if it were His, 1675

and not let it be defective from parents' sin,  
 but let the pregnancy progress safely,  
 and let the child have proper limbs,  
 and let Nature have neglected nothing  
 when she molded this fruit into human shape; 1680  
 and when the lady is delivered of it,  
 let her be well and let the child live.

He took the lady aside  
 and discussed this gift  
 with which God had favored them. 1685

"Devant le colp ai grant dotance,  
 Biele, que nostre engendreüre  
 Tort a femiele porteüre,  
 Se Dex tant done que il nasce;  
 Que li rois Ebayns pas ne lassce 1690  
 Que femes aient iretage  
 A son vivant, por le damage  
 Des .iii. contes par les jumieles,  
 Sin ont moult perdu les femieles."

"Bials sire ciers," cho dist la dame, 1695  
 "En moi, cho savés, n'a nul blasme  
 Quels qu'il soit, masles u femiele;  
 Mais Dex qui crie home et apiele  
 Otroit que lie en soit la mere  
 Et soit a plaizir de son pere." 1700

"Ma dolce amie," dist li cuens,  
 "Jhesus li plus, li vrais, li buens,  
 Il fist Adan, cho est la voire,  
 Et Evain de sa coste en oire.  
 Es vos l'entensiön reposte 1705

Por quoi il le fist de sa coste,  
 Qu'ensi fuscent d'une voellance  
 Com il sunt fait d'une sustance,  
 Andoi eüscent un voloir,  
 A l'esjoir, et al doloir. / 1710

Entr'ome et feme a grant commune,  
 Car d'als .ii. est la sustance une,  
 Et adonques meësmement  
 Quant il i a esposement,  
 Car el saintisme sacrement 1715

De nostre Noviel Testament  
 Met on entr'als tele aliänce,  
 Cho sachiés vos tolt a fiance,  
 C'uns sans et une cars devienent:  
 Sor als est puis s'il ne se tienent. 1720

Biele, quant nostre cars est une,  
 Soit nostre volentés commune.  
 Le sanc avons [nos] als commun,  
 Or aiens le voloir commun."

La dame li repont: "Bials sire, 1725  
 Ja rien que vostres cuers desiré  
 N'orés par moi estre escondie."  
 "Entendés moi, suer, dolce amie,

"My dear, I am deeply concerned  
 about the possibility that the child we have engendered  
 might turn out to be female  
 (if God allows it to be born),  
 and that King Evan may not allow 1690  
 women to inherit  
 as long as he lives, because of the damage done  
 to two counts by twin girls,  
 through which females have lost so much."

"Dear, sweet Sire," said the lady, 1695  
 "I am not to blame, you know,  
 whether the child is male or female.  
 God who created and who watches over mankind  
 has decreed that the mother should be happy  
 and the father pleased with any child." 1700

"My sweet love," said the count,  
 "Jesus the pious, true, and good  
 created Adam, this we know to be true,  
 and right away created Eve from his rib.  
 And here is the hidden reason 1705  
 why he made her from his rib:  
 so that they would be of one mind,  
 as they are made of one substance.  
 Both should be of one mind,  
 united in joy and sorrow. 1710

There is great unity between man and woman,  
 because the two are of one substance.  
 And it is the same  
 when they are married,  
 for, with the most holy sacrament 1715  
 of our New Testament,  
 such an alliance is made between them  
 that you should know for certain  
 they become one flesh and blood.

It is upon their heads if they don't hold to this thereafter. 1720  
 Since, my sweet, our flesh is one,  
 let our will be one as well.  
 Since our blood is one,  
 let us be of one mind."

The lady replied to him, "Sweet lord, 1725  
 nothing that your heart desires  
 will I refuse you."

"Hear me, sister, sweet friend:

Quant vos ventres vos akioldra  
 (Cho iert adonc quant Dex voldra) 1730  
 A vo delivrer n'avra mie  
 Fors une feme, dolce amie.  
 —Ne le me tornés mie a blasme—  
 N'i avrés c'une sole dame.  
 Feme fu un per d'Engletiere 1735  
 Ki morut l'autrier d'une guere,  
 Et la dame en remest enchante.  
 Apriés sa mort cha vint a m'ante.  
 D'enfant se delivra l'altrier:  
 Par non l'apiela on Galtier. 1740  
 Ne vesqui mais tant solement  
 .viii. jors puis le baptisement.  
 La dame si est ma cosine  
 Et somes trestolt d'une orine.  
 Cesti seule vos voel livrer 1745  
 Quant cho vendra al delivrer.  
 Lequel qu'aiés, masle u femiele,  
 Par la dame me mandés, biele,  
 Que un bel fil avés eü,  
 Oiant trestols qu'il soit seü. 1750  
 Car se nos avons une fille  
 N'avra al montant d'une tille  
 De quanque nos sos ciel avons,  
 Se nos l'afaire ne menons  
 Si cointement par couverture 1755  
 Que on n'en sace l'aventure.  
 Faisons le com un fil norir,  
 De priés garder et bien covrir,  
 Si le porons\* del nostre engier.  
 Nus nel pora ja calengier." 1760  
 Cho respont la contesse encontre:  
 "Dex me doinst, sire, mal encontre,  
 Se jo nel fac moult volentiers."  
 La dame mande endementiers,  
 Et cele i vient isnielement 1765  
 Et est rechute bielement.  
 Li cuens se cozinain enmainne  
 O lui en sa cambre demainne,  
 Se li demostre tolt l'affaire  
 Si qu'ele entent bien que doit faire. 1770  
 Li cuens li fait bele promesse  
 Et moult li promet la contesse.

when it is time for you to give birth  
 (which will happen in God's time), 1730  
 you shall have only one woman  
 to deliver you, sweet love—  
 please do not blame me for this—  
 you shall have only one lady.  
 She was the wife of a peer of England 1735  
 who died a while ago in a war,  
 leaving the lady pregnant.  
 After his death, she came to my aunt's  
 and was shortly delivered of a child  
 who was given the name of Walther. 1740  
 He lived only a week  
 after being baptized.  
 The lady is my cousin;  
 we are very closely related.  
 I will bring you this one woman alone 1745  
 when it is time for the baby to be delivered.  
 Whichever you have, male or female,  
 you shall have the lady announce to me,  
 sweet, that you have had a fine son;  
 let it be announced in the presence of all. 1750  
 For if we have a daughter,  
 she won't get a single shred  
 of our earthly possessions,  
 unless we arrange things so  
 cleverly and secretly 1755  
 that nobody finds out what we're up to.  
 We will raise her as a boy,  
 watch her closely and keep her covered up.  
 Thus we will be able to make her our heir;  
 no one will be able to challenge it." 1760  
 To this the countess replied,  
 "May God see fit to punish me,  
 if I do not do this most willingly."  
 Then they sent for the lady;  
 she came right away 1765  
 and was most cordially received.  
 The king conducted his cousin  
 to his private chambers  
 and there explained the whole situation to her,  
 so that she understood perfectly well what to do. 1770  
 The count promised her many things;  
 the countess promised her a great deal.

- Cele dist qu'el le servira,  
 Venra entor li et ira.  
 La dame plus et plus apoise 1775  
 Et de son mal le conte poise.  
 L'enfes l'angoissce, et point, et broce.  
 Li jors del agezir aproce.  
 Vos savés qu'a moi nient ne monte  
 C'on mecce en rime ne en conte 1780  
 Come la dame fu penec  
 A l'enfanter et demenee.  
 Mais tant dirai, ele enfanta,  
 Et ot enfant, tant en pena.  
 Moult fu la contesse adolee 1785  
 Car l'enfertés li est colee  
 El cuer, es os, es niers, es vainnes,  
 Car moult a eü de grans painnes.  
 La dame ert cozine al segnor.  
 Onques n'ot mais travail gregnor, 1790  
 Car seule fu sans compagne  
 Al delivrer de la contesse.  
 Et on vos a sovent retrait  
 Que mal a ki malade trait.
- Or voel a l'enfant repairier 1795  
 Et demostre et esclairier  
 Liquels cho fu, masle u femiele.  
 Segnor, cho fu une puchiele.  
 Nature i mostre tolte s'uevre.  
 Se jo le vus di et descuevre 1800  
 Quels l'uevre fu, ne vos anuit,  
 Car vos devés bien estre aduit,  
 Se vos volés savoir un conte,  
 D'entendre et oïr cho que monte.  
 Nature qui moult grant force a 1805  
 Vint a l'enfant, si s'esforça./  
 Dist: "Or voel faire ouvre forcible."  
 Tolt si com cil qui prent un crible,  
 U tamis, u un buletiel,  
 Quant faire violt blanc pain e biel, 1810  
 Et quant la farine i a mise  
 Dunt crible, u bulette, u tamise,  
 Et torne le flor d'une part,  
 Et le gros terchuel en depart,

The lady said she would serve her;  
 she would act as go-between.  
 The countess grew heavy with child; 1775  
 the count was distressed by her discomfort.  
 The child pressed upon her and kicked her and jabbed her.  
 The day of her confinement grew near.  
 You know that I have no special interest  
 in telling in prose or verse 1780  
 how the lady suffered torment  
 and how her body was contorted in childbirth.  
 But I will say this: she went into labor  
 and had the baby, however much pain it cost her.  
 The countess was in agony. 1785  
 The spasms coursed through her heart  
 and bones and nerves and veins.  
 Hre contractions were prolonged and very painful.  
 The lady who was the lord's cousin  
 never had a more difficult task, 1790  
 for she was alone, without anyone to help her,  
 throughout the countess's delivery.  
 And, as has often been said,  
 ill-used is the one who treats the ill.

Now let us turn to the child 1795  
 and clear things up and reveal  
 whether it was a boy or a girl.  
 My lords, it was a girl!  
 She was a triumph of Nature's art.  
 If I tell you all about 1800  
 this handiwork, don't be annoyed,  
 for you ought to be well informed,  
 if you ask to hear a story,  
 in order to understand what it's really about.  
 Nature, who has great powers, 1805  
 came to the child and took hold of it  
 and said, "Now I'm going to create a masterpiece."  
 Just like the one who takes a sieve  
 or sifter or colander  
 when he wants to make beautiful white bread, 1810  
 and sifts the flour through  
 the sifter, sieve or colander,  
 and puts the extra-fine flour on one side  
 and the coarse bran on the other,

Et fait adonc un entreclos 1815  
 Entre le fleur blanche et le gros,  
 Si qu'o le fleur n'a nule palle,  
 Ne busce nule, ne escalle,  
 Ne entre tolt l'autre monciel  
 De fleur vallant un botonciel, 1820  
 Et de la fleur fait ses gastials,  
 Et del tercuel torte a porciels,  
 Tolt si com cis fait sans dotance  
 Que chi ai mis en la sanblance,  
 Si fait Nature, c'est la some, 1825  
 Quante faire violt un vallant home  
 Que voelle ovrer par majestyre.  
 Premièrement prent sa matyre.  
 Avant tolte ouvre si l'esmie,  
 Et moult l'espurge, et esniie; 1830  
 Et quant l'a moult bien esmiié  
 Si oste del gros le delié.  
 De cel delié si fait sans falle  
 Les buens, et del gros la frapalle.  
 Mais se il avient que Nature 1835  
 Soit corocie, u que n'ait cure  
 C'un poi del gros al delié viegne  
 Et al mollier avoec se tiegne,  
 Cil gros se trait al cuer en oire.  
 Et se ne me volés or croire 1840  
 Vos le poés par vos prover.  
 Ne poés vos sovent trover  
 Vil cuer et povre, et riche cors  
 Kist sarpelliere par defors?  
 Li cors n'est mais fors sarpelliere, 1845  
 Encor soit de la terre chiere;  
 Mais li cuers ne valt une alie  
 K'est fais de grosse et de delie.\*  
 Et s[e] un poi de chiere terre  
 Se melle avoec la grosse et serre 1850  
 Dont Nature fait le bas home,  
 Al cuer se trait, c'en est la some.  
 Et par cho vient que halt corage  
 Ont mainte gent de bas parage./  
 Si com maint noble sont sollié, 1855  
 De lor vils cuers entoëllié,  
 Si sunt li bas de grant affaire  
 A cel pooir qu'il pueent faire;

and carefully keeps 1815  
 the extra-fine flour separate from the coarse,  
 so that the fine flour has no straw  
 or chaff or husks in it,  
 and the other little heap  
 doesn't have the least little bit of fine flour, 1820  
 and makes fine cakes of the flour  
 and loaves for the pigs out of the bran—  
 just like this, without a doubt,  
 like the one we have depicted here,  
 does Nature, to be brief, 1825  
 proceed when she wants to make a noble human being  
 that she wants to be a masterpiece.  
 She first prepares her raw material.  
 Before starting to work, she breaks it up  
 and purifies it and cleans it, 1830  
 and when she has broken it into little pieces,  
 she separates the fine from the coarse.  
 She always makes quality folk from  
 the refined clay, and riff-raff from the coarse.  
 But if it happens that Nature 1835  
 is in a bad mood and isn't careful,  
 so that a little of the coarse gets mixed in with the fine  
 and is retained in the molding,  
 this coarse matter attacks the heart right away.  
 And if you don't care to believe me, 1840  
 you can prove it for yourself.  
 Don't you often find  
 a poor, vile heart with a rich body,  
 which is nothing but sackcloth on the outside?  
 The body is mere sackcloth, 1845  
 even if it's made from the finest clay,  
 and the heart made of coarse mixed with fine  
 isn't worth a crab-apple.  
 But if a bit of fine clay  
 is mingled and sticks with the coarse stuff 1850  
 out of which Nature makes the low-born,  
 it works upon the heart, in truth.  
 And that is why lofty character  
 may be found in many of low station,  
 just as many nobles are sullied, 1855  
 dragged down by the vileness of their hearts,  
 while there are men of low degree but noble character  
 who do the very best they can,

Et plain de moult grant honesté  
Sunt, et seront, et ont esté. 1860

De cho le lairai ore atant.  
Repairier voel a cel enfant  
Dont jo vus ai fait mentiön.  
Nature i mist s'ententiön.  
Li matere est et biele et pure. 1865

Ainc de mellor n'ovra Nature.  
Biele est, sel fait encor plus bele,  
Car faire en volra sa puciele.  
Cho dist Nature l'engignose  
Ki en s'ovraigne est mervellose: 1870

"Ainc mais nen endurai a prendre  
Ceste matere, ne despendre:  
Or la prendrai houes ma mescine.  
Tant com la materre est plus fine  
Covient il plus l'uevre afiner, 1875

Bien commencer et miols finer.  
La matere ai moult estuïe,  
Si a[i] estei moult anuïe  
De grosse ouvre, et de vilainne.  
Or voel a cesti mettre painne. 1880

En li sole, car bel me sanble,  
Metrai plus de bialté ensanble  
Que n'aient ore .m. de celes  
Qui en cest monde sont plus beles.  
Alcune fois doit paroïr m'uevre." 1885

A son secré va, si descuevre.  
Molles i a bien .m. milliers,  
Que cho li est moult grans mestiers,  
Car s'ele n'eüst forme c'une,  
La samblance estroit si commune 1890

De tolte gent, c'on ne savroit  
Quoi, ne quel non, cascuns avroit.  
Mais Nature garda si bien  
En s'uevre n'a a blasmer rien.  
Ele a formes grans et petites, 1895

Laides, contrefaites, parfites,  
Car si sunt faites tolte gent,  
Grant et petit, et biel, et gent,  
Tant mainte forme i a diverse.  
Et Nature en a une aërse. 1900

and are full of integrity;  
are, were, and always will be. 1860

I'm going to drop this subject now;  
I want to get back to that infant  
whom I mentioned to you before.  
Nature puts forth her noblest efforts.  
The clay is beautiful and pure. 1865

Nature never made anything better.\*  
The child is beautiful; Nature is making her more beautiful  
still,

for she wants her to be her own little girl.  
Thus speaks ingenious Nature,  
whose works are marvelous: 1870

"I will no longer hesitate to take  
this clay and use it:  
I will use it now to make my girl.  
The finer the material,  
the more fitting it is to do fine work,  
to begin well and finish better. 1875

I have been very sparing with good material,  
but now I am quite bored  
with crude work and vulgarity.  
Now I want to take pains with this one. 1880

In her alone—for I wish it to be so—  
I shall assemble more beauty  
than a thousand of the most beautiful girls  
in the whole world now possess.

Once in a while I must show what I can do." 1885

She goes to her coffer and opens it up.  
She has at least a million molds there,  
and she has very great need of them,  
for if she had only one form,  
everyone would look so much alike 1890  
that no one would ever be able to tell  
who was who or what their name was.

But Nature takes such care  
that there is nothing to fault in her work.  
She has forms both big and little, 1895

ugly, misshapen, and perfect,  
for thus all people are fashioned,  
big and little, handsome and fine,  
she has so many different forms.  
But one mold she has kept aside; 1900

Ainc mais user ne l'endura.  
 Nature quanque a fait jura  
 Qu'or a d'ovrer moult bon talent.  
 Prist cele forme, porta l'ent,  
 Va cele part a entençon 1905  
 U doit ovrer, comence en son:  
 Biel cief fait, bloie kievalure  
 Ki luisent cler par nuit obscure.  
 La kavelure recercelle;  
 De la greve dusque a l'orelle 1910  
 Com une ligne droit descent  
 Sique ses poins ne se desment.  
 La kavelure al cief li serre:  
 Ja n'estevra la greve querre,  
 Ne al pinier ne al trecier, 1915  
 Car Nature iert al redrecier.  
 Les orelles li fait petites  
 Nature, ki les a escrites,  
 Les sorcils bruns et bien seöir,  
 Nul hom ne puet si bials veöir. 1920

Cho dist Nature: "Jo m'en duel  
 Se riens i falt." Dont part l'entruel  
 De son polcier si bielement,  
 Et dont li fait isnielement  
 Plain volt, et face bien retraite, 1925  
 Et la color si bien refaite.  
 Cho dist Nature: "C'iert ma fille."  
 Atant la face li bresille,  
 Et com plus croistra la puciele,  
 Et li colors en la masciele. 1930  
 La bouce escrist, fait l'overture  
 Petite, et levres a mesure,  
 Sor le menton les dens serrés.  
 Ja nul si bel volt ne verrés.  
 Apriés li fait col blanc et lonc, 1935  
 Voltice espaule par selonc,  
 Et les bras li fait si tres drois,  
 Les mains petites, lons les dois,  
 Le pis bien fait, graisles les flans,  
 Miols faite ne vit sers ne frans. 1940  
 Et les hances si fait voltices,  
 Les cuisses moles et faitices.  
 Les janbes droites fist Nature,

she has never used it yet.  
 Nature swears by all she has made  
 that she really feels like getting to work now.  
 She takes that mold and carries it out  
 and goes to where she intends to work 1905  
 and begins right at the top.  
 She fashions a beautiful head, blond hair—  
 the kind that shines brightly in the dark night.  
 The head of hair curls around;  
 from the part to the ear 1910  
 it falls evenly,  
 Nature's hand is so steady.  
 She attaches the hair to the head:  
 you won't have to look for the part,  
 whether you comb it or braid it, 1915  
 for Nature will set it perfectly straight.  
 Nature designed and drew  
 a pair of little ears,  
 made eyebrows, brown and very neat;  
 no one has ever seen such beautiful ones. 1920

Then Nature says, "I would be sorry  
 if anything were lacking." Then with her thumb  
 she forms the space between the two eyes beautifully,  
 and quickly makes  
 the whole face, and traces a well-turned visage 1925  
 and colors it most beautifully.  
 Nature says, "This will be my girl!"  
 The more she applies color to the face,  
 the more the girl's beauty will be enhanced.,  
 and the color on her cheeks deepened. 1930  
 She designs the mouth, makes the opening small,  
 and forms the lips to match,  
 places the teeth well and forms the chin—  
 you will never see a more beautiful face.  
 And then she makes a long white neck, 1935  
 and forms the curve of the shoulders along with it.  
 And she makes the arms very straight,  
 the hands small, the fingers long,  
 the bosom well-turned, slender sides;  
 neither serf nor freeman ever saw better. 1940  
 And she makes the hips rounded,  
 the thighs soft and shapely.  
 Nature makes the legs straight,

- Et piés, et ortalz a mesure.  
 Que vos feroie huimaïs alonge? 1945  
 Vos le tenrés puet s'estre a songe.  
 Ainc belizors voir ne vesqui  
 De li el monde, ne nasqui,  
 Al plus droit que jo puis esmer.  
 En li n'a niënt a blasmer/ 1950  
 Fors solement qu'ele est trop biele,  
 Que tant en a en la puciele  
 Qu'a .m. peüst assés savoir,  
 Se tant en peüscent avoir  
 Et de bialté et de faiture. 1955  
 Ainc n'ovra mais si bien Nature  
 A rien ki morir doitve vivre.  
 Bele Eufemie en est delivre.  
 De l'angoisse est resalenee,  
 Que sa fille est si biele nee. 1960  
 La grans angoisce l'atenrist,  
 Mais cele bialtés amenrist  
 Sa grant angoisse et s'enfertés.  
 Si con ç'avint dirai vertés.  
 Cele qui fu o la contesse 1965  
 Cui li cuens ot fait la promesse,  
 Et fu sa cozine germaine,  
 Al conte vait noncier l'estraïne.  
 Vient en la sale tolt riant,  
 Oiant tols les barons criant: 1970  
 "Faites vos liet, bials sire cuens!  
 Jhesus li plus, li vrais, li buens,  
 Un moult bel fil vos a tramis.  
 Or avés vos moult plus d'amis."
- Tolte la cors est esjoïe 1975  
 Por la noviele c'ont oïe.  
 N'i ot ainc mais joie gregnor.  
 Li cuens mercie cel Segnor  
 Par cui il pluet, et vente, et halle,  
 Lequel qu'il ait, femiele u malle; 1980  
 Mais volentiers, se Deu pleüst,  
 Presist le fil se il l'eüst.  
 Si en est en moult grant error,  
 Car il n'en set pas la verlor.  
 O l'error se melle esperance, 1985  
 Et o l'esperance se melle errance.

and feet and toes in proportion.  
 Why should I go on like this? 1945  
 You'll probably think it's all a dream.  
 But never, in truth lived a more beautiful creature  
 in this world, nor was anything more lovely ever born.  
 As near as I can estimate,  
 there is absolutely nothing wrong with this girl— 1950  
 except that she's too beautiful.  
 For there is so much beauty in her  
 that it would be plenty for a thousand,  
 if they could share  
 such beauty and workmanship. 1955  
 Nature will never work so well  
 on any mortal being again.  
 Belle Eufemie was delivered of this child.  
 Her anguish was somewhat assuaged  
 because her daughter was born so beautiful. 1960  
 She was weak from her terrible ordeal,  
 but this beauty attenuated  
 her great pain and weakness.  
 Now I will tell you truly what happened next:  
 the woman who was with the countess— 1965  
 the one the count had promised so much  
 and who was his first cousin—  
 went to announce the news to the count.  
 She came into the room all smiles,  
 and cried out in the presence of all the barons, 1970  
 "Rejoice, good Sir Count!  
 Jesus the pious, the true, the good  
 has granted you a most beautiful son—  
 a fine addition to the family."

The entire court rejoiced 1975  
 when they heard the news;  
 there never was greater rejoicing.  
 The count gave thanks to the Lord  
 who brings rain and wind and scorching heat  
 for whichever it was, male or female. 1980  
 But he would gladly, if it pleased God,  
 have taken a son if given one.  
 He was in a state of tremendous uncertainty,  
 for he didn't know the truth.  
 With uncertainty, hope was mingled, 1985  
 and with hope, uncertainty.

La lie chiere de la dame  
 Ki en riant nonça la fame  
 L'errance de son cuer deboute;  
 Mais par lui mesme i est la doute, 1990  
 Qu'il rova porter la noviele,  
 Que qu'il eüst, malle u femiele,  
 Qu'il eüst un bel fil eüt.  
 Desire qu'ait le voir seüt.  
 La sale est de chevaliers plaine: 1995  
 Grans est la joie c'on i mainne.  
 Uns bedials crie c'om s'acoise:  
 "Ma dame n'a mestier de noise!"/  
 Cil voidierent errant la cort,  
 Et li cuens en la cambre acort 2000  
 Por l'estre savoir et enquerre.  
 L'uis de la cambre apriés lui serre.  
 Li voloits qu'a del voir savoir  
 Tolt qu'il ne puet vergoigne avoir  
 Qu'al lit ne voist de l'acolcie. 2005  
 De sa main destre l'a tocie,  
 Et cele en a moult grant vergoigne.  
 Li cuens porquant ne s'en eslogne,  
 Ainz dist: "Comment est, bieie amie?"  
 Cele respont qu'el n'avra mie 2010  
 Angoisse que ne puist porter  
 Tolt por son segnor conforter.  
 "Biele, de vostre engendreüre  
 Voldroie savoir l'aventure,  
 Lequel cho est, malle u femiele, 2015  
 Oïr en voel certe noviele."  
 "Se vos, bials sire, nel savés,  
 Jo vos di c'une fille avés.  
 S'est la plus bieie creäture  
 C'ainc en cest mont fesist Nature." 2020  
 Atant sa fille li ensaigne.  
 Li cuens le voit, et si le saine.  
 Puis dist: "Li Sires ki te fist,  
 Et en tel figure te mist,  
 Te doinst cho que desir veïr, 2025  
 Et croistre te face et tehîr,  
 Et a ta mere doinst santé."  
 Li cuens s'en a forment vanté,  
 Qu'il ne donroit mie une tille

The cheerful demeanor of the lady  
 who smilingly announced the news  
 opposed the doubt in his heart,  
 but he himself had caused this doubt 1990  
 when he asked her to announce  
 that he had a fine son  
 whether it was a boy or a girl.  
 He wanted to know the truth.  
 The hall was full of knights; 1995  
 everyone was celebrating wildly.  
 An official called for them to be quiet:  
 "My lady has no need of noise!"  
 They emptied out the hall and scattered.  
 The count rushed to the bedchamber 2000  
 to find out how things really stood.  
 He locked the door of the bedchamber behind him.  
 His desire to know the truth  
 took away any feeling of shame  
 which would have kept him from approaching a woman in  
 childbed. 2005  
 He took her hand in his;  
 she was very embarrassed at this,  
 but the count did not go away.  
 He said, "How are you, dearest love?"  
 She said there would never be 2010  
 pain too great for her to endure  
 for the sake of her lord's well-being.  
 "Sweet love, I wanted to know how things turned out,  
 whether you gave birth  
 to a boy or a girl, 2015  
 I would like to know for certain."  
 "If you don't know, dear lord,  
 I will tell you that you have a daughter.  
 She is the most beautiful creature  
 ever placed in this world by Nature." 2020  
 Then she showed him his daughter.  
 The count saw her and blessed her.  
 Then he said, "May the lord who created you  
 and gave you such a lovely form  
 grant you whatever you desire 2025  
 and make you grow and flourish,  
 and grant good health to your mother.  
 The count swore up and down  
 that he wouldn't give a trifle

De solte a un fil de sa fille, 2030  
 Car ainc ne vit si biele cose.  
 Color i voit de lis, de rose.  
 Se Deux en done l'aventure  
 Qu'il en puist faire couverture,  
 Donques a il quanque il desire. 2035  
 A la contesse prent a dire:  
 "Consel nos convenra aquierre  
 Que nos oirs ne perge sa tierre.  
 Je le voel, biele, desguiser,  
 Si com m'oïstes deviser. 2040  
 Faire en voel malle de femiele.  
 Or en pensés, amie biele,  
 Car nos ne poö[n]s pas savoir  
 Se jamais poriens malle avoir.  
 Nos n'en somes pas aseür, 2045  
 Et se nos l'avons par eür/  
 Cesti ferons desvaleter.  
 Nus ne nos en pora reter  
 De traïson, de felonie,  
 De malvaistié, de vilonie. 2050  
 Et se nos falons a oir malle,  
 Ceste ira al vent et al halle,  
 A la froidure et a la bize.  
 Moult bone garde i avra mize.  
 Devant le ferai estalcier, 2055  
 Fendre ses dras, braies calcier.  
 Et ceste dame i metra painne,  
 Ki est ma cozine germainne.  
 Devenra por m'amor norice.  
 Se jo sui manans ele iert riche. 2060  
 Mar avra ja de honte soig  
 S'or me secort a cest besoiing.  
 Sel faisons ore baptizier  
 Et nostre dolte apetizier,  
 Car se de baptesme a l'eür 2065  
 Nos en seromes plus seür.  
 Sel faisons apieler Scilense  
 El non de Sainte Paciensce,  
 Por cho que silensce tolt ance.  
 Que Jhesus Cris par sa poissance 2070  
 Le nos doinst celer et taisir,  
 Ensi com lui est a plaizir!

to exchange his girl for a boy, 2030  
 for he had never seen such a beautiful thing.  
 She was the color of lilies and roses.  
 If God gives him the chance  
 to conceal her sex,  
 he will have everything he wants. 2035  
 He said to the countess,  
 "We ought to devise a plan  
 to keep our heir from losing her lands.  
 Dearest, I want to disguise her,  
 as you heard me say before. 2040  
 I want to make a male of a female.  
 Think about it, dearest love,  
 for there is no way we can know  
 if we will ever have a son.  
 We can't be sure of it, 2045  
 and if we do have one, by any chance,  
 we'll turn this one back into a girl.  
 That way, no one can accuse us  
 of treason or felony,  
 of wickedness or villainy. 2050  
 But if we don't have a male heir,  
 this girl-child will wander in wind and scorching sun,  
 in freezing cold and autumn breeze.  
 We will watch over her very carefully.  
 We will have her hair cut short in front, 2055  
 have her wear garments split at the sides and dress her in  
 breeches,  
 and the lady who is my first cousin  
 will take care of everything.  
 She will be nursemaid out of loyalty to me.  
 If I prosper, she shall be rich. 2060  
 She will never have to worry about being poor or abandoned  
 if she helps me now with this task.  
 Now let us have the baby baptized,  
 and then we can relax a little.  
 For if we are lucky with the baptism, 2065  
 we will be in a much stronger position.  
 We shall call her Silence,  
 after Saint Patience,  
 for silence relieves anxiety.  
 May Jesus Christ through his power 2070  
 keep her hidden and silent for us,  
 according to his pleasure.

Mellor conseil trover n'i puis.  
 Il iert només Scilenscius;  
 Et s'il avient par aventure 2075  
 Al descovrir de sa nature  
 Nos muerons cest -us en -a,  
 S'avra a non Scilencia.  
 Se nos li tolons dont cest -us  
 Nos li donrons natural us, 2080  
 Car cis -us est contre nature,  
 Mais l'altres seroit par nature."  
 Dunt dist la contesse et la dame:  
 "En quanque dit avez n'a blasme,  
 Se l'enfes fust crestienés." 2085  
 Dont vient li cuens ki est senés.  
 Un drap li loie entor les rains  
 Imesmes de ses bieles mains,  
 Que li prestres par aventure  
 Nen aparçoivie sa nature. 2090  
 Si dira on al capelain,  
 Ançois qu'il i mecce sa main,  
 Que il en haste le baptize,  
 Car la vie li apetize,/  
 Et que l'enfant poroit tuer 2095  
 Ki le drap volroit remuer.  
 El conte ot bien cointe home et sage;  
 De soi meïsme a fait message.  
 Le capelain vias apiele,  
 Se l'amaïne en la capiele, 2100  
 Se li a dit: "Mes fils se muert."  
 Et li priestres ses puins detuert.  
 Li cuens li dist: "Ne monte rien,  
 Vos diols ne fait ne mal ne bien.  
 N'avra por cho ne bien ne mel. 2105  
 Mais aprestés l'aigue et le sel."  
 Et il dist a son clerc: "Diva!  
 Va ent poruec!" Et cil i va,  
 Prent aigue en un vassiel de lanbre  
 Et sel a pris en une canbre 2110  
 Ki voisine ert a la capiele.  
 Li cuens sa cozinain apiele  
 Et ele vient atolt l'enfant  
 Oltre ses bras son cief pendant.  
 Com s'il deüst morir li loche, 2115  
 Car la dame de gret l'ahoce,

I can't think of a better plan.  
 He will be called Silentius.  
 And if by any chance 2075  
 his real nature is discovered,  
 we shall change this -us to -a,  
 and she'll be called Silentia.  
 If we deprive her of this -us,  
 we'll be observing natural usage, 2080  
 for this -us is contrary to nature,  
 but the other would be natural."  
 The countess and the lady both said,  
 "Everything you say is true,  
 if the child were to be christened thus." 2085  
 Then the clever count came  
 and put a cloth around the child's hips  
 with his own hands,  
 so that the priest might not  
 accidentally perceive her nature. 2090  
 The chaplain will be told,  
 before he lays a hand on the child,  
 that he must baptize it in haste,  
 because its life is ebbing fast,  
 and the child might die 2095  
 if its wrap were removed.  
 The count was truly a clever man;  
 he brought the message in person.  
 He called the chaplain right away,  
 and led him to the chapel 2100  
 and said to him, "My son is dying."  
 The priest wrung his hands.  
 The count said, "That's no help.  
 Your grief can do no good nor harm;  
 he'll neither be harmed nor helped by it. 2105  
 Prepare the water and salt instead."  
 The priest said to his clerk, "Hey, hurry!  
 Get moving!" And the clerk went  
 and took water from a marble vessel  
 and salt from a chamber 2110  
 next to the chapel.  
 The count summoned his cousin  
 and she came holding the infant  
 with its head dangling from the crook of her arm,  
 drooping as if the child were dying, 2115  
 for the lady was letting it wobble on purpose,

Ki ert voisose, et moult recuite,  
 Si est de barat tres bien duite.  
 Dist lor: "L'enfes a poi de vie.  
 Hastés vos tost, ainz qu'il devie." 2120  
 Li capelains ki grant haste a  
 Baptizié l'a en .i. hanap,  
 Dont ot envolepé ses rains,  
 Car crient ne muire entre ses mains.  
 Quel gret qu'aient nature et li us 2125  
 S'est apielés Scilentius.

[P]artolt tresvole la noviele  
 Que l'enfes muert: ne lor fu biele,  
 Car il orent bien oï dire  
 Que moult l'ot fait bel nostre Sire. 2130  
 Por cho si en font gregnor plainte.  
 La ot mainte gent de dol tainte.  
 Dient qu'il ert et gens et bials;  
 Ja s'il fust lais, bochus, mesials,  
 Si tost la vie ne rendist. 2135  
 Mais cho est bien voirs que l'on dist:  
 Li buen, li biel el siecle muerent,  
 Li lait, li malvais i demeurent./  
 Es vos por nient gens esmaris.  
 L'enfes, qui mal n'ot, est guaris. 2140  
 Il n'est garis qu'il n'ot nul mal.  
 En la tiere ot un senescal.  
 O la contesse estoit norris,  
 Parens Renalt, kist ja porris.  
 Cil amoit plus bele Eufemie 2145  
 Qu'il ne fasoit sa fille mie.  
 En un bos mest, devers la mer.  
 Li cuens le prent forment amer,  
 Qu'il en ot oï grans biens dire,  
 Et que moult loials est li sire. 2150  
 Et dist: "Dame, jel manderaï,  
 Et l'enfant li commanderai.  
 Une maison li ferai faire  
 El bos, soltive et solitaire.  
 O l'enfant iert iceste dame, 2155  
 S'en face si qu'ele n'ait blasme,  
 Et nul n'i voist et nus n'i viegne,  
 N'a le maison rote ne tiegne,  
 Un enfant i ait qui le sierre,

which was very clever of her indeed.  
 She was quick to learn deception.  
 She said to them, "The child is barely alive.  
 Hurry up, all of you, before it dies." 2120  
 The chaplain, who was in a tremendous hurry,  
 baptized the child in the piece of cloth  
 which was wrapped about its hips,  
 for he was afraid it would die in his arms.  
 However nature and custom may have felt about it, 2125  
 the child was named Silentius.

The news spread rapidly everywhere  
 that the child was dying. No one was pleased,  
 for the had heard it said  
 that our Lord had made the child very beautiful. 2130  
 That only increased their lamentation.  
 Many people were pale with sorrow;  
 they said that he was graceful and beautiful,  
 and that if he had been ugly, hunchbacked or leprous  
 he wouldn't be dying so young. 2135  
 And what they say is certainly true:  
 the good and the beautiful die young in this world;  
 the wicked and ugly remain alive.  
 But here you have people upset for nothing,  
 for the child who wasn't sick was cured. 2140  
 Actually, he wasn't cured because he wasn't sick.  
 There was a seneschal in the land  
 who had been raised with the countess  
 and was a close relation of Renald, who lay moldering.  
 He loved belle Eufemie 2145  
 even more than his own daughter.  
 He lived in a forest near the sea.  
 The count had taken a great liking to him,  
 for he had heard many good things about him,  
 and the man was very loyal. 2150  
 He said, "Lady. I will send for him  
 and entrust the child to him.  
 I will have him build a house  
 in the woods, isolated and solitary.  
 This lady shall be there with the child. 2155  
 This way, she will have no problems:  
 there'll be no coming and going,  
 there'll be no household staff,  
 only a child to serve her,

O petit sens, ki rien n'entierve, 2160  
 Ne ne face conoistre l'uevre;  
 Et nequedent tols jors se cuevre.  
 L'aiue avra forment petite  
 Por le covrir, mais le merite  
 Iert graindre, voir d'une sesmainne, 2165  
 Que ne soit grans d'un an la painne.  
 Li seneschaus li face avoir  
 Quanqu'il onques porra savoir  
 Que ele avoir voelle et commande.  
 Et se la fole gens demande 2170  
 Porqu'ele est o l'enfant si seule,  
 On dira que n'a soig de peule,  
 Qu'ele a de l'enfant norir honte  
 Por cho qu'ele est parente a conte."

La dame estoit al deviser 2175  
 Ki l'enfant devoit desirrer,  
 Et dist lor bien segurement  
 Et si lor jure durement  
 Qu'ele fera tel couverture  
 En cele soie noretur 2180  
 Que tolte gent en decevra,  
 Que nus le voir n'aparcevra,  
 Ne ja n'en oront mentiön  
 Desque avra tele ente[n]tiön,  
 Qu'il sache bien conoistre l'uevre 2185  
 Por que on le coile si et cuevre./  
 Dont ont le senescal mandé.  
 Il vient quant il l'unt commandé.  
 Receüs est par grant amor,  
 Sans noise faire, et sans clamor. 2190  
 Il mostrent donques tolte l'uevre  
 Et prient moult que bien le cuevre,  
 Qu'il en soit gardé qu'il norissce,  
 Que vraie noviele n'en isce.  
 Li seneschals donques lor jure 2195  
 Quanque il puet et asseüre,  
 Se l'enfes plus d'amis n'eüst  
 Ne mais lui seul, et Deu pleüst,  
 Qu'il celeroit la verité  
 Por rendre a l'enfant l'ireté. 2200  
 Li cuens meïsmes dont l'encline  
 Et la contesse sa cozine.

one too young to understand anything 2160  
 or betray the secret,  
 and yet she will have to be constantly on her guard.  
 She will have very little help  
 in keeping things hidden, but the benefit  
 will be greater in one week 2165  
 than if one took pains for a year.  
 The seneschal will see that the lady  
 has whatever she wishes and commands  
 whenever he hears of any need.  
 And if foolish people ask 2170  
 why she stays so isolated with the child,  
 we will say she doesn't want anyone around.  
 that she is ashamed to be nursemaid  
 because she is of noble birth."

The lady who was to mis-raise the child 2175  
 was in agreement with the plan,  
 and she assured them absolutely  
 and swore a solemn oath to them  
 that she would do such an excellent job  
 of concealing things, in her role as nursemaid, 2180  
 that everyone would be deceived;  
 no one would find out the truth,  
 nor would they ever hear any mention of it.  
 Since the lady was of this mind,  
 they then summoned the seneschal, 2185  
 so that he would be well acquainted with the plan,  
 and know why they were concealing the child.  
 As soon as they summoned him, he came  
 and was received as an intimate friend,  
 without fanfare and public spectacle. 2190  
 They told him everything,  
 and begged him to conceal it,  
 and keep his role of guardian secret,  
 so that the truth would not get out.  
 The seneschal swore to them 2195  
 the most solemn oaths possible and assured them  
 that even if it were God's will  
 that the child should have no other friend but him alone,  
 he would conceal the truth  
 in order to secure the child's inheritance. 2200  
 The count himself bowed low to him,  
 as did the countess to his cousin.

Moult funt de doner, de promeitre  
 A la dame por en grant mettre  
 Qu'ele nen ait pas en porvil 2205  
 De norir lor fille por fil.  
 Et jo certes n'i voi nul blasme  
 Se grant loier donent la dame,  
 Car de mescine avront vallet,  
 Et de lor fille un oir mallet. 2210  
 Congiet ont pris moult bonement,  
 Si s'entrebaissent dolcement.  
 Li seneschals met se el retor  
 Car tels fais n'a point de sejour.  
 La dame otolt l'enfant enmainne. 2215  
 Or monte l'engiens et la painne  
 Al senescal de celer l'uevre.  
 Vient en maison et si se cuevre  
 Viers privés, viers estrange gent.  
 Un ostel a fait bel et gent 2220  
 En la forest joste la cort.  
 Cuidiés que moult biel ne s'atort?  
 Oïl! et l'ostels est de bos,  
 De mur, de plaseïs enclos.  
 Li senescals, ki que l'en ferne 2225  
 I fait metre une moult fort ferme,  
 Qu'il savra tres bien son françois,  
 Quels que il soit, tres bien ançois  
 Que il le pié dedens i mete.  
 Moult est li cors et biele et nete. 2230  
 Met i .ii. bones fermeüres,  
 .ii. vierals, et fors serreüres.  
 Clés i a mises trosqu'a quatre,  
 Que nus vilains n'i puist enbatre. /  
 Les .ii. retient et les .ii. balle 2235  
 Celi qui de l'enfant est balle,  
 Que il i ait d'entrer pooir,  
 Et ele en issce a son voloïr.  
 La dame et l'enfant i a mis.  
 De tols biens lor i a tramis 2240  
 A grant fuison et a plenté;  
 Et un enfant a volenté  
 Ke soolté\* li tiegne itant.  
 [Il] ne lor fa/t ne tant ne quant.  
 N'i met pas home qui le serve 2245  
 Qui l'estre de l'enfant enterve,

They gave many gifts and promises  
 to the lady to secure her good will,  
 so that she would not disdain 2205  
 to raise their girl as a boy.  
 And I certainly see nothing wrong  
 with rewarding the lady handsomely,  
 for they will be getting a boy for a girl,  
 a little male heir instead of a daughter. 2210  
 They took affectionate leave of one another  
 and embraced most tenderly.  
 The seneschal hastened to return,  
 for such matters admit of no delay.  
 He took the lady and the child. 2215  
 Now it was up to the seneschal to conceal  
 the matter by clever planning and hard work.  
 He went home and kept things secret  
 from everyone, both familiars and strangers.  
 He constructed a charming lodging 2220  
 in the forest near his estate.  
 Do you think he did a good job?  
 Indeed he did! And he enclosed the lodging  
 with woods and walls and palisades.  
 However one might blame him for it, 2225  
 the seneschal had a strong gate built,  
 so that he could identify a man  
 very well, whoever it might be,  
 long before he could set foot inside.  
 It was large and thick and well-fashioned. 2230  
 He put two good bars across it,  
 two bolts and strong locks.  
 He locked it with four keys,  
 so that no villain could force his way in.  
 He kept two and gave the other two 2235  
 to the lady in charge of the child,  
 so that he could enter  
 and she could leave at her will.  
 He installed the lady and child there.  
 He supplied them with all kinds of good things, 2240  
 plentifully and abundantly,  
 and a child to serve her,  
 to keep her company.  
 They were lacking for absolutely nothing.  
 He didn't appoint a man to serve them, 2245  
 because he might discover the child's true nature,

Qu'il ne fesist par aventure  
 Demostrement de sa nature.  
 Li seneschals atant s'en vait  
 Et la dame lie s'en fait 2250  
 Quant prise s'est a si prodome.  
 Or vos ai jo dite la some,  
 L'oquison de ceste aventure,  
 Com cis ouevrent contre Nature,  
 Ki l'enfant ont si desvoié 2255  
 Com jo vos ai chi devisié.

Quant Nature s'est aperçute  
 Qu'il l'ont enganee et deçute,  
 Que s'uevre li ont bestornee  
 De si come l'ot atornee, 2260  
 Cuidiés que forment ne s'en duelle,  
 Et que grant mal ne lor en voelle  
 De cangier sa fille por fil,  
 Et que ne l'ait moult en porvil?  
 Oïl! cho sachiés entresait! 2265  
 "Il ont en mon desdaing cho fait  
 Quanses que miols valt Noreture  
 Que face m'uevre!" dist Nature.  
 "Par Deu! par Deu! or monte bien!  
 Il n'a en tiere nule rien, 2270  
 Ki par nature ait a durer,  
 Ki puist al loing desnaturer.  
 Le cuer ai plus froit que glaçon  
 Por maltalent de ma façon  
 Que Noreture me desguise. 2275  
 Gregnor bialté i euc assise  
 Qu'on ne peüst en .m. trover.  
 Mon pooir i vol esprover.  
 Or m'est torné a g[ra]nt dolor.  
 Meësmement por sa color, 2280  
 Por cho que fis en son visage  
 Del blanc al vermel mariäge,/  
 Jo fis l'un l'autre variier,  
 Por tolt le monde tariier.  
 Del blanc i mis a grant merveille 2285  
 Qu'ele ne fust pas trop vermelle.  
 Vermel i mis de grant valor  
 Li blans n'i trasist en palor.  
 Et or en ont fait un oir malle

or the child might accidentally  
 do something to reveal its sex.  
 The seneschal took his leave,  
 and the lady, happy, realized 2250  
 how much she owed to this good man.  
 Now I have told you everything:  
 how this strange turn of events came to pass,  
 and how these people worked contrary to nature  
 and turned the child from her proper path, 2255  
 as I have just finished telling you.

When Nature realized  
 that they had tricked and deceived her  
 by turning her work into the opposite  
 of what she had turned out, 2260  
 you can imagine how disturbed she was  
 and how much she wanted revenge upon them  
 for changing her daughter into a son,  
 and how much she despised their plan.  
 Oh yes! You can be sure of that right now! 2265  
 "They have insulted me," said Nature,  
 "by acting as if the work of Nurture  
 were superior to mine!  
 By God, by God! We'll see about that!  
 There is nothing on this earth 2270  
 created by Nature  
 that can be dis-natured in the long run.  
 My heart feels colder than ice,  
 I am so furious about the way  
 Nurture is disguising my creation. 2275  
 I put more beauty into her  
 than could be found in a thousand.  
 I wanted to prove my prowess with her.  
 Now they have ruined that for me.  
 It's the same with her complexion — 2280  
 when I painted her face,  
 I married white with red,  
 mixed them in such proportions  
 as to excite the envy of everyone.  
 I put in a good amount of white, 2285  
 so that she wouldn't be too red,  
 and put in a large quantity of red,  
 so that she wouldn't be too pale.  
 And now they have made a male heir of her,

Ki ira al vent et al halle, 2290  
 Com se cho fust une grosse ouevre.  
 Se jo a loing ne le descuevre,  
 Dont puet plus certes Noretur  
 Que jo ne puisse," dist Nature.  
 Segnor, par Deu, Nature a droit! 2295  
 Car nus hom tel pooir n'aroit  
 Qu'il peüst vaintre et engignier  
 Nature al loig, ne forlignier.  
 Jo sai tres bien, par Noretur  
 Fait mains hom bien contre Nature 2300  
 U por efforcement de gent,  
 U faire ne l'oze autrement.  
 Et ki fait bien par estavoir  
 Ne por crieme de pis avoir,  
 Cho n'est pas naturels faintize, 2305  
 Ainz est paors qui le justize.  
 Et quant il est fors de la crieme,  
 Cuidiés *que sis\** cuers ne l'enprieme?  
 Oïl! car il li dist et conte  
 Que miols valent .m. mars a honte 2310  
 C'un denier mains a grant honor.  
 Miols valt li graindres del menor.  
 Nos veomes maint home enbatre  
 Un an, u .ii., u .iii., u quatre  
 En bon us tolt par noretur 2315  
 Mal gré u non sa vil nature:  
 Et puis apriés si s'en repent,  
 De son bienfaire se reprent\*  
 Et s'achieve sa felonie,  
 Ki le renbat en vilonie. 2320  
 Car li nature vils l'enerre,  
 Et li cuers de la grosse terre  
 Ki tient sor lui la segnorie  
 Et solle la parmenterie.  
 Et mains cuers de gentil nature 2325  
 Empire moult par noretur,  
 Et a grant honte si [a]hert,  
 Qu'a moult grant painne puis le pert.  
 Car gentils cuers, s'il acostume  
 La malvaistié et l'amertume, / 2330  
 Se il s'enprent a enivrer,  
 Envis s'en puet si delivrer,  
 Com li malvais del bien retraire.

who will go out in the wind and scorching sun, 2290  
 as if he were of crude workmanship.  
 If I don't unmask her in the long run,  
 Nurture's power will be proven  
 stronger than mine," said Nature.  
 Lords, by God, Nature is right! 2295  
 No man has the power, in the long run,  
 that he can vanquish and outwit  
 Nature, or betray heredity.  
 I know very well that many a man acts contrary to his nature,  
 does the right thing because of nurture, 2300  
 whether somebody forces him to,  
 or whether he doesn't dare to do otherwise.  
 But a man who does the right thing out of necessity,  
 or for fear of coming off badly—  
 this is not natural restraint; 2305  
 it is fear that keeps him straight.  
 And when he is not governed by fear,  
 don't you think his heart will put its stamp on him?  
 Yes! for it will tell him  
 that a thousand ill-gotten marks 2310  
 are worth more than a denier less earned honorably,  
 that more is worth more than less.  
 We have seen many a man do the right thing  
 for one, two, three or four years,  
 only because of nurture, 2315  
 whatever his vile nature wants,  
 and then afterwards repent of it,  
 go back on his fine behavior;  
 thus his wicked nature wins out  
 by plunging him back into villainy. 2320  
 For his vile nature has paid a deposit on him,  
 and his heart of coarse clay  
 holds sway over him  
 and soils his fine apparel.  
 And many a heart of noble nature 2325  
 becomes much worse through nurture  
 and hardens itself to very shameful ways,  
 so that it has a hard time shedding them later.  
 For if a noble heart becomes accustomed  
 to wickedness and bitterness, 2330  
 once it has begun to be poisoned by them,  
 it can only be saved with great difficulty,  
 the way bad can be drawn out of good.

- Prover le puis par cest affaire  
 C'uns petis hanas plains de fiel 2335  
 Honiroit plus un mui de miel  
 C'uns muis de miel n'amenderoit  
 Un lot de fiel, ki l'i metroit.  
 En un poi de vil noreture  
 Empire plus bone nature 2340  
 Que longhe aprisons de bienfaire  
 Puist amender cuer de pute aire.  
 Ichi a certes trop a dire,  
 Mais mes cuers tent a ma matyre;  
 A parler de l'enfant goloze, 2345  
 Que Nature plaint et dolose.  
 De maltalent fremist et groce,  
 Viers Noreture se coroce.  
 Mais ne li valt pas une tille:  
 Silence n'iert a an mais fille. 2350  
 Dire vos puis seürement  
 Que l'enfes croist moult durement  
 Plus en l'an c'uns altres en trois.  
 Onques d'enfant norri en bois  
 Ne vos pot on si grans biens dire. 2355  
 Por cho que tels est li matyre,  
 Si ai m'entente plus penee,  
 La rime assise, et miols menee.
- Quant li enfes pot dras user,  
 Por se nature refuser 2360  
 L'ont tres bien vestu a fuer d'ome  
 A sa mesure, c'est la some.  
 Li senescals i vait et vient,  
 L'enfant et cele dame tient  
 El bos moult honorablement. 2365  
 Et si l'a fait sensablement  
 Car l'enfant fist letres aprendre  
 Si tost com il i pot entendre.  
 Car por icho le violt destraindre  
 Et faire entor ostel remaindre, 2370  
 Qu'en tel liu le portaist enfance  
 U li enfes par ignorance  
 Descovrist as gens sa nature,  
 Se fust falsee Noreture.  
 Al doctriener n'a que la dame: 2375  
 Si bien le fait que n'i a blasme,

I can prove it by this example:  
 a little tumbler-full of gall 2335  
 would harm a measure of honey  
 more than a measure of honey  
 could improve a quart of gall, if you poured it in.  
 A little bad nurture  
 harms a good nature more 2340  
 than lengthy instruction in doing good  
 can mend a heart intrinsically evil.  
 There is certainly much to say about this,  
 but my heart belongs to my subject matter.  
 I yearn to speak of the child 2345  
 that Nature was mourning and grieving over.  
 She scolded and shook with anger;  
 she was furious with Nurture.  
 But it didn't help a bit:  
 Silence wasn't any more of a girl in a year. 2350  
 I can tell you one thing for certain—  
 the child grew more sturdily in a year  
 than others do in three.  
 No one could ever give a better account  
 of any child ever raised in the woods.\* 2355  
 Since that is the way the story goes,  
 I have redoubled my efforts,  
 ordered and improved my rhyming.

When the child was of an age to wear clothing,  
 in order to deny her nature, 2360  
 they took care to dress her in male clothing  
 made to her measure.  
 The seneschal came and went,  
 cared for the child and the lady  
 most honorably in the woods. 2365  
 He did this very sensibly:  
 he had the child learn his letters  
 as soon as he was capable of it,  
 for he wanted to restrain him by this means  
 and make him stay inside the lodging 2370  
 rather than spend his childhood somewhere  
 where, not knowing any better,  
 he might reveal his nature to people,  
 thus contradicting nurture.  
 There was none but the lady to teach him. 2375  
 She did it well, beyond reproach.

C'ainc ne veïstes tel norice.  
 L'enfant estruist et si l'enthice/  
 De bones mors de faire honor  
 Et al gregnor et al menor. 2380  
 Moult bien le doctrine et enseigne.  
 Li enfes pas ne la desdegne,  
 Ainz est moult liés de l'apresure  
 Car cho li fait bone nature.  
 Li enfes est de tel orine 2385  
 Que il meïsmes se doctrine.  
 Ceste vos est sovent retraite  
 Que bons oisials par lui s'afaite.  
 Et cis par soi meïsme aprent  
 Moult plus qu'a son eé n'apent. 2390  
 Enfans ot donc ens el païs\*  
 De la tiere et d'allors naïs  
 E[t] cis a cestui s'aparelle;  
 Mais nus a cest ne s'aparelle,  
 Ne de bonté, ne de science. 2395  
 Itant vos dirai de Silence:  
 Tant com il est plus bials de tols,  
 Tant est il plus vallans et prols  
 Que il ne soient tolt ensamble.  
 Or vos ai dit cho que m'en sanble. 2400

Li senescals a tolt conté  
 A/ pere et mere sa bonté.  
 Dist lor qu'il a par Deu tel grasse.  
 Cuidiés que haitiés ne les face?  
 Oïl! onques si lié ne furent 2405  
 Quant la verté en aparçurent!  
 Li senescals la les enmainne  
 Et l'enfes plus et plus se painne  
 De faire bien, quant il le loent.  
 Mais li malvais, quant il cho oent 2410  
 Que on les prise, dont s'orguellent  
 Et grant folie en auls acuellent,  
 Que il ne valent une pie.  
 L'orgiols lor valt une pepie;  
 Torgent les cols, cho sachiés vos. 2415  
 Con di me tu? Qui somes nos?  
 Segnor, de moult legier empire  
 Ki tent a malvaistié et tyre,  
 Si com jo puis a droit esmer.

You never saw such a devoted nurse.  
 She instructed him, taught him principles  
 of good conduct, to honor  
 both great and humble. 2380  
 She taught and instructed him very well.  
 The child was not ungrateful;  
 he was very glad of such learning—  
 that was the effect of his good nature.  
 The child's innate qualities were such 2385  
 that he taught himself.  
 You have often been told  
 that a good falcon trains himself,  
 and this child learned more by himself  
 than anyone else his age. 2390  
 There were children in the country,  
 both foreign-born and native,  
 and they were all alike,  
 but none was like this one  
 in goodness or in learning. 2395  
 I will tell you this much about Silence:  
 just as he was the most beautiful of all,  
 he was more valiant and noble  
 than all the others put together.  
 Now I have told you how I see it. 2400

The seneschal told the father and mother  
 all about the child's good qualities;  
 he told them his gifts were due to God's grace.  
 Don't you think that made them happy?  
 Indeed, they had never been so glad 2405  
 as when they were able to see for themselves that it was true.  
 The senschal brought them there,  
 and the child took more pains  
 to do well when they praised him.  
 But the wicked, when they hear 2410  
 that they are being praised,  
 become so full of vanity and folly  
 that they are not worth a magpie.  
 Pride is like pip to them—  
 it strangles them, as you well know. 2415  
 "What are you saying? Who do you think we are?"  
 Lords, he who tends and is drawn to wickedness  
 becomes worse for no reason at all,  
 as far as I can rightly judge.

Ne por loer ne por blasmer 2420  
 Ne se puet malvais hom retraire  
 De cho que cuers li loe a faire;  
 Et por cho di jo que Nature  
 Signorist desor Noretüre.  
 Ki en ses vils fais s'abonist 2425  
 Et voit et set qu'il se honist,/  
 Se il se honist si de gré,  
 Dont le tienc jo a forsené.  
 Et se ses vils cuers li fait faire  
 Qu'il ne s'en puisse pas retraire, 2430  
 Dont est il sers et ses cuers sire,  
 Espi! quant tels cuers le maistryre.  
 Li cuens a son enfant veü,  
 De grant sens a aparceü  
 Qu'il est de tel discreciön. 2435  
 Deu prie et fait affliction  
 Que lui de son enfant sovigne,  
 Qu'en cele longes le maintigne.

Quant l'enfes est de tel doctrine  
 Qu'il entent bien qu'il est mescine, 2440  
 Ses pere l'a mis a raison,  
 Se li demostre l'oquoison  
 Por que on le coile si et cuevre.  
 "Se li rois Ebayns seüst l'uevre  
 Que nos de vos, bials fils, menons, 2445  
 De quanque nos sos ciel avons  
 Estroit li vostre pars petite;  
 Car li rois, bials fils, desirite  
 Toltes les femes d'Engletiere,  
 Tolt par l'oquoison d'une guerre 2450  
 De .ii. contes ki en morurent  
 Par .ii. jumieles ki dunt furent.  
 Bials dols ciers fils, n'est pas por nos  
 Cho que faisons, ainz est por vos.  
 Tolve l'oquoison, fils savés. 2455  
 Si chier come l'onor avés,  
 Si vos covrés viers tolte gent."  
 Et cil respont moult dolcement,  
 Briément, al fuer de sage enfant:  
 "Ne vos cremés, ne tant ne quant, 2460  
 Car, se Deu plaist, bien le ferai,  
 Viers tolte gent me coverrai."

Neither praise nor blame 2420  
 can restrain an evil man  
 from what his heart counseled him to do.  
 And thus I say that Nature  
 is superior to Nurture.  
 If a man persists in doing wrong, 2425  
 and sees and knows that he is dishonoring himself,  
 if he thus dishonors himself on purpose,  
 I hold him to be a madman.  
 But if his vile heart forces him to do it,  
 so that he cannot stop doing it, 2430  
 he is the servant and his heart the lord.  
 See what happens when such a heart is master!  
 The count, observing his child,  
 felt a great sense of satisfaction  
 that he was so well behaved. 2435  
 He prostrated himself and prayed to God  
 to be mindful of his child  
 and to preserve his sense of discretion.

When the child was old enough  
 to understand he was a girl, 2440  
 his father sat down to reason with him  
 and explain the circumstances  
 which had led them to conceal his identity this way.  
 "If, dear son, King Evan knew  
 what we are doing with you, 2445  
 your share of our earthly possessions  
 would be very small indeed.  
 For the king, dear son, disinherited  
 all the women of England  
 on account of the death of two counts 2450  
 in a battle they fought  
 over twin heiresses they had married.  
 Dear sweet precious son, we are not doing this  
 for ourselves, but for you.  
 Now, son, you know the whole situation. 2455  
 As you cherish honor,  
 you will continue to conceal yourself from everyone."  
 And he replied very sweetly,  
 briefly, as befits a well-bred child,  
 "Don't worry the least little bit. 2460  
 So help me God, I will do it.  
 I will conceal myself from everyone."

Moult le castie biel li pere  
 Et alsî fait sovent la mere,  
 Li senescals et la norice. 2465  
 De faire bien cascuns l'entice.  
 Il est de tel entendement  
 Qu'il croit bien lor castiement.  
 Li senescals por essaucier  
 Et por aprendre a chevalcier 2470  
 Le mainne en bos et en rivieres  
 Ki sunt el païs bien plenieres.  
 Sel mainne plus sovent el halle  
 Par cho quel violt faire plus malle./  
 Il a us d'ome tant usé 2475  
 Et cel de feme refusé  
 Que poi en falt que il n'est malles:  
 Quanque on en voit est trestolt malles.  
 El a en tine que ferine:  
 Il est desos les dras mescine. 2480  
 Li senescals sor tolte rien  
 Es premiers ans le garda bien.  
 Com plus croist l'enfes en grandece,  
 Tant amenrist plus sa destrece.  
 Quant on n'i puet folie ataindre 2485  
 Por quoi le devroit on destraindre?  
 Cho qu'il crient sa droiture perdre  
 Le fait plus a savoir aherdre.  
 Ses cuers meïsmes bien l'escole  
 Al deguerpir maniere fole. 2490  
 Por cho a il lassor assés  
 Et quant il ot .xi. ans passés  
 N'i a un seul de lui plus maistre.  
 Quant il joent a le palaistre,  
 A bohorder, n'a l'escremir, 2495  
 Il seus fait tols ses pers fremir.

[S]ilences forment s'enasprist,  
 Car ses corages li aprist  
 Ke *si* fesist par couverture.  
 Apriés .xii. ans si vint Nature 2500  
 Ki le blasme forment et coze.  
 Dist li: "Chi a estrange coze,  
 Ki te deduis al fuer de malle,  
 Et vas si al vent et al halle,  
 Car une speciäl forme ai 2505

The father gave him much good advice,  
 as did the mother often,  
 and the seneschal and the nurse; 2465  
 they all urged him to be good.  
 He was receptive to their teaching  
 and heeded their admonitions well.  
 In order to build up his endurance  
 and teach him to ride, the seneschal 2470  
 took him through woods and streams,  
 which were plentiful in the countryside.  
 He took him out often in the scorching heat,  
 in order to make a man of him.  
 He was so used to men's usage 2475  
 and had so rejected women's ways  
 that little was lacking for him to be a man.  
 Whatever one could see was certainly male!  
 But there's more to this than meets the eye—\*  
 the he's a she beneath the clothes. 2480  
 The seneschal watched the child closely  
 during his early years,  
 but the older he grew,  
 the easier that seneschal's task became.  
 When one could find no folly in him, 2485  
 what was the use of restraining him?  
 What they thought would cause him to be unsteady  
 only caused him to adhere more closely to discretion.  
 His heart itself schooled him  
 to eschew foolish behavior. 2490  
 Because of this, he was given a good deal of freedom.  
 And by the time he was in his twelfth year,  
 none was his master any more.  
 When they practiced wrestling,  
 jousting or skirmishing, 2495  
 he alone made all his peers tremble.

Silence was deeply disturbed about this,  
 for her conscience told her  
 that she was practicing deception by doing this.  
 In her twelfth year, Nature appeared, 2500  
 grumbling and complaining and blaming her.  
 She said to her, "This is a fine state of affairs,  
 you conducting yourself like a man,  
 running about in the wind and scorching sun  
 when I used a special mold for you, 2505

Dont a mes .ii. mains te formai.  
 Et la bialtet qu'ai tant celé[e]  
 Ai tolte en toi amoncellee.  
 .m. gens me tienent por escarse  
 Por la bialté, dont tu iés farse; 2510  
 Car jo ai de .m. gens retraite  
 La bialté, dont tu iés refaite.  
 .m. femes a en ceste vie  
 Ki de toi ont moult grant envie  
 Por le bialté qu'eles i voient, 2515  
 Car puet scel estre eles i croient  
 Tel cose qu'en toi nen a mie.  
 Et tels est ore moult t'amie/  
 Qui te haroit de tolt le cuer,  
 Se il de toi savoit le fuer, 2520  
 Qu'el s'en tenroit a malballie  
 Que s'esperance estroit fallie.  
 Tu me fais, certes, grant laidure  
 Quant tu maintiens tel noreture.  
 Ne dois pas en bos converser, 2525  
 Lancier, ne traire, ne berser.  
 Tol toi de chi!" cho dist Nature.  
 "Va en la cambre a la costure,  
 Cho violt de nature li us.  
 Tu nen es pas Scilentius!" 2530  
 Et cil respont: "Tel n'oï onques!  
 Silencius! qui sui jo donques?  
 Silencius ai non, jo cui,  
 U jo sui altres que ne fui.  
 Mais cho sai jo bien, par ma destre, 2535  
 Que jo ne puis pas altres estre!  
 Donques sui jo Scilentius,  
 Cho m'est avis, u jo sui nus."  
 Dont se porpense en lui meïsme  
 Que Nature li fait sofime: 2540  
 Por cho que l'-us est encontre us  
 N'a pas a non Scilentius.  
 Aler en violt a la costure  
 Si com li a rové Nature,  
 Car por fief, ne por iredage, 2545  
 Ne doit mener us si salvage.

Atant i sorvint Noreture  
 Et voit que parole a Nature.

when I created you with my own hands,  
 when I heaped all the beauty I had stored up  
 upon you alone!  
 There are a thousand people who think I'm stingy  
 because of the beauty I stuffed you with, 2510  
 for I extracted the beauty of a thousand  
 to create your lovely appearance!  
 And there are a thousand women in this world  
 who are madly in love with you  
 because of the beauty they see in you— 2515  
 you don't suppose they think something's there  
 that was never part of your equipment at all?  
 There are those who love you now  
 who would hate you with all their hearts  
 if they knew what you really are! 2520  
 They would consider themselves misused,  
 having their hopes so cruelly dashed.  
 It's a very nasty thing you're doing to me,  
 leading this sort of life.  
 You have no business going off into the forest, 2525  
 jousting, hunting, shooting off arrows.  
 Desist from all of this!" said Nature.  
 "Go to a chamber and learn to sew!  
 That's what Nature's usage wants of you!  
 You are not Silentius!" 2530  
 and he replied, "I never heard that before!  
 Not Silentius? Who am I then?  
 Silentius is my name, I think,  
 or I am other than who I was.  
 But this I know well, upon my oath, 2535  
 that I cannot be anybody else!  
 Therefore, I am Silentius,  
 as I see it, or I am no one."  
 But then she convinced herself  
 that Nature's spurious argument was plausible: 2540  
 that because the -us was contrary to usage,  
 her name was not Silentius.  
 She wanted to go and learn to sew,  
 just as Nature demanded of her;  
 she should not cultivate such savage ways 2545  
 for fief or inheritance.

But then Nurture arrived on the scene  
 and saw that he was talking to Nature

Di li: "Que fais tu, diva, chi?"  
 Cil dist: "Nature tence a mi. 2550  
 Et si n'est pas, par foi, a tort  
 Qu'ele m'acostume et amort  
 A tel us ki est droitureus,  
 Car cis us n'es pas natureus.  
 Ainc feme, voir, de mon parage, 2555  
 Ne mena mais si fait usage,  
 Ne jo plus longhes nel menrai:  
 A us de feme me tenrai.  
 Jo ne voel pas moi estalcier,  
 Fendre mes dras, braies calcier, 2560  
 Ne mais vivre a fuer de garçon,  
 Prendre mon coivre, et mon arçon.  
 Avint adonques mais a nule?  
 Nenil! adunc quant jo m'afule  
 Por moi de tel giu a retraire 2565  
 Com vallet suelent encor faire,/   
 Dont dient tuit mi compagnon:  
 'Cis avra moult le cuer felon  
 Se il vit longhes entressait.'  
 Mais ne sevent com moi estait. 2570  
 Se me desful par aventure  
 Dont ai paor de ma nature.  
 Conjoie moult diversement.  
 En cort aloie conversant,  
 Tolt cho metrai ariere dos 2575  
 Et viverai dont a repos.  
 Cis Dameldex qui me fist naistre  
 Me puet bien gouverner et paistre:  
 Queles! ja n'ai jo oï conté\*  
 Qu'il est plains de si grant bonté 2580  
 Et done a tolte creäture  
 Sofisalment lonc sa nature?  
 Fu ainc mais feme si tanee  
 De vil barat, ne enganee  
 Que cho fesist par covoitise? 2585  
 Nel puis savoir en nule guise."

Quant Noretur cho oï  
 Cuidiés qu'ele s'en esjoï?  
 Nenil! anchois fremist et groce.  
 Enviers Nature se coroce 2590  
 Et si l'esgarde surement.

and said to him, "Hey! What are you doing here?"  
 He said, "Nature is scolding me, 2550  
 and she's right, in fact,  
 to get me accustomed  
 to appropriate habits,  
 for this behavior is unnatural.  
 Truly, no woman of my lineage 2555  
 ever behaved in such a way,  
 nor wil I do so any longer!  
 I will keep to women's ways.  
 I won't cut my hair short any more,  
 wear slit garments and breeches 2560  
 and live like a boy  
 with bow and quiver.  
 Did anything like this ever happen to anyone?  
 Never! Now, when I get dressed,  
 and don't participate 2565  
 in the kinds of games that boys are used to,  
 all my companions jeer,  
 'This one will be a terrible coward,  
 if he lives that long!'

But they don't know how it is with me. 2570  
 Whenever I happen to get undressed,  
 I am afraid my sex will be discovered.  
 My idea of fun is very different.  
 I have been spending my time at court,  
 but I will put all this behind me 2575  
 and live very quietly from now on.  
 The good Lord who created me  
 will be my shepherd and my guide.  
 Haven't I heard it said  
 that in his great goodness 2580  
 he dispenses of his bounty to each creature  
 according to its nature?  
 Was any female ever so tormented  
 or deceived by such vile fraud  
 as to do what I did out of greed? 2585  
 I certainly never heard of one!"

When Nurture heard this,  
 do you think she was overjoyed?  
 Hardly! on the contrary, she quivered and scolded.  
 She was furious with Nature. 2590  
 She looked her straight in the eye

Puis li a dit moult durement:  
 "Lassciés ester ma noreçon,  
 Nature, a la maleÿçon.  
 Jo l'ai tolte desnaturee. 2595  
 N'avra ja voir o vus duree.  
 Se ne lassciés ices t anter  
 Bien vos porés al loig vanter  
 Se jo ne fac par noretur  
 .m. gens ovrer contre nature. 2600  
 Jo noris tres bien, c'est la some,  
 D'un noble enfant un malvais home.  
 Jo te desferai tolt ton conte.  
 Nature, envoies o ta honte."  
 Quant Nature s'en fu alee 2605  
 Et o le roce a devalee  
 U Noretur ot si tencié,  
 Es vos l'estor recommencié  
 Seur Scilence: car la Raisons  
 Li monstre, et dist les oquoisons 2610  
 Que poi li valt mains de la mort  
 Se il s'acostume et amort  
 A deguerpir sa noretur  
 Por faire cho que violt Nature./  
 "Croi mon conseil, amis Silence, 2615  
 Et aies en toi abstinence.  
 Fai de ton cuer une ferté.  
 S'a lui te prent, de la verté,  
 Nature, qui t'angoisce adés,  
 Ja n'ieres mais vallés apriés. 2620  
 Tolt perdrés cheval et carete.  
 Ne cuidiés pas li rois vos mete  
 En l'onor, por estre parjure,  
 S'il aperçoit vostre nature."  
  
 Raisons ja od li tant esté, 2625  
 Se li a tant admonesté  
 Que Silences a bien veü  
 Que fol conseil avoit creü  
 Quant onques pensa desuser  
 Son bon viel us et refuser, 2630  
 Por us de feme maintenir.  
 Donques li prent a sovenir  
 Des jus c'on siolt es cambres faire  
 Dont a oi sovent retraire,

and said most severely,  
 "Nature, leave my nursling alone,  
 or I will put a curse on you!  
 I have completely dis-natured her. 2595  
 She will always resist you.  
 If you don't stop haunting her,  
 you'll have small reason for vanity left,  
 if I make a thousand people  
 work against their nature through nurture. 2600  
 I have succeeded very well  
 in turning a noble child into a defective male.  
 I will undo all your work.  
 Nature, begone in disgrace!"  
 When Nature had gone away 2605  
 and descended from the rock  
 where Nurture had attacked her so,  
 the battle for Silence began again,  
 as you shall hear, for Reason  
 stated her case, citing examples 2610  
 as to why, if she abandoned her nurture  
 to take up the habits of nature,  
 it would be almost as bad  
 as killing herself.  
 "Believe what I say, friend Silence, 2615  
 and forbear!  
 Fortify your heart,  
 for if Nature, who is now pressing you so hard,  
 takes it from you, believe me,  
 you will never train for knighthood afterwards. 2620  
 You will lose your horse and chariot.  
 Do not think the king will go back on his word  
 and acknowledge you as rightful heir,  
 when he finds out your true nature."

Reason stayed with him for so long 2625  
 and admonished him so severely  
 that Silence understood very well  
 he had listened to bad advice  
 ever to think of doing away  
 with his good old ways 2630  
 to take up female habits.  
 Then he began to consider  
 the pastimes of a woman's chamber—  
 which he had often heard about—

Et poise dont en son corage 2635  
 Tolt l'us de feme a son usage,  
 Et voit que miols valt li us d'ome  
 Que l'us de feme, c'est la some.  
 "Voire," fait il, "a la male eure  
 Irai desos, quant sui deseure. 2640  
 Deseure sui, s'irai desos?  
 Or sui jo moult vallans et pros.  
 Nel sui, par foi, ains sui honis  
 Quant as femes voel estre onis.  
 Gel pensai por moi aäsier. 2645  
 Trop dure boche ai por baisier,  
 Et trop rois bras por acoler.  
 On me poroit tost afoier  
 Al giu c'on fait desos gordine,  
 Car vallés sui et nient mescine. 2650  
 Ne voel perdre ma grant honor,  
 Ne la voel cangier a menor.  
 Ne voel mon pere desmentir,  
 Ainz me doinst Dex la mort sentir.  
 Por quanque puet faire Nature 2655  
 Ja n'en ferai descoverture."

Si est li voirs, cho dist l'estorie  
 Ki de Silence fait memorie,  
 C'onques ne fu tels abstinence  
 Com poés oïr de Silence. 2660  
 Jo ne di pas qu'il ne pe[n]sast  
 Diversement, et ne tensast/  
 Diverse cogitatiön  
 Com enfant de tel natiön,  
 Meësmement enfant si tendre. 2665  
 Ki doit a tel usage entendre.  
 Et cuers s'est une créature  
 Mervelles d'estrane nature:  
 Qu'il pense voir moult largement,  
 Torne et retorne trop sovent 2670  
 Les larges pensers que requelt  
 Dont motes foie[e]s se due[l]t.  
 Et por cho di jo de Scilence  
 Qu'i ert de moult grant abstinence,  
 Que ses pensers le tormentoit 2675  
 Et il le sentoît et soffroit.

and weighed in his heart of hearts 2635  
 all female customs against his current way of life,  
 and saw, in short, that a man's life  
 was much better than that of a woman.  
 "Indeed," he said, "it would be too bad  
 to step down when I'm on top. 2640  
 If I'm on top, why should I step down?  
 Now I am honored and valiant.  
 No I'm not, upon my word—I'm a disgrace  
 if I want to be one of the women.  
 I was trying to make life easy for myself, 2645  
 but I have a mouth too hard for kisses,  
 and arms too rough for embraces.  
 One could easily make a fool of me  
 in any game played under the covers,  
 for I'm a young man, not a girl. 2650  
 I don't want to lose my high position;  
 I don't want to exchange it for a lesser,  
 and I don't want to prove my father a liar.  
 I would rather have God strike me dead!  
 Whatever Nature may do, 2655  
 I will never betray the secret!"

If what the story that keeps alive  
 the memory of Silence tell us  
 is true, you never heard of such forbearance  
 as was to be found in Silence. 2660  
 I'm not saying that he didn't  
 go through periods of hesitation  
 and inner conflict,  
 as might be expected in a young person who came of such  
 good stock,  
 but who was also a tender child 2665  
 who had to force herself to live that way.  
 And the human heart is a creature  
 that has a strange and peculiar nature:  
 it thinks a great deal,  
 turns the deep thoughts it harbors 2670  
 over and over again, far too often,  
 and causes itself a great deal of grief.  
 And that is why I say that Silence  
 showed such great forbearance,  
 for his thoughts tormented him, 2675  
 and he felt this and suffered from it.

Et tols jors ert pres a contraire  
 A cho que ses cuers voloît faire.  
 Et qui ouevre contre voloîr  
 Soventes fois l'estuet doloîr. 2680  
 Silences ot le cuer diviers.  
 Cho fu li dozimes iviers,  
 Li ans dozimes est entrés,  
 Des qu'il fu primes engenrés.  
 Bien ert cruels, s'ert bials et pros, 2685  
 Larges, cortois, amés de tols.  
 .ii. jors u .iii. mest o le pere,  
 Quant il voloît, et o la mere.

Oiés merveilleuse aventure  
 Si con nos conte l'escriture. 2690  
 En la tiere ot .ii. menestrels.  
 N'i ot eü onques mais tels.  
 Li uns ert li mioldres jogleres  
 Del mont, li autres ert harperes.  
 Avironee ont Engletiere, 2695  
 Grant avoir aquis en la tiere.  
 En Cornuälle sunt venu;  
 Del conte sunt bien retenu.  
 .viii. jors ont od lui despendus;  
 Bons loiers lor en fu rendus 2700  
 Si qu'al departir fu a gré.  
 Enviars la mer sunt puis alé  
 Car passer voelent en Bertagne.  
 Nuis les sosprent en une plagne  
 Dejuste une moult grant foriest 2705  
 U li més fu et encor est  
 U mest li senescals, li sire  
 De cui vos m'avés oï dire  
 Ki fil al conte norissoit.  
 Li maistre tors apparissoit, / 2710  
 Sor tolt le bos une ruee,  
 Mais tant lor fait une nuee  
 Qu'il ne le pueent veïr preu,  
 Qu'il ert ja entre cien et leu.  
 Cil voient le bos espessir, 2715  
 Ne sevent u entrer n'isscir.  
 De cel païs ne sevent rien.  
 Dont dient: "Deu, Saint Julien,  
 Trametés nos anuit tel oste

He was always ready to go against  
 what his heart wanted him to do,  
 and whoever works against his will  
 finds himself often in a state of unhappiness. 2680  
 Silence's heart was divided against itself.

It was the twelfth winter;  
 the twelfth year had begun  
 since he first came into being.  
 The winter was cruel; he was lovely and noble, 2685  
 generous, courteous, beloved by everyone.  
 He would spend two or three days with his father  
 whenever he wished, or with his mother.

Now you're going to hear something amazing!  
 As the manuscript tells us, 2690  
 there were two minstrels in the land,  
 the best you ever heard of.

One was the best jongleur in the world,  
 the other was a harpist.  
 They had made a tour of England 2695  
 and had been very successful there.

They came to Cornwall  
 and were well received by the count.  
 They spent a week at his court  
 and were well rewarded for it 2700  
 when it came time for them to leave.

Then they headed for the coast,  
 for they wanted to cross over to Brittany  
 Nightfall surprised them in a stretch of open country  
 next to a huge forest 2705

where the manor house was and still is  
 where the seneschal lived —  
 the lord I have been telling you about,  
 the one who was raising the count's son.

The main tower rose above the woods 2710  
 just a stone's throw away,  
 but the fog was so thick  
 they could hardly see it,  
 for it was already twilight.

They could see the forest growing denser, 2715  
 and they didn't know how to get in or out of it;  
 they didn't know the area at all.  
 They said, "God and Saint Julian,  
 just bring us this night a host

Nient ne nos doinst, nient ne nos oste, 2720  
 Ne nos tollent li male gent  
 Qu'avons aquis tant longement.  
 Salve nos, Dex, et nostre ator."  
 Dont voient umbroier la tor  
 Deseur le bos une ruee, 2725  
 Al descovrir d'une nuee.  
 En la forest estoit a destre,  
 Dont la voie estoit a senestre.  
 Si [se] metent en une sente,  
 Parvienent a la tor eënte. 2730  
 Que puet caloir quant il i sunt?  
 Altre demorance n'i funt.  
 Hucent en halt: "Ki est laiens?"  
 On lor a dit: "Gent a çaiens.  
 Ki estes vos et que querés?" 2735  
 Cil dient: "Ovrés, sel sarés."  
 Li portiers a le porte ovierite  
 Et cil l'oquison descovierite.  
 Dient: "Nos somes jogleör.  
 A çaiens nul herbergeör 2740  
 Ki nos herbergast ceste nuit?"  
 "Oïl! amis, si con jo cuit,  
 N'eüstes hostel mais si buen."  
 "Sals soit li sire, et tolt li suen!"  
 Cho respondent li menestrel. 2745  
 "A porte n'ot mais portier tel.  
 Par les serjans de la maizon  
 Puet on conoistre par raizon  
 Se prodome u non est li sire;  
 Que nos l'avons oï bien dire 2750  
 Que bons sire fait bons serjans  
 Trestolt sans battre de vergans.  
 Bon serjant refont bon segnor."  
 L'uissiers adestre le gregnor.  
 Quant lor chevaux a assenés 2755  
 Les maïstres a amont menés.  
 Le senescal i ont trové  
 Et por moult prodome esprové./  
 Et quant cho vint apriés mengier  
 De lor mestier ne font dangier. 2760  
 Li uns viiele un lai berton,  
 Et li altres harpe Gueron.  
 Puis font une altre atempreüre

who won't rob us; we're not asking for pay— 2720  
 just don't let bad people take away  
 what has taken us so long to acquire.  
 Save us, oh Lord, and our belongings."  
 Then they saw the tower loom up  
 above the trees a stone's throw away, 2725  
 when the fog lifted for a moment.  
 It was to the right of the forest,  
 and to the left of the road.  
 They set out on a path  
 and came to the tower: it looked threatening, 2730  
 but what did they care, as long as they had found it?  
 They weren't about to hesitate.  
 They shouted from below, "Who's in there?"  
 The answer came, "The people inside!  
 Who are you and what do you want?" 2735  
 They answered, "Open up and we'll let you know!"  
 The porter opened the gate  
 and they explained their situation.  
 They said, "We are minstrels.  
 Is there no one inside 2740  
 who might offer us shelter for the night?"  
 "Yes, friends. there is! in my opinion,  
 you've never had such good lodgings."  
 "A blessing on the lord and all his men,"  
 the minstrels replied. 2745  
 "There never was such a porter at any gate.  
 By the officers of the household\*  
 you may know for certain  
 whether the master is a decent man.  
 We have often heard it said 2750  
 that a good master makes a good officer  
 without beating him with sticks.  
 And good officers make good masters, in turn."  
 The porter shook hands with the leader.  
 When he had seen to the horses, 2755  
 he led their masters upstairs.  
 They found the seneschal there,  
 and they could tell he was a very good man.  
 So when they had finished their meal,  
 they were quick to practice their trade. 2760  
 One fiddled a Breton lai;\*  
 the other harped "Gueron."  
 Then they chose a different rhythm

- Et font des estrumens mesure.  
 Si font ensamble un lai Mabon — 2765  
 Celui tient on encor a bon —  
 S'en ist si dolce melodie  
 Qu'il n'i a cel quil bien ne die:  
 "Certes que Dex les amena!  
 Bien ait qui cha les adreça!" 2770  
 Mais ainz qu'il voient mais .ii. vespres,  
 Orront voir canter altres vespres  
 Dont plus dolans sera li sire  
 Que s'il veïst son fil ochire.
- Li senescals mar les vit onques. 2775  
 Quant il ont assés joé, donques  
 S'en vait li senescals gesir.  
 Anuit perdra tolt son desir.  
 Li menestrel plus n'i demeurent.  
 Repozer vont, mestier en eurent, 2780  
 Car tolt sunt las de chevalcier.  
 Silences fu al descalcier:  
 N'i ot altre que lui la nuit.  
 Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui qu'anuit,  
 Ne violt qu'altres sa main i mete 2785  
 Ne c'on sor lui ne s'entremete.  
 Colcié se sunt et cil les cuevre.  
 Moult fist benignement cele ouevre.  
 A cascun livre un orellier.  
 Cil prenent moult a merveillier 2790  
 D'enfant de son eé si tendre  
 Comment puet a service entendre.  
 Ainc enfes n'ot si grant francize  
 Ne ne fu de si grant servise.  
 Demandent li: "Qui est tes pere?" 2795  
 "Uns vavasors, si est ma mere  
 Norrice a cel enfant gregnor  
 Ki est ainsnés fils al segnor."  
 Et cil li prenent dont a dire:  
 ".ii. moult bials enfans a tes sire, 2800  
 Et si te fait gregnor honor  
 Que al plus grant, ne al menor.  
 Di nos, kiele, por quoi il fait,  
 Car nos savons tolt entressait,  
 Se ne fussces fils a princier 2805  
 Ja ne te tenist a si chier."/

and played their instruments together.  
 Together they played the "Lai Mabon" — 2765  
 this is still a popular piece.  
 They produced such sweet melodies  
 that there wasn't a one who didn't say,  
 "Surely, God has brought them here!  
 We wish him well who guided them to us!" 2770  
 But before two nights have passed,  
 they will sing a very different tune, believe me!  
 —one that will make the seneschal as sorry  
 as if he had seen his son get killed.

It's a pity for him that he ever laid eyes on them! 2775  
 After they had played a good deal,  
 the seneschal retired.  
 Tonight he will lose his heart's desire!  
 The minstrels didn't wait around.  
 They went to bed; they needed rest, 2780  
 for they were exhausted from the day's ride.  
 Silence was there to help them undress.  
 He was the only one there that night.  
 Whatever anyone thought of it,  
 he didn't want anyone else 2785  
 to lend a hand or intervene.  
 He helped them undress and saw to their bedcovers.  
 He accomplished these tasks most charmingly;  
 he brought each of them a pillow.  
 They were amazed that a child 2790  
 of such tender years  
 was able to be of such service;  
 they had never seen a child of such noble bearing,  
 nor one who was so accomplished at serving.  
 They asked him, "Who is your father?" 2795  
 "A vavassor; my mother  
 is nurse to an older child  
 who is the lord's elder son."  
 Then they said to him,  
 "Your lord has two beautiful children, 2800  
 but he does you greater honor  
 than to the elder or younger.  
 Can you tell us, please, why he does this?  
 for we could see at once  
 that he wouldn't hold you dearer 2805  
 if you were a prince's son."

"Oho!" fait l'enfes, "miols savés  
 Que vos ichi dit nen avés.  
 Li sages hom se rent plus fier  
 Sovent viers cho qu'il a plus chier. 2810  
 Et neporquant n'est pas fiertés,  
 Saciés de fit, ains est ciertés.  
 El seneschal a moult sage home,  
 N'a nul plus cointe trosqu'a Rome.  
 Ne violt ses fils bel sanblant faire, 2815  
 Ne folement sor lui atraire,  
 Faire vilains, ne orgellols.  
 Et jo si resui se fillols."  
 "Amis," font il, "quels que tu soies  
 N'iés pas vilains, ne ne foloies. 2820  
 Dex, ki te fist, porgart ta vie!"  
 "Segnor, et Dex vos beneïe!"

Silences vait en son lit donques,  
 Mais il n'i dormi la nuit onques.  
 Moult li remort sa consiënce. 2825  
 Ses cuers li dist: "Diva! Silence,  
 Ti drap qu'as vestut, et li halles,  
 Font croire as gens que tu iés malles.  
 Mais el a sos la vesteüre  
 Ki de tolt cho n'a mie cure. 2830  
 S'il avenoit del roi Ebayn  
 Que il morust hui u demain,  
 Feme raroit son iretage.  
 Et tu iés ore si salvage,  
 Ne sai a us de feme entendre. 2835  
 Alques t'esteveroit aprendre  
 Dont te seüsces contenir,  
 Car tolt cho puet bien avenir.  
 Et se coze est par aventure  
 Que si fais us longhes te dure, 2840  
 Bien sai, tu ieres chevaliers  
 Puet sc'estre coärs, u laniers,  
 Car ainc ne vi feme maniere  
 D'armes porter en tel maniere.  
 Tolt cho repuet avenir bien. 2845  
 Se ne ses donc aucune rien  
 Por tes compaignons conforter,  
 Ne te volront pas deporter.  
 Car t'en vas vials en altre tierre

"Aha!" said the youth, "you know  
 better than what you've just said.  
 A wise man is often more severe  
 with the one he holds dearest. 2810  
 this isn't harshness, however;  
 you can be sure it's a sign of affection.  
 The seneschal is a very wise man,  
 the wisest one this side of Rome.  
 He doesn't want to be too gracious to his sons, 2815  
 or spoil them with too much attention,  
 and have them turn out bad-tempered or haughty.  
 As for me, I am his godchild."  
 "Friend," they said, "whoever you are,  
 you are no villain and no fool. 2820  
 May God who made you keep you safe."  
 "Lords, and may God bless you."

Then Silence went to bed,  
 but he didn't sleep a wink all night.  
 His conscience was bothering him a lot. 2825  
 His heart said, "Hey, Silence!  
 those clothes you're wearing and that sunburnt face  
 make people believe that you're a boy.  
 But what that boy has under his clothes  
 has nothing to do with being male! 2830  
 If it should happen that King Evan  
 died today or tomorrow,  
 women would inherit again,  
 and you are now so fierce  
 that you know nothing of women's arts. 2835  
 You really need to learn something  
 that would serve you in good stead,  
 for all that might come to pass!  
 And if it should turn out that  
 you have to keep up this pretense for a long time, 2840  
 you'll become a knight, as you well know,  
 and then maybe you'll be a terrible coward,  
 for I never saw a woman fit  
 to bear arms in such a manner.  
 All that may well happen. 2845  
 If you don't know a single way  
 to entertain your companions,  
 they won't want to spend their time with you.  
 Why don't you at least go abroad

Sens et savoir aprendre et quere. 2850  
 Entrues puet naistre tels noviele  
 Ki te sera puet sc'estre biele.  
 Que dira donc li cuens tes pere?  
 Que devenra donques ta mere?/  
 Que diront il quant le savront? 2855  
 Que puet caloir? Bien te ravront,  
 Par si que Dex l'ait destiné  
 Et que l'ait si déterminé.  
 Avoec ces jogleörs iras.  
 Por cho que biel les serviras, 2860  
 Et que tu painne i voelles rendre,  
 Poras des estrumens aprendre.  
 Se lens iés en chevalerie  
 Si te valra la joglerie.  
 Et s'il avient que li rois muire, 2865  
 Es cambres t'en poras deduire.  
 Ta harpe et ta vièle avras  
 En liu de cho que ne savras  
 Orfrois ne fresials manioier.  
 Si te porra mains anoier 2870  
 Se tu iés en un bastonage  
 Ke tu aies vials *el en gage*."\*

Silences est en grant effroi  
 Qu'il cuide faire tel desroi  
 .iii. liues anchois qu'il ajorne. 2875  
 Sa sele met et bel s'atorne.  
 Moult par est bials ses caceörs.  
 Puis vait al lit des jogleörs  
 Et dist lor: "Segnor, dormés vos?"  
 "Amis," funt il, "par Deu, ne nos." 2880  
 "Segnor, g'irai el bois berser,  
 Mais s'il vus plaist a converser  
 Huimais ichi, tant vos dirai,  
 Por vostre amor pas n'i irai."  
 Et cil respondent comme sage: 2885  
 "Icho vus vient de bon corage.  
 Vostre offre amons nos durement,  
 Mais nos vus disons purement  
 Que por un grant avoir conquerre  
 Ne remanriens en ceste terre 2890  
 .ii. jors entiers a nostre voel.  
 Tart meüsmes de Tintaguel,

to gain some experience and acquire some expertise? 2850  
 In the meantime, you might hear  
 the kind of news that would make you happy.  
 What will your father the count say?  
 What will happen to your mother?  
 What will they say when they find out? 2855  
 What can it matter? They will have you back again  
 if that is God's will,  
 if that's the way it's meant to be.  
 You shall go with these jongleurs.  
 Provided you serve them well 2860  
 and are willing to work very hard,  
 you will learn how to play instruments.  
 If you are slow at chivalry,  
 minstrelsy will be of use to you.  
 And if the king should happen to die, 2865  
 you will be able to practice your art in a chamber;  
 you will have your harp and viele  
 to make up for the fact that you don't know  
 hoe to embroider a fringe or border.  
 You will be less bored 2870  
 in your captivity  
 if you at least have something to fall back on."

Silence is absolutley frantic,  
 for he plans to travel so fast  
 as to cover two leagues before daybreak. 2875  
 He equips himself well  
 and saddles his beautiful hunter.  
 Then he goes to the jongleurs' bed  
 and says to them, "Lords, are you still asleep?"  
 "Not us, friend," they say. 2880  
 "Lords," he says, "I am off to the forest to hunt.  
 But if you wish to remain  
 another day, I should like to say that  
 I'll stay here on your account."  
 And they reply like well-bred men, 2885  
 "This comes of your good character.  
 We are deeply moved by your offer,  
 but we will tell you quite simply  
 that we wouldn't willingly stay  
 two whole days in this land, 2890  
 even if we were offered a fortune.  
 We left Tintagel late yesterday

Ersoir, por venir a la mer:  
 Car nos poriens forment amer  
 Que nos fuscimes en Bertagne.” 2895  
 “Segnor, et Dex vos doinst gaagne  
 Et vos escremissce de mort.  
 Li vens vus vient deviers le nort.  
 Se tost vus metés a la voie  
 Ains nuit i porrés estre a joie, 2900  
 Car li mers est ichi estreite.  
 Ki buen vent a et bien exploite,/  
 De primes trosqu’a miédi  
 I puet tres bien estre de chi.  
 Trosque al port n’a solement 2905  
 Fors .x. liues escarsement.”

Silences a itant s’en torne.  
 Ne cudiés pas que mains sejourne:  
 D’une herbe qu’ens el bos a prise  
 Desconoist sa face et deguise. 2910  
 Ki bien l’esgarde viers le chiere  
 Bien sanble de povre riviere.  
 Al premier flot vient a la mer.  
 De tols les suens pense escaper.  
 Lieve se nef et puis i entre. 2915  
 Li jogleör viennent soëntre,  
 Font pris de passer, si entrerent.  
 Li maronier se desancrerent,  
 Lievent lor sigle, si s’en vont,  
 En Bertaïne venu en sunt. 2920

[A]nchois qu’il fuscent arivé  
 Ont de l’enfant moult estrivé.  
 Li uns a dit: “Dex, est cho il?”  
 Li altres dist: “Par foi! nenil!  
 Mal sanble la color celui 2925  
 A la color quist en cestui.”  
 L’enfes ot tele ententiön  
 Qu’onques ne lor fist mentiön  
 Qui il fust ne que la fesist,  
 Ne que en Bertagne fesist, 2930  
 Qu’il ne desiscent a la gent.  
 Des nés isscent moult bielement.  
 Scilenses o çals s’acompane,  
 Et quant il sunt a la campagne

in order to reach the sea,  
 for we would be very glad  
 to be in Brittany." 2895

"Lords, God prosper you  
 and shield you from death.  
 The wind is coming from the north.  
 If you set out right away,  
 you can reach your destination before nightfall, 2900  
 for the sea is very narrow at this point.  
 He who has good wind and makes good time  
 can easily be there  
 in half a day.  
 It is barely ten leagues 2905  
 from here to the port."

Then Silence went away.  
 But you mustn't think he was ready to leave yet:  
 first he stained and disguised his face  
 with a herb he found in the woods. 2910  
 Whoever looked at his complexion  
 would certainly think him of low station.  
 At first tide he reached the sea.  
 He wanted to escape from all his people.  
 The ship floated free and he went on board. 2915  
 The jongleurs arrived immediately after,  
 paid their passage and boarded the ship.  
 The sailors weighed anchor,  
 hoisted their sails and left;  
 they were on their way to Brittany. 2920

Before they arrived,  
 they talked a great deal about the youth.  
 One of them said, "Good lord, is that he?"  
 The other said, "Heavens, no. Certainly not.  
 This boy has a very bad complexion, 2925  
 compared to the other."  
 The youth intended  
 not to say a thing to them  
 about who he was or what he was doing there  
 or what he intended to do in Brittany, 2930  
 so they wouldn't tell anyone.  
 They disembarked without any complications.  
 Silence accompanied them,  
 and when they were in the countryside,

- Demande lor u il iront. 2935  
 Cil dient qu'a Nantes giront  
 Se *il* le pueent exploitier.  
 "Pensés," fait l'enfes, "de qoitier:  
 Ki temple puet ostel avoir  
 Al soper li torne a savoir." 2940  
 Trosques a Nantes sont venu.  
 Un home encontrent tolt kenu  
 Ki moult resamble bien prodome.  
 Cil lé herberja, c'est la some.  
 Usent lor vie a grant deduit. 2945  
 Silences siert tolte la nuit,  
 Et cil prennent a merveillier  
 Et l'uns a l'autre a consellier.  
 "Si m'aît Dex, si com j'espoir,  
 C'est chi nostre vallés d'ersoir. 2950  
 Il est tols d'altretel servise,  
 Mais qu'il est trestols d'autre guise.  
 Et, par foit, c'est estrange cose:  
 Cil d'ersoir ot color de rose  
 Et cis ichi l'a si tré jausne, 2955  
 Com s'il fust tains d'ortie u d'aisne."
- Silences les voit si doter,  
 Par eures l'un l'autre boter:  
 Et ot tres bien que c'est de lui.  
 "Segnor," fait il, "qu'est de celui 2960  
 Ki vos servi ersoir si bien?  
 Se jo i ai mespris de rien,  
 Une altre fois le ferai miols.  
 Jo ne sui mie moult très viols.  
 Se vos *me* degniés rien aprendre, 2965  
 De bon cuer voel moult bien entendre.  
 Icil qui vos servi ersoir  
 Est miols apris que jo, espoir."  
 Sorrit, que cil l'ont bien veü,  
 Dont sevent qu'il sunt decheü 2970  
 Par la color qu'il a faitice.  
 Cil loe sa face traitice,  
 Et cis la color amortie.  
 Si pert la roze sor l'ortie,  
 Si pert la colors de nature: 2975  
 Blance et ver*m*elle est la mesture.  
 S'il est alcuns ki croire l'oze,

he asked them where they were going. 2935  
 They said they would spend the night in Nantes  
 if they could make good enough time.  
 "Let's try and make it fast," said the youth,  
 "for he who reaches the inn early  
 gets a savory supper."\* 2940  
 They reached Nantes,  
 where they met an old gray-haired man  
 who seemed a very honest sort,  
 and he put them up, in short.  
 They had a most delightful time. 2945  
 Silence served them the entire evening.  
 They began to wonder  
 and consult on another:  
 "So help me God (I hope he will),  
 that is our valet from last night. 2950  
 He serves exactly the same way,  
 even though he looks completely different.  
 And indeed, it's strange:  
 the one last night had a rosy complexion,  
 while this one is all yellowish, 2955  
 as if he were stained with nettles or wine-dregs."

Silence saw them wondering  
 and nudging each other for hours  
 and could hear very well they were talking about him.  
 "Gentlemen," he said, "what's this talk 2960  
 of someone who served you so well last night?  
 If I have neglected anything,  
 I will do better next time.  
 I am still very young;  
 if you deign to teach me something, 2965  
 I will learn it with all good will.  
 The one who served you last night  
 was better trained than I am, I hope."  
 He smiled, and they looked closely at him  
 and realized they had been deceived 2970  
 by the color he had manufactured.  
 One praised his lovely face,  
 the other his fair complexion (under the deadening dye).  
 Thus the rose wins out over the nettle  
 and Nature's color becomes apparent. 2975  
 White and red are mingled:  
 if anyone dares to believe it,

Il passe anbeure et lis et roze.  
 Et quant li jogleör le sorent  
 Que cho fu il, grant joie en orent. 2980  
 Devisent dont que il ira  
 O als et si les servira:  
 Par tel covent l'aprenderont.  
 Afient dont qu'il l'atendront  
 Et voideront bien main la tierre, 2985  
 Que on nel viegne illuques querre.

Al seneschal voel revenir  
 Ki cel enfant devoit tenir.  
 Por cho qu'il siolt aler as chiens  
 Ne mespensa encore giens 2990  
 Desci que vint al anuitier.  
 Donc commence en soi a luitier,  
 Et quant il voit que il demeure  
 Plus c'onques mais ne siolt nule eure,/  
 Set que li menestrel, ahyi! 2995  
 L'ont de son damoisiel traï.  
 Ki donc veïst larmies espandre,  
 Et ces cevials tirer et tandre,  
 Tordre ces puins, battre poitrines,  
 Plorer ces dames, ces mescines, 3000  
 Ronpent ces anials de ces mains  
 Al tordre qu'il funt, c'est del mains!  
 Car li sires et cele dame  
 Ki nori l'avoit dont se pasme.  
 La ot moult grant confondison. 3005  
 Quant revienent de pasmison,  
 .c. en sunt tramis par la tierre  
 Por celui cerkier et requierre.

Noviele atrote et si acort  
 Et vient moult tost corant a cort 3010  
 Que perdus est li damoisials  
 Ki ert si prols, si gens, si bials.  
 Et quant l'entent li cuens ses pere,  
 Et Eufemie, quist sa mere,  
 As cuers en ont tel dol, tel ire, 3015  
 C'on nel vos puet conter ne dire,  
 Non, certes, la centisme part:  
 Enaizes que lor cuers ne part.  
 Moult poi en falt que il ne crievent:

he outdoes both rose and lily.  
 And when the jongleurs knew  
 that it was he, they were overjoyed. 2980  
 They decided then that he would go  
 with them and serve them;  
 on these terms, they would instruct him.  
 They promised they would take care of him  
 and that they would leave the territory right away, 2985  
 so that no one would come and find him there.

Now I want to get back to the seneschal  
 who was in charge of the youth.  
 Because Silence was used to going off hunting,  
 the seneschal didn't think anything of it 2990  
 until it began to grow dark.  
 Then he began to worry.  
 And when he saw that the youth was staying out  
 later than and been his custom before,  
 he knew that the minstrels, alas! 2995  
 had robbed him of his young lord.  
 Then you could see tears shed  
 and pulling and tearing of hair  
 and wringing of hands and beating of breasts.  
 Ladies and girls wept loudly, 3000  
 they wrenched the rings from off their fingers  
 with the wringing they did; that's the least of it,  
 for the lord and lady  
 who had raised the youth fainted.  
 That caused great consternation. 3005  
 And when they recovered from their swoon.  
 they sent a hundred men throughout the land  
 to find Silence and bring him back.

The news traveled very fast,  
 and soon the entire court knew 3010  
 of the disappearance of the youth  
 who was so charming, handsome and brave.  
 And when his father, the count, heard the news,  
 and Eufemie, his mother,  
 their hearts were filled with such anguish 3015  
 that no one could possibly describe it;  
 no, not even one one-hundredth of it.  
 Their hearts were nearly breaking;  
 they were very close to death.

Sovent pasment, sovent relievant, 3020  
 Et li baron qui les sostient  
 De pasmer moult envis s'astient.  
 Por çals de pasmison retraire  
 Eskivent soi de noise faire:  
 Tant sunt il voir plus tormenté 3025  
 Et refragent lor volenté.  
 Por cho c'on ait\* al cuer eënte,  
 Quant on descuevre sa tormente,  
 Selonc cho c'on l'a de maniere,  
 U par demostrement de ciere, 3030  
 Quant on nen a de parler aase  
 U qu'eure soit que on le taise,  
 U par dire priveement  
 A conpagnon, u durement.  
 Quant il est lius de mener joie 3035  
 Apertement, si c'on bien l'oie,  
 U quant il est lius de parler  
 C'on voit sa coze devorer,  
 Moult grieve mains par certes l'uevre  
 Quant on le cuer si en descuevre, 3040  
 Com li afares li requiert,  
 Et si con a le coze afiert./  
 Mais cist nen osent faire noise  
 Que la contesse ne s'en voise,  
 Dont on ne puet coisir alainne, 3045  
 Et por le conte ki se painne:  
 Car par noisier un bien petit  
 Poroient rendre l'esperit.

Longe est et griés lor pasmisons—  
 Plus que nos, certes, ne disons— 3050  
 Et quant un poi sunt revenu,  
 Oiés com se sunt contenu.  
 En halt crient: "Bials fils Scilence,  
 Com nos kerkiés grief penitence!  
 Li diols qui por vos nos enivre 3055  
 Nos fait languir en liu de wivre.  
 Com plus verrons joie mener,  
 Tant nos convenra plus pener.  
 Mais com poriens nos pis avoir?  
 Certes, jo ne le pui savoir. 3060  
 Trestolt duel nos viennent enseble  
 Quant nostre fils de nos s'en emble,

They kept on fainting and being revived, 3020  
 and the nobles who came to their assistance  
 were scarcely able to keep from fainting themselves.  
 To keep the parents from swooning,  
 they refrained from giving vent to their grief;  
 by repressing their natural inclination, 3025  
 they only increased their own suffering, to be sure.  
 When one has an aching heart,  
 if one reveals one's anguish  
 by one's bearing  
 or facial expression, 3030  
 when one is not free to speak  
 or if it is appropriate to keep silent about the matter,  
 or by speaking confidentially or giving vent to grief  
 privately, with a close friend,  
 if the situation requires that one demonstrate joy 3035  
 openly, with loud rejoicing,  
 or if one has a chance to speak  
 when one's situation is truly desperate,  
 one certainly suffers far less  
 if one can open one's heart 3040  
 as the matter requires  
 and in a manner appropriate to the occasion.  
 But these people did not dare mourn openly  
 for fear of killing the countess.  
 who was barely breathing, 3045  
 and the count, who was suffering terribly,  
 because the slightest bit of noise  
 might have killed them both.

They were prostrate with grief for a long time.  
 It was more painful than words can express. 3050  
 And when they had recovered a little,  
 this was their reaction:  
 they cried aloud, "Silence, our beautiful son!  
 What dreadful suffering you have caused us!  
 We are so tormented by grief 3055  
 that we are more dead than alive.  
 The more happiness we see,  
 the more we will suffer.  
 How could anything worse have befallen us?  
 (I certainly don't know the answer to that!) 3060  
 We are afflicted with all sorrows at once,  
 having our son run away from us.

Ki mireöirs estoit del mont,  
 Et de la mer trosqu'ens el font  
 Devriemes querre nostre preu. 3065  
 C'estroit noier et vivre peu.  
 Quant si grans dolors nos enivre,  
 Nos menres mals est petit vivre.  
 Moult par seromes esperdu,  
 Quant nostre joie avons perdu, 3070  
 Se convoitons vivre sans joie  
 Car nos noions quant il se noie.  
 Nostre [joie] est viers mer alee:  
 S'al fons ne fust adevalee  
 Qu'ele ne fust noïe tolte, 3075  
 Ja nen avriemes si grant dolte.  
 Mais por que iriemes nos dotant?  
 Nos mals ne vient pas degotant,  
 Mais a un fais sor nos chaï.  
 Por que seriemes esbahi? 3080  
 Car certes finement savons  
 Jamais n'avrons pis c'or avons.  
 De pis avoir n'avons dotance,  
 De miols avoir nule esperance.  
 Et nostre crieme et nostre espoir 3085  
 Avons nos perdu tres ersoir."  
 Trestols li païs plaint Scilence.  
 Cil ki est de povre abstinence  
 Ki ne se puet tenir de plor,  
 Icil ne fait la nul demor. / 3090  
 Loing en sus d'als s'en vait mucier,  
 Plorer son dol, plaindre et hucier.  
 Moult demainnent grant dol, por voir,  
 De cho qu'il ont perdu lor oir.  
  
 Segnor, oï avés la plainte. 3095  
 De teles funt cascun jor mainte.  
 Et si n'est fors joer et rire  
 A cho que l'on vos poroit dire;  
 Mais ki demainne trop le voire  
 As gens, l'en fait\* sovent mescroire: 3100  
 Por cho ne voel jo pas trop dire.  
 Li senescals kin a grant ire  
 Nen oze pas a cort venir,  
 Qu'il ne set preu raison tenir  
 Que il a fait del fil al conte. 3105

He was the mirror of the world.  
 the best thing for us to do  
 would be to drown ourselves at the bottom of the sea, 3065  
 drown and end our lives.  
 When we are afflicted with such terrible suffering,  
 ending our lives would be the lesser evil.  
 We would be truly insane,  
 having lost the joy of our life, 3070  
 if we wanted to live without joy,  
 for we are drowned if he is.  
 Our joy went down to the sea.  
 If it were possible that he's not at the bottom of the sea,  
 if he weren't really drowned, 3075  
 we wouldn't feel such despair.  
 But how could we possibly doubt it?  
 Our misfortune doesn't come drop by drop,  
 it falls upon us all at once.  
 Why should we worry any more, 3080  
 when we know for certain  
 that the worst has already befallen us?  
 We have no fear of anything worse,  
 no hope of anything better:  
 last night we lost 3085  
 both fear and hope."  
 The entire country mourned Silence.  
 Those who had little self-control  
 and couldn't hold back their tears  
 left quickly. 3090  
 They went to hide themselves far from the parents  
 to moan, to grieve and wail aloud.  
 Truly, they mourned long and deeply  
 because they had lost their young lord.  
  
 Lords, now you have heard how they lamented. 3095  
 Every day there were fresh displays of grief.  
 And this is like play and laughter,  
 compared to what I could tell you.  
 But those who tell people too much  
 of the truth often destroy their credibility, 3100  
 and so I don't want to say too much.  
 The seneschal, who was dreadfully upset,  
 didn't dare to come to court,  
 because he hardly knew how to justify  
 what he had done with the count's son. 3105

Il n'en set preu venir a conte,  
 Tant que li cuens a lui le mande.  
 Voelle u non, se li commande  
 Que il le verté li descuevre,  
 Tolt si com est alee l'uevre, 3110  
 Et cil nen oze mot celer.  
 Si ne fait fors renoveler  
 Et enaigrir lor dol, lor rage,  
 Quant cers les fait de lor damage.  
 Li cuens set que li jogleór 3115  
 Ont pris del mont le mireór.  
 Volés savoir que il lor fait?  
 I[l] fait banir par cel forfait  
 Les jogleörs tols de sa tiere,  
 Que rien n'i viegnent mais aquierre. 3120  
 S'on en puet un ballier u prendre,  
 Il le fera ardoir u pendre.  
 Ki en porra un atraper  
 Se de gré le lassce escaper,  
 On fera de lui altretel 3125  
 Com on feroit del menestrel.

Oï avés, cho est la some,  
 Que .m. gens muerent par .i. home:  
 Et par .ii. d'als, quant sunt falli,  
 Avient que .m. sunt malballi. 3130  
 Mais avis m'est, que c'on en die,  
 Que cist ne font a blasmer mie  
 Quel qu'ait li cuens damage u honte;  
 Car nel sevent pas fil a conte.  
 Ne sevent niënt de la voire: 3135  
 Qu'il jurast, nel peüscent croire,  
 Car il les siert si humlement.  
 Et se l'estorie ne me ment,/  
 Il a des estrumens apris,  
 Car moult grant travail i a mis, 3140  
 Qu'ains que li tiers ans fust passés  
 A il ses maistres tols passés,  
 Et moult grant avoir lor gaagne.  
 Por quant si ont moult grant engagne  
 Que nus d'als ne set que il face: 3145  
 Et por cho qu'il a gregnor grasce  
 Que il nen aient mais en cort,

He was scarcely able to give an account,  
 no matter how much the count asked for one.  
 Whether he wanted to or not, he was ordered  
 to disclose the truth,  
 exactly as it happened, 3110  
 and he didn't dare omit a word.  
 His explanation only renewed  
 their grief and made them more bitter and angry  
 by reaffirming their sense of loss.  
 The count knew that jongleurs 3115  
 had taken the mirror of the world.  
 Do you want to know what he did to them?  
 For this crime, he had all jongleurs  
 banished from his lands;  
 they were never to seek their fortune there again. 3120  
 Any who were seized or captured  
 would be burned or hanged.  
 Anyone who could have captured one,  
 but let him escape on purpose,  
 would suffer the same fate 3125  
 as the minstrel would have.

What you have heard all comes down to this:  
 a thousand people were doomed on account of one man;  
 because of two, whatever they might have done,  
 it happened that a thousand were persecuted. 3130  
 I don't care what anyone says; in my opinion,  
 those minstrels were not at all to blame  
 for whatever loss the count had suffered,  
 because they didn't know he was the count's son.  
 They didn't know a thing about it. 3135  
 And even if he had sworn it was true, they wouldn't have  
 believed him,  
 because he served them so humbly.  
 And if we can believe the story,  
 he learned to play instruments so well,  
 he put such effort into it, 3140  
 that before the end of the third year  
 he had completely surpassed his masters,  
 and earned a great deal of money for them.  
 They were so humiliated by this  
 that they didn't know what to do. 3145  
 And because he found much greater favor at court  
 than they ever had,

Criement que l'enfes ne s'en tort  
 Et qu'o als mais estre ne voelle;  
 Et que il de cho s'en orguelle 3150  
 Qu'il seus set plus qu'il doi ne facent.  
 Cuidiés que granment ne l'en hacent?  
 Oïl, qu'il criement le damage.  
 Cuidiés qu'es cuers n'aient grant rage,  
 Que ne lor tort a moult grant honte 3155  
 Quant il sunt devant roi u conte,  
 Qu'il harpe et viiele a plaisir  
 Et c'on les fait por lui taisir?  
 Oïl! dont ont si grant anguissce  
 Nus ne se[t] que il faire puissce. 3160  
 Trestols li frons lor en degotte  
 C'on por un garçon les debotte.

Silences estoit ja si bials  
 N'ert pas garçons, mais damoisials.  
 Et estoit ja el quart esté 3165  
 Qu'il o ces maistres ot esté.  
 Grans est li diols qu'en fait li pere,  
 Tolt cil del païs, et la mere,  
 Car ainc nus n'i vient qui lor die,  
 Tant ait la tiere entor ordie: 3170  
 "J'ai veü vostre fil illuec:  
 Cho sachiés vos." Et neporuec  
 L'a fait li cuens bien sovent quere,  
 Tramis ses mës de terre en terre.  
 Car cil a fait de son non cange, 3175  
 Si l'a mué por plus estrange.  
 A cort se fait nomer Malduit,  
 Car il se tient moult por mal duit,  
 Moult mal apris lonc sa nature.  
 Et sil refait par couverture. 3180  
 Il est forment de grant service,  
 Et si se paine en tolte guise  
 De çals servir a volenté.  
 Avoir porcace a grant plenté.  
 Por cho qu'ert bials, et si vallans, 3185  
 En son mestier si tres vallans,  
 Ert il a cort tols jors li sire.  
 Porquant nel puet nus por voir dire,  
 Por nule honor c'on li fesist,  
 Que mains por cho s'entremesist 3190

they were afraid that the youth might change his mind  
 and not want to stay with them any longer;  
 that he might become vain 3150  
 because he alone could outdo the two of them.  
 Don't you think they hated him for this?  
 Yes, indeed, for they feared financial ruin.  
 And don't you think their hearts were filled with rage?  
 Can't you imagine how deeply ashamed they felt, 3155  
 when, in the presence of king or count,  
 he was asked to play harp or vîele as much as he pleased,  
 and they were silenced so people could hear him?  
 Oh, yes, they felt such jealous rage  
 that neither of them knew what to do. 3160  
 Their foreheads dripped with sweat at the thought  
 that they were slighted because of a serving-boy.

Silence was already so handsome that he  
 was clearly no servant, but a young man of quality.  
 It was already the fourth summer 3165  
 that he had served these masters.  
 His father, his mother, and all his countrymen  
 continued to grieve deeply,  
 for none ever came to tell them,  
 however carefully they had combed the entire country,  
 "I saw your son in such-and-such a place; 3170  
 I thought I'd let you know." Nevertheless,  
 the count had him searched for again and again;  
 he sent his messengers from one country to another.  
 But the youth had changed his name 3175  
 to an even stranger one.  
 In public, he called himself Malduit,  
 because he thought himself very badly brought up,  
 very badly educated with regard to his nature,  
 and also to conceal his identity. 3180  
 He gave the very best of service  
 and exerted himself in every way  
 to do the minstrels' bidding and please them.  
 He earned a great deal of money.  
 Because he was handsome, gracious, 3185  
 and such an accomplished musician,  
 he was the center of attention wherever he went.  
 And yet, no one could truthfully say,  
 despite all the honors he may have received,  
 that he waited on the minstrels with any less care, 3190

De çals servir et descalcier,  
 Car ne se voloît essalcier.  
 Il les siert moult et biel et bien,  
 Mais ne li valt, voir, nule rien:  
 Car por servir, ne por bien faire, 3195  
 N'iert ja vencus cuers de pute aire.  
 Car li cuers cui francise adrece  
 N'iert ja vencus fors par destrece.  
 Li bontés a l'enfant acroist,  
 Li vilonie a çals aïst. 3200

Silences croist moult en francise,  
 Li jogleör en culvertise,  
 Tant com li buens tent a l'onor  
 Et malvais a le deshonor.  
 Oiés merveilleuse descorde! 3205  
 Se Dex, par cui li mons s'acorde,  
 N'aie l'enfant qu'il escape,  
 Icil le prendront a le trape.  
 Por bien fait col\* frait li rendront,  
 S'il pueënt, cho li atendront. 3210  
 Entr'als en vont moult devisant,  
 D'eures a altres mal disant,  
 Par l'enemi qui les tangone,  
 Ki les aömbre et avirone.

Un jor repairent de Gascoigne, 3215  
 Et viennent al duc de Borgoigne.  
 Moult biel et bien sunt retenu:  
 Puis sont as estrumens venu.  
 Silences i est plus eslis  
 Que il ne soient, et joïs, 3220  
 Qu'en lui ot moult bon menestrel.  
 Ens el palais n'ot ainques tel,  
 Si est moult bials, et bien senés,  
 Et si est granment plus penés  
 De faire bien et honesté 3225  
 Que li altre n'aient esté.  
 Et en cho gist moult de le grasce,  
 C'on loe tols jors, quoi qu'il fasce:  
 Paint d'acesmer sa volenté,  
 De faire honor, et a plenté 3230  
 Ait vials bials dis sor tolte rien,  
 Ki plus ne fait {cha ju} bien.\*

serving them and taking their boots off.  
 He didn't want to give himself airs,  
 he served them well and efficiently—  
 but it certainly did him no good at all,  
 for fine service and good deeds 3195  
 never won foul heart,  
 while a noble heart  
 is won over by the mere sight of distress.  
 As the youth's goodness increased,  
 his masters' villainy grew. 3200

As Silence grew more and more admirable,  
 his masters became more and more deceitful,  
 just as a good man always tends toward honor,  
 and an evil one towards dishonor.  
 Now you'll hear of a terrible breach of trust. 3205  
 If God, from whom the world derives its order,  
 doesn't help the youth to escape,  
 they will catch him in their trap;  
 they will give him a broken neck for his trouble,\*  
 that's what they'll do if they get the chance. 3210  
 They are plotting many things in secret;  
 they are thinking up one evil plan after another,  
 incited by the Enemy who goads them,  
 who has cast his dark shadow over them and has them in his power.

One day they left Gascony 3215  
 for the court of the Duke of Burgundy,  
 where they were very well received.  
 They proceeded to play their instruments.  
 Silence was more sought after  
 than they were, and enjoyed greater success, 3220  
 for he was a very fine minstrel.  
 The palace had never seen his like.  
 He was so handsome and accomplished,  
 and put much more effort into giving a fine performance,  
 put much more of himself into his art 3225  
 than the others ever did.  
 And these qualities were largely responsible for the  
 favor and praise he received whatever he did,  
 whether he strove to achieve greater self-discipline,  
 or to refine his performance, or whether he knew 3230  
 plenty of beautiful stories on any subject,  
 no one could outdo him {?}.

Ainz que li menestrel s'en isscent,  
 Congié ne qu'avoir le peuïsscent, /  
 Li dus une grant fieste i tint. 3235  
 Icil ki l'a, plus le maintint.  
 Li menestrel i ont joé  
 Mais il i sont si desjoé  
 Que il n'osent un mot tentir,  
 Car li dus nes violt consentir, 3240  
 Ne mais Scilence solement.  
 Celui voelent oïr la gent:  
 Et cil en ont angoisse et honte,  
 Moult plus que ne vos di el conte.  
 Li diols lor est es cuers colés 3245  
 Que lor mestiers est refolés  
 Tolt par l'afaire d'un gloton,  
 Ki pas ne valoit un boton.  
 "N'a encor pas .iiii. ans d'assés,  
 Et or nos a ensi passés!" 3250  
 Font anbedui li menestrel.  
 "Kaieles! Ki vit mais itel?  
 Itels sordens\* nos croist en lui  
 Ki nos fera encor anui.  
 Tel caiel norist l'om adiés 3255  
 Ki li cort a la janbe apriés.  
 Tels fait meismes le vergant  
 Dont on le bat. Nostre serjant  
 Avons desor nos fait segnor.  
 Nus hom n'or mais honte gregnor 3260  
 Que nos avons ichi eü.  
 Nos somes plus que decheü.  
 U mainz savons que ja d'assés,  
 U cis vassals a tols passés  
 Les jogleörs de jogler bien. 3265  
 Car nus n'en sot ja viers nos rien.  
 Duree n'i puet nus avoir:  
 Cis a emblé nostre savoir.  
 Por voir, en son enmiodrement  
 Voi croistre nostre empirement. 3270  
 Nos savoirs monteplie en lui,  
 Et Dex, com j'en ai grant anui!  
 Il l'ont or tant proisié en cort.  
 Cuidiés vos or qu'il ne s'en tort?  
 Oïl, atolt nostre savoir: 3275  
 Si volra, partira l'avoir.

Before the minstrels left,  
 before they were granted permission to leave,  
 the duke gave a great feast. 3235  
 He showed even greater favor to Silence than before.  
 The minstrels began a concert there,  
 but they were so disconcerted  
 that they didn't dare say a word,  
 because the duke didn't want to hear them; 3240  
 he just wanted to hear Silence alone.  
 Everyone wanted to hear only him,  
 and the minstrels were enraged and humiliated at this,  
 much more than I am telling you.  
 Their hearts were pierced with grief 3245  
 that their craft was so disdained  
 all on account of some  
 no-good, no-talent nobody.  
 "He doesn't even have four years' experience  
 and he's outdone us like this!" 3250  
 both minstrels exclaimed.  
 "For heaven's sake! Who ever heard of such a thing?  
 He is about as welcome as a tooth-ache,  
 and as likely to continue giving us trouble.  
 It's like the dog 3255  
 that bites the leg of the man who feeds him.  
 It's like the one who cuts\*  
 the stick that beats him —  
 we've created a master out of our servant.  
 No man has ever known greater shame 3260  
 than what we are experiencing now.  
 We are worse than outwitted:  
 either we're not as good as we used to be,  
 or this upstart is the best  
 jongleur that ever was. 3265  
 Nobody even came close to us before.  
 Things can't go on like this:  
 this upstart has stolen our artistry.  
 And the better he gets,  
 the worse things get for us. 3270  
 Our talents are multiplied in him.  
 God, this makes me sick!  
 To think how much they've praised him here at court!  
 Don't you think he's bound to turn on us now?  
 Of course! he has all our knowledge. 3275  
 If he wants to, he'll split the profits.

Nostre damages doblera,  
 Car nostre avoir enportera,  
 Et plus avoec: c'iert nostre grasce  
 Que en cort mais, u mestier fasce, 3280  
 N'iermes oï. Tant l'ont amé,  
 Trop iermes par lui adamé."/   
 "Mais se jo vo fiânce avoie,"  
 Cho dist li uns, "et jo savoie  
 Que vos men conseil celissiés, 3285  
 Qu'a nului ne le desisiés,  
 Certes," fait il, "gel vos diroie."  
 "Tolés!" fait il, "gel jehiroie!  
 Nostre amistiés va degotant  
 Quant vos m'alés de rien dotant. 3290  
 Bials dols compaig, ne me dotés!"  
 "No[n] fac jo, voir! Or m'escoltés.  
 Ki par un mal puet abasscier,  
 Compaing, .d., doit lil lasscier?"  
 "Nenil! bials amis, par raison." 3295  
 "Jo prenc cestui a oquoison  
 De cest malvais garçon ochire,  
 Car ja s'il vit n'iermes sans ire.  
 Dites, compaig, comment vos sanble!  
 Ferons nos iceste ouevre ensamble?" 3300

Li altres ert altels u pire,  
 Com hom cui l'enemis espire.  
 "Compaing," fait il, "par ces .ii. mains,  
 Jo n'en voel plus, jo n'en voel mains,  
 Ne en penser, ne en voloir. 3305  
 Li riens qui plus me fait doloir  
 Cho est qu'il dure tant en vie."  
 "Compaing, jon ai si grant envie  
 Que por poi que mes cuers ne crieve  
 C'on sor nos l'ensalce et eslieve, 3310  
 Et qu'il est a tols a plaizir,  
 Et c'on nos fait por lui taizir."  
 "Bials compaig," fait il, "mals fus m'arde  
 Se me donoie de cho garde  
 Qu'il seüst tant de la moitié, 3315  
 Ne qu'il eüst si exploitié.  
 Ne vos, compaig?" "Non de la dime!  
 Il l'a apris par lui meïsme,  
 U li malfet li ont apris

That will more than double our losses:  
 not only will he take away our earnings,  
 it will be our fate  
 never to be heard at any court 3280  
 where he has performed. He has become so popular  
 that he will rob us of all future profits."  
 "But if I felt I could trust you,"  
 one of them said, "and if I knew  
 that you would keep what I say a secret, 3285  
 and not tell anyone,  
 why, then I would certainly have something to tell you."  
 "Come on!" said the other. "You think I would tell?  
 Our friendship is really going down the drain  
 if you have begun to distrust me. 3290  
 Dear friend and companion, don't doubt me!"  
 "All right, I won't. Now listen to me:  
 if by one bad deed a man can avert  
 five hundred, old friend, should he refrain from it?"  
 "Not at all, dear friend; it stands to reason." 3295  
 "I'm just using this as an example  
 to justify killing this vile boy,  
 for we'll have nothing but trouble as long as he lives.  
 Tell me, comrade, what do you think?  
 Shall we do the job together?" 3300

The other was just as bad or worse,  
 like a man inspired by the devil.  
 "Friend," he said, "I swear by these two hands,  
 I want neither more nor less;  
 our thoughts and wishes are the same. 3305  
 What bothers me the most  
 is that he is still alive."  
 "Friend, I feel so eager to do it  
 that my heart is nearly bursting—  
 the way they raise him above us and praise him 3310  
 and the way they all favor him  
 and silence us so that he can perform."  
 "Friend," he said, "may Saint Anthony's fire\* consume me  
 if I ever thought  
 he would learn even the half of what he has, 3315  
 or become so proficient.  
 What about you, friend?" "Certainly not!  
 He learned it all by himself,  
 or else some demons taught him

Ki en tel baldor l'ont ja mis. 3320  
 Enaizes voir que jo ne derve.  
 Or sagement, qu'il ne l'enterve!  
 Or l'aparlons plus bel qu'ancois:  
 Il sara moult bien son franchois  
 Se nos nel prendons a la trape. 3325  
 Sans caperon li ferons cape,  
 Car le cief perdra al trebuc.  
 Senpres prendrons congié al duc.  
 Por quoi iriens nos en Espagne,  
 Compaig, por golozer gaagne?/ 3330  
 Nostre [espoir] gist en lui ocire.  
 Parmi un bos est nostre pire,  
 Ki dure bien une jornee.  
 Nos i ferons la destornee.  
 Nos nos perdrons de gré sans falle 3335  
 En le plus espesse boscalle:  
 Et quant nos verrons nostre liu,  
 Nos li ferons .i. malvais giu."

Tolt cest affaire ont atiré  
 Et sont andoi si espiré 3340  
 Par l'enemi qui les enthice  
 A faire l'uevre de malice  
 Que pietés lor sanble dure,  
 Misericorde amere et sure,  
 Quant sans merite et sans deserte 3345  
 Voelent l'enfant livrer a perte.  
 Tant com il plus heënt l'enfant  
 Tant li mostrent plus bel sanblant.  
 Par decevable et par faintise  
 Voelent covrir lor covoitise. 3350  
 Cil jors lor sanbla durer trente.  
 Il usent moult a grant aënte.  
 Le soir vont al duc congié prendre,  
 Car il n'i voelent plus atendre:  
 Et li dus done a cascun d'eus 3355  
 Un marc d'argent, Silence .ii.  
 Envie les mort et tangone,  
 Por quant s'est lor, quanque on lor done.  
 A tols i ont dont pris congié.  
 Silences a le nuit songié 3360  
 Que chien le voelent depecier;  
 Et por cho qu'il crient le blecier,

to attain such excellence. 3320  
 It's really enough to drive a man crazy.  
 Now we'd better be careful, so he doesn't catch on!  
 Let's speak more kindly to him than we usually do.  
 He'll have to be very clever indeed  
 not to fall into our trap. 3325  
 We'll make him a cape without a hood,\*  
 for he'll lose his head in our trap.  
 Let's take leave of the duke right away."  
 "Why should we bother to go to Spain,  
 friend, if we're eager to make a killing? 3330  
 Our profit lies in killing him here.  
 Our route takes us through a forest  
 that takes a whole day to get through.  
 We will make a detour there.  
 That's it: we'll pretend to get lost 3335  
 in the densest part of it.  
 And when we find a likely spot, we'll play a nasty trick on  
 him."

Thus they plotted the whole thing.  
 Both of them were so inspired 3340  
 by the Devil, who kept urging them  
 to do this wicked deed,  
 that pity seemed hard to them  
 and mercy bitter and sour:  
 they wanted to murder the youth,  
 who in no way deserved it. 3345  
 The more they hated the youth,  
 the more they pretended to be nice.  
 They wanted to conceal their purpose  
 by means of deception and falsehood. 3350  
 That day seemed like a month to them,  
 it was so hard for them to get through it.  
 They took leave of the duke that evening,  
 for they could wait no longer.  
 The duke gave one mark of silver 3355  
 to each of them, and two to Silence.  
 They were tormented with jealousy,  
 despite that fact that all the money went to them.  
 Then they took leave of everyone.  
 During the night, Silence dreamt 3360  
 that wild dogs wanted to tear him apart.  
 And because he feared the pain,

Si est esperis de son somme  
 Ensi griément, cho est la some,  
 C'ainc puis ne dormi cele nuit. 3365  
 Volés oïr con s'a deduit?  
 Tolte nuit escolte et orelle,  
 Car de son songe a grant merveille.

As jogleörs de l'altre part  
 Angoissce moult li cuers et art. 3370  
 Et c'est moult bone partissure  
 D'ome felon et plain d'ardure  
 Qu'il nen est mie daärains,  
 Anchois le conpre premerains,  
 Car ses fel[s] pensers le tormente 3375  
 Ains qu'il puist faire altre aënte.  
 Il est de ces tolt ensement  
 Qui sunt en maint porpensement/  
 Que cascuns d'als achiever puissce  
 Le mal dont il sunt en anguissce. 3380  
 Et cuidiés qu'a tols .iii. n'anuit  
 Qu'il ne pueënt dormir la nuit,  
 Li doi qui pensent le mal faire,  
 Li tiers de cho qu'il se crient traire?  
 Car il a songié hisdeus songe, 3385  
 Mais Dex li vertissce a mençoinge.  
 Tolt quoi se contient et escolte,  
 Et cil nen ont pas de cho dolte.  
 Cuident qu'il dormie com il siolt,  
 Com vallés qui reposer violt. 3390  
 Li uns dist: "Gel ferai premiers,  
 Si croistra ma pars de deniers."  
 L'altres respont isnielement:  
 "Conpaing, parlés plus bielement,  
 Qu'il n'est pas lius de plaidoyer. 3395  
 Nos iermes andoi moitiier  
 Et de l'avoir qu'il a aquis  
 Et del pechié, bials dols amis!  
 Mais or li disons qu'il s'atorne.  
 Faisons li croire qu'il ajorne. 3400  
 De nuit nos metons a la voie  
 Car tels fais n'a soig c'on le voie."

Silences entent et escolte.  
 Or n'est il pas de cho en dolte,

he awoke from his dream  
 in such a terrible state  
 that he slept no more that night. 3365  
 Shall I tell you what he did?  
 He listened to every sound the whole night through,  
 he was so disturbed by his dream.

As for the minstrels,  
 they were tormented and feverish. 3370  
 And it's only fair  
 that a man who is inflamed with evil desires  
 should pay in advance  
 rather than later:  
 his evil thoughts torment him 3375  
 even before he gets the chance to harm anyone.  
 And it's the same with these two  
 who are pondering  
 how they might be able to carry out  
 the wicked deed that is preying upon them. 3380  
 You can imagine how weary all three of them were  
 from not being able to sleep that night—  
 the two because of the evil they were planning,  
 and the third because of the evil he feared.  
 He has had a terrible dream; 3385  
 may God prevent it from coming true!  
 He remained motionless and listened,  
 and the others suspected nothing:  
 they thought he was asleep as usual,  
 like any youth who wants his rest. 3390  
 One said, "I'll strike the first blow;  
 that will increase my share of the money."  
 The other replied quickly,  
 "Take it easy, comrade;  
 this is no time to argue. 3395  
 The two of us will divide  
 his earnings  
 and the sin equally, my dear friend.  
 But now we'll tell him to get ready.  
 Let's make him believe it's near dawn. 3400  
 Let's get under way while it's still dark,  
 for such deeds are better done unseen."

Silence was listening and heard them.  
 There was now no doubt in his mind

- Que li doi culviert desperé 3405  
 N'eüsscent son songe averé  
 Des chiens dont il avoit songié  
 S'il en eüsscent le congié.\*  
 Mais Dex ne le volt consentir.  
 Silences ne volt mot tentir, 3410  
 Ains gist tols cois et si orelle,  
 Si escolte cele merveille.
- Li jogleör plus ne sejoignent.  
 Silence apielent, si s'atornent.  
 Dient li qu'il est piece a jors 3415  
 Et qu'il volroient estre allors.  
 "Levés!" font il. "Petit savés  
 Com grief\* jornee a faire avés."  
 "Chi n'a" fait il, "mestier de gloze,  
 Car grief jornee est male coze, 3420  
 Et bien doit remanoir el mal  
 Ki de son gré se met el val."  
 Sa parole ont cil trestornee:  
 Dient que il ont grief jornee  
 Por cho que lor voie est pesans, 3425  
 Et lor jornee est longhe et grans.  
 Si tornent le plus bel defors,  
 Mais malfés ont dedens les cors.  
 Que puet caloir, quant il ne crient?  
 Dex l'a bien guari, quil maintient. 3430  
 Dist lor: "Segnor, vos me dirés  
 Ains que jo mueuje, u vos irés,  
 Car aler poés en tel liu  
 U l'on me feroit malvais giu,  
 Se l'en m'i peüst atraper, 3435  
 Ains que jo peüsce escaper."
- "Amis," font il, "ne vos cremés.  
 Nos amons vos, vus nos amés.  
 Quant dîtes qu'estes si haïs,  
 Cremons que ne soiés traïs. 3440  
 Se li malfaitor sont a destre,  
 Acuellons la voie a senestre.  
 Ses encontrons par aventure  
 Et faire nos voelent rancure,  
 Por nos meïsmes i serons. 3445

that these two desperados 3405  
 would, if given half a chance,  
 make his dream  
 of the two dogs come true.  
 But God won't allow it!  
 Silence didn't want to utter a word. 3410  
 Instead, he lay quietly and listened  
 to these strange goings-on.

The minstrels didn't wait any longer.  
 They called to Silence and began to get ready,  
 saying that it was near daybreak 3415  
 and they would like to be on their way.  
 "Get up!" they said. "Little do you know  
 what a hard journey you have to make."  
 "That needs no interpretation," said Silence.  
 "A hard journey is a dreadful indeed, 3420  
 and he richly deserves his evil fate  
 who deliberately puts himself at a disadvantage."  
 The minstrels turned his words around:  
 they said that they had a hard journey ahead  
 because the road was difficult, 3425  
 and that would make for a long and strenuous day's travel.  
 Thus they affected goodness,  
 while they were evil on the inside.  
 But what difference did that make, since Silence was  
 unafraid?  
 God protected and watched over him. 3430  
 He said to them, "Gentlemen, before I make a move,  
 you must tell me where you are going,  
 because you could be headed for someplace  
 where someone might do me a bad turn  
 if they happened to catch me 3435  
 before I could escape."

"Friend," they said, "don't worry.  
 We are loyal to you, as you are to us.  
 When you say you feel threatened,  
 we, too, are afraid you might be in danger. 3440  
 If the criminals are on the right,  
 we will take the path to the left.  
 And if we should happen to encounter them,  
 and if they want to attack us,  
 we will all be there to help each other. 3445

S'il i fierent, nos i ferrons."  
 "Dirai vos," fait il, "une rien:  
 Je ne cuic pas, ains le sai bien  
 Que vos i ferrés volentiers.  
 Et cil se quart endementiers, 3450  
 Se il violt, qui a garder s'a,  
 U s'il nel fait que fols fera.  
 Segnor, jo que vos celeroie?  
 Mes enemis enconterroie  
 Se jo aloie o vos en France, 3455  
 Cho sachiés vos tolt a fiānce;  
 U s'o vos aloie en Espagne,  
 En Alvergne, u en Alemagne.  
 Si me vient chi miols remanoir,  
 Qu'aler allors por pis avoir. 3460  
 Jo remanrai, cho est la some,  
 Et vos end irés com prodome  
 Et bone gent, bien le savés.  
 Si com vos viers moi fait avés,  
 Vos rendie Dex le gueredon; 3465  
 Por tel deserte altretel don.  
 Moult m'avés fait, plus eüsciés  
 Se moi faire le peüssciés.  
 En vos servir ai jo perdu."  
 Li jogleör sont esperdu. 3470  
 Aportent le gaäig avant,  
 Se li ont dit par avenant:  
 "Sire, amis chiers, prendés vo part."  
 Et l'enfes .c. mars en depart./  
 A çals en lasce plus de .c., 3475  
 Et cil s'en vont hastivement.

Silence remaint a sejour  
 Avoec le duc a grant honor.  
 Puis li prent pités de son pere,  
 De ses parens et de sa mere. 3480  
 De ses .c. mars bien se conroie.  
 Al duc prent congié de sa voie,  
 Et passe la mer d'Engletierre.  
 Plus tost que pot vint en sa tierre.  
 Vient la u on plus le desire, 3485  
 Mais li alquant en avront ire  
 Anchois qu'il sachent qui il soit.  
 Al plus bel ostel que il voit

If they strike, we strike, too."

"I have something to say to you," said Silence.

"I think, or rather, I know very well,  
that you will be only too happy to strike.

In the meantime, the one who has to protect himself 3450  
had better be on his guard, if he wants to defend himself;  
and if he doesn't do this, he is a fool.

Gentlemen, why should I not speak openly?

You know very well indeed  
that I would encounter my enemies 3455  
whether I went with you to France  
or whether I went with you to Spain  
or Auvergne or Germany.

Therefore, it would be much better for me to stay here  
than to go somewhere else and be worse off. 3460

In short, I'm staying here.

And you will go off, like upright  
and honest men, make no mistake about that.

As you have done to me,  
may God do to you in return; 3465  
may you receive your just desserts.

You have done much for me,  
and would have done more if you could have.  
I haven't been able to do quite enough for you."

The minstrels were undone. 3470

They took out the earnings  
and graciously said to him,  
"Dear friend, good sir, take your share."

Then the youth took a hundred marks as his portion,  
and left them more than a hundred, 3475  
and they took off in a hurry.

Silence stayed on a while  
as a highly valued member of the ducal household.

Then he was seized with pity for his father  
and mother and his relatives. 3480

With his hundred marks, he easily made arrangements.  
He took leave of the duke, was on his way,  
and crossed the English Channel.

He reached his own lands as quickly as possible.  
He's arrived at the place where he's most wanted, 3485

but some people are going to be very upset  
before they find out who he is.

The youth went immediately

S'est trais li enfes maintenant.  
 Et li ostes li vient devant 3490  
 Et molt dolcement le requit;  
 Mais tost a veü son deduit,  
 Cho sont li estrument celui.  
 "Sainte Marie! quel anui,  
 Amis," fait il, "et qué damage 3495  
 Ai requelloit de tel ostage!"  
 Silences enquiert et entierve  
 S'il a bon sens u se il derve.  
 "Amis," fait il, "cis diols est vostres—  
 Il est ambeure et miens et vostres. 3500

Or entendés a ma raison,  
 Si poés oïr l'oquoison.  
 Chi vindrent l'autre an jogleör.  
 Li cuens lor fist moult grant honor.  
 N'ot c'un enfant: celui enblerent. 3505  
 Nos ne savons u l'enmenerent.  
 Moult loig de nos l'ont espani.  
 Par ceste oquoison sont bani  
 Li jogleör de ceste terre,  
 Que rien n'i viennent mais aquierre. 3510  
 Ki un en prent, u il le renge,  
 Quel qu'il miols violt, u il se penge.  
 Menres mals est de vos a rendre  
 Que l'en me deüst por vos pendre.  
 Mais or ne l'aiés en despit. 3515  
 Trosqu'a demain avrés en respit.  
 "Non ai," fait il, "se Dex me salt,  
 Car respis sor nuit .c. mars valt.  
 Or menons nostre vie a joie:  
 Ki plus l'a longe si l'a poie." 3520  
 Dont prent sa harpe et sa viiele,  
 Si note avoec a sa vois bieie./  
 N'i a celui d'illuec entor  
 Ne face a l'ostel donc son tor.  
 Moult i a borjois assanblés, 3525  
 Car puis que l'enfes fu enblés  
 N'i ot oï harpe ne rote,  
 Viiele nule, cant ne note.\*  
 Et dient tuit, cho est la some:  
 "Ainc mais ne fu tels forme d'ome! 3530  
 Com il a, las, povre sejour,

to the best inn he could find.  
 The innkeeper came out 3490  
 and greeted him most cordially,  
 but then saw at once what he had with him —  
 his instruments.  
 "Holy Mary!" he said,  
 "what trouble and sorrow 3495  
 I get from a guest like you, my friend."  
 Silence asked him  
 whether he was sane or crazy.  
 "Friend," said the man, "the sorrow is yours as well —  
 it is both of ours, mine and yours. 3500  
 Now listen to what I have to say,  
 and you will understand the reason why.  
 A few years ago, some minstrels came here.  
 The count bestowed great honors upon them.  
 He had only one son: they kidnapped him. 3505

We don't know where they took him;  
 they took him far away from us.  
 For this reason, all minstrels  
 have been banished from this land;  
 they can no longer seek their fortune here. 3510  
 Whoever catches one of them must hand him over  
 as best he can, or be hanged himself.  
 It's a lot easier on me to turn you in  
 than to be hanged in your place.  
 Butr don't get upset about that now — 3515  
 you have a reprieve until tomorrow."  
 "Well then, I won't," he said, "God help me,  
 a night's delay is well worth a hundred marks.  
 Now let's enjoy our life;  
 no matter how long, it's always too short." 3520  
 Then he took his harp and viele  
 and sang beautifully as he played.  
 Everyone from all around  
 came running to the inn.  
 There was a large crowd of townspeople, 3525  
 for they hadn't heard a harp or lute  
 or viele\* or song or even a note  
 since the child had been kidnapped.  
 And they all exclaimed,  
 "There never was such a man! 3530  
 What a pity he'll be here for such a short time —

Car il pendra demain sor jor.”  
 N’i a celui ne s’esmerveille.  
 Silences lor fait sorde orelle:  
 Maine sa joie et son deduit. 3535  
 Et l’ostes trait moult male nuit,  
 C’ainc ne le fina de gaitier,  
 Car al conte le violt ballier.

Qu’alongeroie plus mon conte?  
 L’endemain l’enmena al conte 3540  
 Tolt vielant amont le rue.  
 L’enfes le voit, si le salue.  
 Li cuens ne li volt mot respondre  
 Car il le pense bien confondre.  
 Silence dist: “Sire, merci, 3545  
 Car se jo ma vie perc chi  
 Nule rien n’i conquesterés  
 Ne ja plus riches n’en serés!”  
 Li cuens l’entent, parfont sospire.  
 Or [ot] tel dol ne pot mot dire. 3550  
 Grant dol demainent li baron  
 Et a privé et a laron,  
 Et forment plore la contesse.  
 Li cuens lor fait une promesse  
 Que il nen iert huimaïs pendus, 3555  
 Et il l’en ont grans grés rendus.  
 Mellent o joie lor anui,  
 Tolt por le biel deduit celui.

Uns viellars l’a bien ravisé  
 Et voit bien qu’il a desvisé. 3560  
 Al conte dist sa consience:  
 “Veés la vostre fil Silence,  
 Si a apris des estrumens.”  
 Li cuens li dist: “Traistor, tu mens:  
 Cho m’est avis que tu rasotes, 3565  
 Bien est mais tans que tu radotes.”  
 Et cil li a dit un respit:  
 “Cho est grans diols que povres vit.  
 Miols me venist estre teüs.  
 Plus est oïs uns desseüs/ 3570  
 En toltes cors, s’il a avoir,  
 C’uns povres hom de grant savoir.”  
 Li cuens li a dit que il derve.

for he'll hang tomorrow morning."  
 They were all amazed, every one of them.  
 But Silence turned a deaf ear  
 and continued to perform joyously. 3535  
 The innkeeper had a very bad night:  
 he didn't take his eyes off the youth,  
 for he wanted to hand him over to the count.

Why should I prolong the suspense?  
 The next day the youth was taken to the count, 3540  
 playing the vicle as he went up the street.  
 When he saw the count, he greeted him.  
 The count didn't want to say a word in reply,  
 because he planned to have him killed.  
 Silence said, "Mercy, Sire! 3545  
 If I lose my life here,  
 you won't have gained any great advantage  
 or be at all the richer for it!"  
 The count heard him and sighed deeply.  
 He felt such pangs of grief that he couldn't utter a word. 3550  
 His noble companions grieved deeply,  
 although they betrayed no signs of it,  
 and the countess wept aloud.  
 The count promised them  
 that he wouldn't be hanged right away, 3555  
 and they expressed their profound gratitude.  
 Their joy was mingled with sorrow  
 at the thought of the youth's exquisite performance.

A certain old man\* examined the youth closely,  
 and saw what he was up to. 3560  
 He spoke his mind to the count:  
 "That is your son Silence;  
 he has learned the minstrel's art."  
 The count replied, "Traitor, you're lying!  
 I think you're completely mad. 3565  
 You've picked a bad time to start babbling."  
 And the old man rebuked him, saying,  
 "It's a dreadful thing to be poor.  
 I would have done better to keep silent.  
 In every court, a wealthy ignoramus\* 3570  
 is listened to more  
 than a poor but learned man."  
 The count told the old man that he was crazy.

- Vait a l'enfant, son non enterve.  
 "Sire," fait il, "nel quier celer. 3575  
 Je me fac Malduit apieler."  
 Et li viellars dont li respont:  
 "Bien sai que vostres nons despont,  
 Car malduis cho est mal apris,  
 Si estes vos, qu'il n'i a pris 3580  
 Ne los a vos n'a vo parage  
 D'avoir mené si fait usage.  
 Cui calt? Or serés plus senés  
 Com plus avrés esté penés,  
 Qu'en une cort ne puet avoir 3585  
 Quanque wés home a [a] savoir.  
 Par une cort, cho est la some,  
 Ne verrés ja bien apris home.  
 Que que aiés fait, amis Scilence,  
 Amendés estes en science: 3590  
 Et se vos vesquisiés .m. ans  
 S'en seriés vos moult plus vallans."
- [Q]ue que li viellars die u face,  
 Silence fait que mot ne sace  
 De quanque il onques li devise; 3595  
 Mais cil s'en a bien garde prise  
 Que cho est il, et vait al conte  
 Qui orains l'en dist lait et honte.  
 Et por le honte qu'il li fist  
 Or escoltés que il li dist. 3600  
 "Sire, or sai bien que jo mespris  
 De vostre fil, que jo vos dis.  
 Cho n'est il pas, mais j'ai oï,  
 Se Dex me doinst estre esjoï,  
 Que cis vos dira tels novieles, 3605  
 S'il violt, et vos, ki seront bieles.  
 De vostre enfant set la verlor  
 Et si vos metra fors d'error."  
 "Fera, por Deu?" li cuens\* respont.  
 "Oïl, par Deu, ki fist cest mont." 3610
- Li cuens violt bien cel plait celer.  
 Le jogleör fait apieler  
 Et moult priveément l'enmainne  
 Od lui en sa cambre demainne./  
 L'uis de la canbre apriés lui serre. 3615

But the old man went up to Silence and asked him his name.  
 "Sir," said the boy, "I won't try to hide it. 3575  
 I call myself Malduit."  
 And the old man replied,  
 "I know very well what your name means:  
 Malduit means 'badly brought up,'  
 and that suits you well, for neither you 3580  
 nor your family wins any praise or prizes  
 for such a counterfeit upbringing.  
 But what does it matter? You will be all the wiser now  
 for having endured greater hardships,  
 for one cannot learn everything 3585  
 one needs to know by staying at court;  
 in short, you will never see a wise man  
 who learned all he knows at court.  
 Whatever you have done, friend Silence,  
 you have made amends for it through wisdom, 3590  
 and if you lived a thousand years,  
 you would be all the more admirable."

Whatever the old man said or did,  
 Silence acted as if he hadn't understood a word  
 of what he was telling him. 3595  
 But the old man could see very well  
 that it was he, and he went to the count  
 who had just insulted him so shamefully.  
 And in return for the way the count has shamed him,  
 listen to what he told him: 3600  
 "Sire, I know now that I was mistaken  
 in what I told you regarding your son.  
 That's not he, but I have heard,  
 may God grant me the joy of it,  
 that this boy can tell you some wonderful news— 3605  
 if you and he are willing.  
 He knows the truth about your son  
 and will clear the matter up for you."  
 "Will he, by God?" the count replied.  
 "Yes, by God who created this world." 3610

The count wanted to keep this interview private.  
 He had the minstrel summoned  
 and brought him in strictest secrecy  
 to his private chamber  
 and locked the door behind him. 3615

Halt s'est assis et cil a terre.  
 Son fil a saisi par la destre,  
 Si enquierit u ses fils converse.  
 Son fil demande et il le tient;  
 Il le convoite et nel voit nient! 3620  
 Li cuens est en dure sentence,  
 Qu'il ainme plus son fil Silence  
 Qu'altre richoise n'altre avoir,  
 Et por quant ne le violt avoir!  
 Il va ja ravisant sa chiere: 3625  
 Com plus l'esgarde, plus l'a chiere.  
 Une hore pense: "Et Dex, est cil!"  
 Et en apriés: "Par foi, nenil!"  
 Ses cuers tamaint pense et\* requelt,  
 Que iols ne voit, et cuers ne velt. 3630  
 De cho qu'il n'a son fil si pleure.  
 Ses filx le voit, plus n'i demeure,  
 Ciet li as piés, et plore, et crie.  
 "Sire," fait il, "vos fils vos prie  
 Que vos merchi aiés de lui. 3635  
 Bien reconois que grant anui  
 Avés eü por moi, bials pere,  
 Vos et mi parent et ma mere.  
 Merchi de vostre engendreüre!  
 Vos savés bien de ma nature: 3640  
 "Jo sui," fait il, "nel mescreés,  
 Com li malvais dras encreés  
 Ki samble bons, et ne l'est pas.  
 Si est de moi! N'ai que les dras,  
 Et le contenance et le halle 3645  
 Ki onques apartiegne a malle."  
 Sor diestre espaule li enseigne  
 Une crois qu'il ot a enseigne.  
 Ormais le puet li cuens bien croire:  
 Donc a baisié son fil en oïre. 3650  
 De joie qui en lui fuisone  
 Li cuens dont tant basier li done  
 Que jo en ai perdu le nonbre,  
 Por le grant fuison qui m'enconbre.  
  
 Grant joie en mainne donc li pere, 3655  
 Tolt cil de la terre et la mere.  
 Ki donc veïst gens esjoïr  
 L'enfant vont veoir et oïr.

He sat on a chair, the boy, on the floor.  
 He took his son by the right hand  
 and asked where his son was living.  
 He asks for his son while holding him;  
 he wants to have him and can't see that he's there! 3620  
 The count is serving a harsh sentence,  
 for he loves his son Silence  
 more than any wealth or possessions,  
 and yet he doesn't want to have him!  
 Now he examines the boy's face carefully: 3625  
 the more he looks at it, the dearer it is to him.  
 One time he thinks, "My God, it's he!"  
 But an instant later: "I'd swear it's not!"  
 His heart is receptive to many things  
 that his eyes don't see and his mind can't accept. 3630  
 He weeps because he doesn't have his son.  
 When his son saw this, he didn't wait any longer.  
 He lay at his father's feet and cried and wept.  
 "Sire," he said. "your son begs you  
 to have pity on him. 3635  
 I see very well that you have endured dreadful suffering  
 on my account, dear father,  
 you and my family and my mother.  
 Have pity on your offspring!  
 You know my nature very well. 3640  
 I am," he said, "believe me,  
 like an inferior piece of cloth  
 powdered with chalk, that looks good, but isn't.  
 That's what I am! I have only the clothing  
 and bearing and complexion 3645  
 that belong to a man."  
 He showed him a birthmark shaped like a cross  
 that he had on his right shoulder.  
 Now the count had to believe him;  
 he immediately embraced his son. 3650  
 Bursting with joy,  
 he kissed him so many times  
 I lost track of the number,  
 overwhelmed by such profusion.  
  
 The father expressed his great joy, 3655  
 as did his mother and all the inhabitants of the land.  
 Then you could see joyful celebrations,  
 as the people came to see and hear the youth.

Silences siet as piés son pere.  
 Dist: "Sire, jo sui vos harpere, 3660  
 Si vos volrai servir anuit.  
 Por amor Deu, ne vos anuit/  
 Que j'en voel estre soldoiés.  
 Por mon service m'otroiés  
 Li jogleör tres ore mais 3665  
 Aient en vostre tiere pais,  
 Car on les a a tort banis  
 C'ainc ne fui par als espanis.  
 Li cuens respont: "Cho me delite  
 Qu'il soient por vostre amor cuite." 3670  
 Al viellart qui dist les novieles  
 Done li cuens soldeës bieles.  
 Por cho qu'il li dist verité  
 En a .x. mars en ireté.  
 Tols li païs est esclairiés 3675  
 Que Silences est repairié.  
 Trosques al roi va li noviele  
 Qu'il est venus, moult li fu biele.  
 Li cuens est mandés maintenant  
 Qu'il viegne al roi atolt l'enfant: 3680  
 Et il i vient plus tost qu'il puet.  
 Tolte la cors contre als s'esmuet.

Or est Silences bien venus.  
 Del roi Ebain est retenus:  
 De sa maisnie avoir le velt. 3685  
 Li cuens ses pere moult s'en duelt;  
 Et quant il altre ne puet estre,  
 Son fil a saisi par la destre  
 Et baze sa bouce et sa face,  
 Et prie moult que bien li face, 3690  
 Et baze sa bouce et sa face,  
 Que bien se cuevre. Et donc s'en torne:  
 Et l'enfes o le roi sejourne,  
 Et siert le bien en mainte guise.  
 La roïne en est moult esprise  
 Por sa façon, por sa bialté. 3695  
 Or oiés quel desloialté  
 Avint et ques mesaventure,  
 Con faite rage et quele ardure  
 Cis Sathanas en soi aquelt:  
 Car onques Tristrans por Izelt, 3700  
 Ne dame Izeuls por dant Tristan

Silence sat at his father's feet.  
 He said, "Sir, I am your harper, 3660  
 and as such I'd like to serve you tonight.  
 For the love of God, don't be angry  
 if I want to be paid for it.  
 For my services, grant me  
 that from this very moment on 3665  
 all minstrels may enter your land in peace,  
 because they are wrongly banished:  
 I was never kidnapped by them."  
 The count replied, "I should be delighted  
 to acquit them for love of you." 3670  
 The count gave a generous reward  
 to the old man who had told him the news.  
 He received a bequest of ten marks  
 for having told the truth.  
 The whole country was glad 3675  
 that Silence had come home.  
 When the news of his return reached the king,  
 he was delighted.  
 The count was immediately ordered  
 to bring the youth to court. 3680  
 He went there as soon as possible.  
 The whole court came forth to greet them.

Now Silence received a cordial welcome:  
 King Evan chose him as retainer;  
 he wanted him to be part of his household. 3685  
 His father the count was very upset at this,  
 but since it couldn't be helped,  
 he took his son by the hand  
 and kissed his mouth and face  
 and prayed fervently that he would make a good job of it  
 and conceal his identity well. Then he departed, 3690  
 and the youth stayed on as the king's attendant  
 and served him well in various capacities.  
 The queen was much taken with the youth  
 because of his beauty and demeanor. 3695  
 Now you shall hear what treachery  
 and evil deeds transpired,  
 what deceitful madness and burning lust  
 lurked in this female Satan!  
 Tristan never suffered 3700  
 such anguished yearning for Isolde

N'ot tele angoisse ne ahan  
 Com eult Eufeme la roïne  
 Por le vallet ki ert meschine;  
 N'onques Jozeph, ki fu prisons 3705  
 Rois Pharaöns, si le lisons,  
 N'ot tele angoisse ne tel mal  
 Par la mollier al senescal,  
 Comme ut icis par la roïne.  
 Si l'orés, ains que l'uevre fine. / 3710

Un jor ala li rois en bois  
 Et mena od lui des Englois.  
 Eufeme se fait malhaitie  
 Ki de cel ouevre ert afaitie,  
 Et fait Silence remanoir 3715  
 Por cui le cuer el ventre a noir.  
 De la harpe le doit deduire,  
 Mais cho li porra anchois nuire  
 Que sa nature li canjast.  
 Anchois espoir que mals n'alast\* 3720  
 Seroit la roïne sanee  
 Kist par sanblant moult enganee.  
 En la cambre fait apieler  
 Silence, et, por l'uevre celer,  
 Li fait sa harpe o soi porter, 3725  
 Quanses por li reconforter.  
 En la cambre painte et celee  
 Li violt s'amor dire a celee;  
 Et donc la fait a tols voidier  
 Qu'il ne la puisse sorcuidier. 3730  
 Si a le jor fait un dangier  
 Faintic que ne poroit mangier,  
 Et qu'el ne puet sofrir le noise  
 Ne ne violt pas c'on i estoise,  
 Ne mais que cil qui harpera. 3735  
 Cho dist qu'il l'asoägera.  
 Ele n'oirre pas sagement  
 Car ja voir assoägement  
 N'avra par lui fors de baisier.  
 Cel pora plus mesaäsier 3740  
 Quant al sorplus volra entendre  
 Qu'ele falra del tolt al prendre.

nor Lady Isolde for Lord Tristan  
 as did Queen Eufeme  
 for this young man who was a girl;  
 nor did Joseph, who was imprisoned 3705  
 by King Pharaoh, as the story goes,  
 suffer such trials and tribulations  
 at the hands of the captain's wife  
 as did Silence because of the queen.  
 You shall hear all about it before the end of this work. 3710

One day, the king went to the forest,  
 accompanied by some of his men.  
 Eufeme, who was highly skilled in such matters,  
 pretended to be indisposed,  
 and had Silence stay behind. 3715  
 Her heart and body were consumed with lust for him.  
 He's supposed to soothe her by playing the harp,  
 but he might get into trouble instead  
 for having changed his nature.  
 Perhaps [if Silence had looked like a girl] 3720  
 the queen, who was so sadly misled by external appearances,  
 might have been cured before anything bad happened.  
 She summoned Silence to her bedchamber,  
 and in order to conceal her intent,  
 she had him bring his harp along, 3725  
 as if in order to comfort her.  
 In her carved and gilded chamber,  
 she wanted to confess her secret love to him.  
 and so she made everyone else leave the room,  
 so that he could not snub her in public. 3730  
 All day she complained,  
 pretended that she couldn't eat,  
 that she couldn't stand the least bit of noise  
 or bear to have anyone come near her—  
 except the harper. 3735  
 She said he would relieve her distress.  
 She's on the wrong track,  
 because she'll never have any relief from him  
 beyond a kiss, believe me!  
 And this will upset her all the more 3740  
 when she goes after the rest  
 and doesn't get it.

Sa harpe a cil bien atenpree  
 Si a grant dolor destenpree  
 A oués la dame de roïne 3745  
 Ki sor lui s'apoie et acline:  
 Et plus et plus de cel s'esprent  
 Que cil harpe si dolcement. /  
 Et pense donc: "Jo li dirai  
 L'amor et tolt li gehirai." 3750  
 Et redist donc: "Viols li tu dire?  
 Vios te tu donques si despire?  
 O je, nel larai por despit,  
 Por reprover, ne por respit,  
 Ne li face orendroit savoir 3755  
 Que il porra m'amor avoir."  
 Et a itant l'acole et baise  
 Et dist li: "Or estes vos aise!/  
 Baisiés me, ne soiés hontels!  
 Por .i. baisier vos donrai .ii. 3760  
 Et ne vos sanble bien estrange  
 Que vos avrés si riche cange?"  
 "Oïl!" dist li vallés mescine.  
 "Donc, me baisiés," dist la roïne.  
 Joste la face, sos sa guinple 3765  
 Li dona cil .i. baisier simple,  
 Car il n'entent pas, al voir dire,  
 Con fait baisier ele desire.  
 Et la dame, qui nen a cure  
 D'estre baisie en tel mesure, 3770  
 Li done .v. baisiers traitis,  
 Bien amorols et bien faitis,  
 Et ot les .ii. baisiers promis  
 Li a des altres tant tramis  
 Que il en est tols anuiés. 3775  
 Dist la dame: "Por Deu, fuiés?  
 Comment?" fait ele, "est cho dangiers?  
 Ene vos plaist si fais cangiers?"  
 "Oïl, roïne, il me delite,  
 Mais bien vus en lairoie cuite." 3780  
 "Cuite! Por quoi?" fait ele donques.  
 "Eut hom de vostre parage onques,  
 Tant fust de pris, ensi grant don?  
 Mon cors vos doinse tolt a bandon!"  
 Et li vallés qui est mescine 3785  
 Est moult en dure descipline,

The youth's harp was in perfect tune.  
 This only caused our lady queen —  
 who was sitting next to him and leaning against him —  
 unbearable pain. 3745  
 Her desire for the harper, who played so sweetly,  
 grew stronger every minute,  
 and she thought, "I'm going to tell him that I love him  
 and confess all to him." 3750  
 But then she said to herself, "Do you really want to tell him?  
 Do you want to lower yourself like that?  
 Yes, I do! I won't hold back for fear of rejection  
 or reproval or delay;  
 I'm going to tell him right here and now 3755  
 that he can have my love."  
 And then, right away, she embraced him and kissed him  
 and told him, "Now just relax!  
 Kiss me, don't be shy!  
 I'll give you two kisses for one. 3760  
 Don't you think that's an amazing  
 rate of exchange?"  
 "Yes," said the youth who was a girl.  
 "So kiss me!" said the queen.  
 Right on her forehead, just below her wimple, 3765  
 Silence gave her one chaste kiss —  
 for you can be very sure he had no intention  
 of kissing her the way she wanted.  
 But the lady, who did not care  
 to be kissed in this manner, 3770  
 gave him five long kisses,  
 exceedingly passionate and very skillful.  
 Besides the two kisses she had promised,  
 she gave him so many others  
 that he was extremely upset. 3775  
 The lady said, "My God! are you running away?  
 What's the matter?" she said, "is something wrong?  
 Don't you like the rate of exchange?"  
 "Oh yes, my queen, I am delighted with it,  
 but let's call it quits." 3780  
 "Quits? Whatever for?" she said then.  
 "Was any man of your lineage,  
 however exalted, ever offered such a glorious gift?  
 I'm offering you my body in complete surrender."  
 Now the youth who is a girl 3785  
 is in a really terrible situation —

Qu'il volroit miols estre .c. liues  
 U li eüst et pais et triues  
 Que en la cambre en tele anguisse,  
 Que il ne set que faire puisse. 3790

La dame son col desafice  
 D'un harponciel d'or qu'ele ot rice.  
 Blance est sa cars com nois negie:  
 N'est pas de fronces asegie,  
 Car ses aës n'a encor cure 3795  
 Que ele ait nule froncissure,  
 Ains ert roönde et tendre et mole.  
 Al vallet dist la dame fole:

"Veés quels bras et quels costés!"  
 "Dame," fait il, "por Deu, ostés!" 3800

Jo vos requier por Deu merci.  
 Se jo ma loialté perc chi  
 Donques sui jo enfin honis  
 Et as pïors del mont onis.

Meffait nen a el mont gregnor 3805  
 Car jo sui hom vostre segnor,/  
 Et ses parens ne sai con priés,  
 Ki me feroit jamais confiés?"

"Confés! Por Deu, et c'or me dites?  
 Serés vos monies, u hermites?" 3810  
 Mandés le conte vostre pere  
 Et la contesse vostre mere

Que vos hermites devenrés  
 Et que religiön tenrés!  
 En vos avra moult bon abé!" 3815

"Roïne, or m'avés vus jabé."  
 "Non ai, se vos estes estables,  
 Mais juvenes sains est viés diäbles.  
 Lassciés, bons hom, tolt cho ester.

Ichi fait mellor arester 3820  
 Q'en bos por son cors afoier."  
 Dont le commence a acoler,  
 Mais cil nen a de tolt cho cure

Car nel consent pas sa nature.  
 Ains li dist: "Dame, en pais soiés!" 3825  
 "Estes vus donc pris ne loiés?"

Dist la roïne. "Qui vos cache?  
 Ki vus laidist? ki vus man[a]ce?"

he'd rather be a hundred miles away,  
 somewhere nice and peaceful and quiet,  
 than in that bedroom in such a tight spot  
 that he doesn't know how to get put of it. 3790

The lady was wearing a magnificent gold brooch  
 at her neck. She unfastened it.  
 Her skin was as white as fresh-fallen snow:  
 she had no problem with wrinkles;  
 she was not old enough yet 3795  
 to have to worry about creases,  
 not at all; she was round and smooth and soft.  
 This lascivious lady said to the youth,  
 "Take a look at these arms! Look at these curves!"  
 "Lady," he said, "for the love of God, stop! 3800  
 for God's sake, have mercy on me!  
 If I commit an act of treachery here,  
 I will be so dishonored by it  
 that I will be one of the worst men in the world.  
 There is no greater crime in the world, 3805  
 for I am your lord's vassal,  
 and his blood relation, I don't know to what degree.  
 Who could ever absolve me of such a sin?"  
 "Absolve you? My God, what are you telling me now?  
 That you want to be a monk or a hermit? 3810  
 Go tell your father the count  
 and your mother the countess  
 that you're going to take vows  
 and become a hermit.  
 You'd make a terrific abbot!" 3815  
 "My queen, now you're making fun of me."  
 "No I'm not, if you're normal.\*  
 Don't you know a saintly youth makes for an old devil?\*" 3820  
 Forget all that—be a man!  
 It's much better to romp in here  
 than to let your body go to waste in some forest!"  
 Then she began to embrace him,  
 but he wasn't at all interested,  
 because his nature kept him from responding.  
 He said to her, "Lady, calm down!" 3825  
 "Are you a captive? Does somebody own you?"  
 said the queen. "Who is chasing you?  
 Who is mistreating or threatening you?"

Ja n'a chaëns lyöns ne leus!  
 Avés paör d'estre o moi seus? 3830

Jo ne sui mie mordans beste!  
 Vos estes vilains, par ma teste.  
 Quant jo vos aig et car m'amés!  
 N'aiés paör, ne vus cremés;  
 Tolte la cors sera mais vostre. 3835  
 Vos serés miens, jo serai vostre.  
 Bials dols amis," cho dist la dame,  
 "Sor moi tornés trestolt le blasme.  
 Mais qui nos blasmeroit, caieles,  
 U qui en savroit ja novieles? 3840  
 Nus hom, voir, se vus volliés.  
 Joés mains que vos ne solliés,  
 Amis, a moi, par couverture;  
 Mais si\* vus fagniés par mesure  
 Que l'on n'ataigne en vo\* faintise, 3845  
 Bials dols amis, vostre cointise.  
 Se del tolt vos abstenissciés  
 Que vos a moi ne venissciés  
 Et parler et joër et rire,  
 Dont poroit on cuidier et dire: 3850  
 Iceste gens de gré s'astienent  
 Qu'il ensamble ne vont ne viennent.  
 Se nos reveniens trop ensamble,  
 Folie seroit, cho me samble:/  
 Qu'en tolte rien valt moult mesure. 3855  
 Moienetés soit couverture,  
 Bials dols amis, de no faisance.  
 Bien le ferons, n'aiés dotance."

La dame por noient se painne  
 Et li vallés fort se demainne. 3860  
 Pense s'or li issoit des mains  
 N'i enterroit des mois al mains.  
 Mais li ostoirs qui joint a l'anne  
 Ne se paine plus ne ahane  
 De restraintre, quant il a fain,  
 Qu'e/ l'enfant;\* poisons a l'ain 3865  
 Ne painne plus estre escapés  
 Que li vallés quist atrapés.  
 Il n'a poör de li rien faire.

There's no lion or wolf around here!  
 Are you afraid of being here alone with me? 3830

I'm not a wild beast! I won't bite you!  
 God, what churlish behavior,  
 when I have made you my equal, and since you love me!  
 Have no fear, don't be afraid!  
 The whole court will be yours from now on. 3835  
 You shall be mine, I will be yours.  
 Sweet, handsome love," said the lady,  
 "put all the blame on me.  
 But who would be able to blame us, for heaven's sake,  
 and who could find out about it? 3840  
 No one, honestly, if you want to do it.  
 Play for me less often than you usually do,  
 my love, to conceal our relationship,  
 but be sure to temper your deception with moderation,  
 so that no one sees that your prudent behavior 3845  
 is just a cover-up, sweet, handsome love.  
 If you stayed away altogether,  
 and never came to see me,  
 or play or speak or laugh with me,  
 people might notice that and say, 3850  
 'Those two are avoiding each other on purpose,  
 that's why they are never seen together.'  
 On the other hand, it would be unwise  
 to meet too often, it seems to me;  
 moderation is best in all things. 3855  
 Let moderation be the mask  
 that conceals our deeds, dear, sweet love.  
 We'll manage things well, never fear."

The lady was expending all this effort for nothing,  
 and the youth was in a state of extreme agitation. 3860  
 He was thinking that if he could escape her clutches now,  
 he wouldn't set foot in that place for at least a month.  
 But a hungry goshawk that has seized a wild duck  
 doesn't struggle harder  
 to hold onto its prey 3865  
 than did the queen with this youth, nor does a fish  
 caught on a hook try harder to escape  
 than did this youth who is trapped here.  
 He couldn't do anything for her;

- N'ele ne puet s'amor retraire, 3870  
 Ne li vallés ki est mescine  
 Ne violt pas dire son covine,  
 De sa nature verité,  
 Qu'il perdroit donques s'ireté.  
 La nonpossance de celui 3875  
 Fait a la dame grant anui.  
 Li fols voloirs de la roïne  
 Fait al vallet moult grant cuerine.  
 Il li anuie trop et grieve.  
 De li s'estorst et si s'en lieve, 3880  
 Et la roïne le rahert.  
 Por poi qu'ele son sens ne pert.  
 Sospire a lonc gemissement.  
 Dist li: "Est cho chierissement?  
 Quant vus si chier vus savés rendre, 3885  
 Bien devriés achater et vendre!  
 Ciertes, bien savés contrefaire  
 Felon vilain de put afaire.  
 Nel fis fors vos a assaier.  
 Moult [me]\* convenroit esmaier, 3890  
 S'il me tenoit ensi a certes.  
 Vostre cors doinst Dex males pertes,  
 Car fait eüsciés altretel  
 Se bien le volsisse et niënt el."
- Atant le lassce et cil s'en vait. 3895  
 Desor volra bastir mal plait,  
 Male aventure o sa jovente,  
 La dame cui Dex mal consente.  
 Ains l'ama plus que créature,  
 Et or le het a desmesure: 3900  
 Car feme n'est mie laniere  
 D'amor cangier en tel maniere./  
 Celui que plus amera fort,  
 U soit a droit u soit a tort,  
 Repuet de moult legier haïr. 3905  
 Feme oze tres bien envaïr  
 L'amor d'un home fierement.  
 Ja nel laira por cri de gent.  
 Mais s'amor nen est mie ferme,  
 Ains est moult fole et moult enferme. 3910  
 De moult legier et ainme et het.  
 Celui el mont qui miols li set,

she couldn't stop loving him. 3870  
 Nor did the youth who is a girl  
 wish to reveal her secret,  
 the truth about her nature,  
 because he would lose his inheritance.  
 The youth's inertia 3875  
 was causing the lady considerable distress.  
 The licentious desires of the queen  
 were upsetting the youth a great deal.  
 It was really getting to be too much for him.  
 He twisted free of her grasp and staggered to his feet,  
 but the queen hung on to him. 3880  
 On the verge of fainting,  
 she let out a long, low moan.  
 She said to him, "Are you trying to jack up the price?  
 If you are such an expert at selling yourself dear, 3885  
 you should go into the business.  
 You certainly do a very good imitation  
 of a cheap, vulgar tradesman.  
 I only did it to test you.  
 I certainly would have reason to be annoyed 3890  
 if I had been serious about it;  
 may God curse you,  
 because you wouldn't have hesitated to do it,  
 if I had really wanted you to."

And then she let go of the youth and he left. 3895  
 From now on, the lady would scheme  
 and plot against the youth,  
 may God confound her!  
 Before, she loved him more than anything;  
 now she hated him beyond measure. 3900  
 A woman never wearies  
 of changing her feelings like this.  
 It is easy for her to hate  
 the man she loves most,  
 whether or not she has reason to. 3905  
 Woman does not hesitate to claim  
 a man's love openly and fiercely;  
 she'll never leave him for fear of public opinion.  
 But her love is not steadfast;  
 it's irrational and unstable. 3910  
 She loves and hates with equal ease.  
 If she begins to find fault

S'ele commence a enlaidir,  
 Sel prent si fort a enhaïr  
 Com s'il eüst tols mors lé siens. 3915  
 Ja ne li sovenra des biens  
 Que fait li ait, s'un poi li lance.  
 En feme a grant desmesurance  
 Quant ire le sorporte et vaint.  
 Mais n'i a nule qui trop aint: 3920  
 De trop amer se gardent bien.  
 Mais jo vos dirai une rien:  
 Tres puis qu'ele a home en cuerine,  
 Ne ciet de legier sa haïne.

Ceste dame estoit moult engrant 3925  
 Com honir peüst cel enfant.  
 Ses cuers i point: ne li dolroit  
 S'il fust pendus, ainz le volroit.  
 Et pense donc: "Se cis pensast  
 Viers feme, rien ne s'en tensast 3930  
 Qu'orains n'eüst a moi joé.  
 U gel verrai tolt desjoé,  
 En fin honi, se gel puis faire,  
 U ja n'iere mais sans contraire.  
 Certes, gel croi bien a erite 3935  
 Quant a feme ne se delite.  
 Quant jo li mostrai mes costés,  
 Que il me dist: 'Por Deu, ostés!'  
 Ene fu cho moult bone ensaigne  
 Qu'il despist femes et desdaigne? 3940  
 Il dist qu'il appartient le roi  
 Mais nel fait guaires plus qu'a moi.  
 Ainc nel lassça por parenté,  
 Mais el a en sa volenté.  
 As vallés fait moult bele chiere 3945  
 Et a lor compaignie chiere.  
 Herites est, gel sai de fi,  
 Et jo de m'amor le deffi.  
 Honte li volrai porcacier."  
 Atant repaire de chacier/ 3950  
 Li rois, si corne la menee.  
 Grant joie i ot le soir menee  
 Fors de la dame la roïne  
 Et del vallet ki est mescine.

with the one she is closest to,  
 she starts to hate him as passionately  
 as if he had killed her entire family. 3915  
 The least criticism makes her forget  
 all the good things he may have done for her.  
 When a woman is dominated by anger,  
 she is completely out of control.  
 There's not one of them who loves too much— 3920  
 they're careful not to love to excess—  
 but I'll tell you one thing:  
 as soon as she has a grudge against a man,  
 she doesn't give up hating easily.

This lady was thinking very hard 3925  
 about ways to harm this youth.  
 Her heart spurred her on: she wouldn't care  
 if he were hanged—in fact, she'd like that.  
 Then she thought, "If he were interested  
 in women, nothing could have prevented him 3930  
 from taking his pleasure with me just now.  
 Either I will see him totally dishonored,  
 completely destroyed, if I can manage it,  
 or I will never know a moment's peace.  
 In fact, I'm sure he's a queer, 3935  
 since a woman doesn't arouse him at all.  
 When I showed him my gorgeous body,  
 he said, 'O God, stop that!'  
 Isn't that proof enough  
 that he has nothing but contempt for women? 3940  
 He claims to be the king's man,  
 but he belongs just as much to me!  
 He didn't reject me because he's related to the king;  
 he did it because he has something else on his mind.  
 He likes young men a lot 3945  
 and really enjoys their company.  
 He's a fag, I'd swear to it,  
 and my love threatens him.  
 I will see that he is totally disgraced."  
 Then, to the sound of long notes on the horn, 3950  
 the king returned from the hunt.  
 That evening, the whole court made merry,  
 except for the queen  
 and the youth who was a girl.

La roïne est en grant angoïssce 3955  
 Par quel engien honir le poïssce.  
 Silences ra moult grant contrarie,  
 Car il ne set par quel affaire  
 Il puist sa bone amor avoir.  
 Mais ele puet tres bien savoir 3960  
 Quant il li est ore escapés  
 Qu'il n'iert mais en canbre atrapés,  
 A la pensee qu'il a ore.  
 Mais il i entrera encore  
 A se moult grant male aventure. 3965  
 Por quant s'afice bien et jure  
 Que por plain bacin de deniers  
 N'i enterroit le mois entiers.  
 Si passe avant c'onques n'i entre.  
 Il va bien od li u soëntre 3970  
 Trosques a l'uis et dont retorne.  
 Dont est la dame e simple et morne  
 Et pense u ele en iert vengie  
 U ja nen iert longhes engie  
 De quanque ele est roïne et dame. 3975  
 Li cuers li art, ele entre en flame.

La dame est plainne de grant rage.  
 Or oiés qu'ele a en corage.  
 Le vallet violt bel sanblant faire,  
 Sel poroit en sa cambre atraire, 3980  
 Et s'une fois dedens l'atrape,  
 Anchois que il mais li escape  
 U il fera quanqu'el volra  
 U a tols jors mais s'en dolra.  
 Silences s'est .v. mois tenus 3985  
 Qu'il en la cambre n'est venus.  
 Ele nel torne mie a jeu.  
 Un jor quant ele voit son leu  
 Si l'ararole faintement.  
 Or escoltés confaitement: 3990  
 "Silence, jo vos ai trové  
 Por moult loial et esprové.  
 Jo le vos di endroit de moi  
 Et d'endroit mon segnor le roi.  
 Ne vos sovient c'o vos giuai 3995  
 Ens en ma cambre, et vos priaï  
 Que vos m'amissciés par amors,

The queen was desperately searching 3955  
 for a means to destroy Silence.  
 The young man, for his part, was under considerable stress,  
 because he couldn't think of a way  
 to get back into her good graces.  
 The queen knew very well that 3960  
 since his narrow escape, it wouldn't  
 be easy to trap him in the bedroom again,  
 given the knowledge he now had.  
 (But he will enter it again,  
 at terrible cost to himself, 3965  
 even though he swore that  
 he wouldn't go there again for a whole month,  
 not even for a basketful of money.)  
 He often passed by, but he never went in.  
 He would accompany the queen, or follow a little 3970  
 behind her, as far as the door, and then turn back.  
 This made the lady wretched and miserable.  
 She thought that either she would soon have her revenge  
 or she would not enjoy the advantages  
 of her position as lady and queen for long. 3975  
 Her heart was on fire; she was aflame.

The lady was consumed with dreadful rage.  
 Now wait till you hear what she had in mind!  
 She would pretend to be nice to the youth  
 in order to lure him into her room. 3980  
 Once he was trapped inside,  
 before he could make his escape again,  
 either he would do what she wanted him to,  
 or he would regret it permanently.  
 Silence held out for five months 3985  
 without entering the bedchamber.  
 She didn't take this lightly at all.  
 One day, she saw her opportunity  
 and spoke to him, intending to deceive.  
 Listen to how well she did it: 3990  
 "Silence, I have found you to be  
 very loyal and trustworthy.  
 I say this to you on my own behalf  
 and on behalf of my lord the king.  
 Don't you remember how I joked with you 3995  
 in my bedroom, and begged you  
 to make love to me,

Et vos fesistes vos clamors?/  
 Donc seuc jo bien sans devinalle  
 Que vos loials estes sans falle. 4000  
 Mais savés por quoi jo le fis?  
 Li rois mes sire m'a requis  
 Et cho a bien un an duré  
 Qu'il m'a tant sovent conjuré  
 Que le plus loial eslesisse 4005  
 Des vallés, et se li desisse.  
 Se Dex me porgart m'ireté,  
 Ne li seuc dire verité,  
 Et il me tint tols jors engrant.  
 Jo si vos vi moult simple enfant 4010  
 Et par vostre simple viaire  
 Me fu, bials amis, a viaire  
 Qu'en vos ot gregnor loialté  
 Qu'en vallet de se roialté.  
 Jel cuidai, s'en fui en error, 4015  
 Mais or sai jo bien la verlor.  
 Et si ne sai pas, al voir dire,  
 Por quoi l'a fait li rois mes sire,  
 Mais que jo cuit que cil avra,  
 Cui li rois plus loial savra, 4020  
 Alcune grant bone aventure.  
 Cho serés vos, car c'est droiture."  
 "Dame," fait il, "ne fu cho el?"  
 "Nenil, se Dex me gart de mel!"  
 Respont encontre la roïne. 4025  
 Cil l'en merchie, si encline.

[O]r a la roïne oquoison  
 De celui honir sans raison,  
 Car li vallés le servira,  
 Venra entor li et ira 4030  
 Ens en la cambre com ains siolt.  
 Un jor est si que li rois violt  
 Aler en bois, com fait sovent.  
 Oïés con dolerols covent  
 Ués le vallet apparellier, 4035  
 Cui Damerdex puist consellier.

Li rois en est el bois alés.  
 Silences a adevalés  
 Les degrés avoec la roïne

and you made such a fuss about it?  
 From then on, I knew for a fact  
 that you are completely trustworthy. 4000  
 But do you know why I did it?  
 The king, my lord, had been after me  
 for a whole year to do it.  
 He repeatedly asked me  
 to test the most loyal youth 4005  
 and report back to him.  
 So help me God,  
 I didn't know what to say to him,  
 and he kept on insisting.  
 You looked like an innocent lad to me, 4010  
 and, judging from your harmless appearance,  
 it seemed obvious to me, my friend,  
 that you were more trustworthy  
 than any other youth in this kingdom.  
 I wondered whether I was wrong about you, 4015  
 but now I know for certain I was right.  
 And although I honestly don't know  
 why my lord king has made this request,  
 I do think that whoever  
 the king knows to be most loyal 4020  
 has some great adventure in store for him.  
 That one will be you — it's only right."  
 "Lady," he said, "it was a test and nothing more?"  
 "That's all there was to it, so help me God!"  
 the queen replied. 4025  
 The youth thanked her and bowed deeply.

Now the queen would have ample opportunity  
 to harm the guiltless youth,  
 for he would serve her,  
 attend her, and enter the 4030  
 bedroom the way he used to.  
 One day, it so happened that the king wanted  
 to go off hunting, as he frequently did.  
 Listen to what a terrible trap  
 is being set for the youth, 4035  
 may God help him!

The king had gone off hunting.  
 Silence had gone down  
 the steps with the queen

En la maistre cambre parrine. 4040  
 Ele a l'uis moult tost verellié:  
 Et cil s'en a moult mervellié,/  
 Et enviars l'uis se trait et sache.\*  
 Ele le saïsist par l'atache.  
 Dist li: "U viols tu aler ore?" 4045  
 "Dame, la fors." "Cho n'est encore!"  
 Respont encontre la roïne.  
 "Por quoi nos fais tu tel covine?  
 Jo t'ai moult longement amé.  
 Tu m'as mon cors moult adamé: 4050  
 Jo t'ai forment acoragié,  
 Et tu mon cors as damagié.  
 L'altrier te mostrai mes amors  
 Et t'en fesis par tolt clamors.  
 Ne me degnas pas escolter, 4055  
 Ains me presis a deboter.  
 Ne degnas puis chaëns venir.  
 Jo ne t'i seu comment tenir,  
 Mais tant ai fait par mon engien,  
 Enon Deu, que jo vos i tiengn; 4060  
 Et par meïsme le catel,  
 Prent chi mon cors, il n'i a tel.  
 Faisons com amis et amie."  
 "Roïne, cho n'i avra mie!  
 Par cele foi que jo doi vos 4065  
 Par moi n'iert honis vostre espols,  
 Non! non! par Deu l'esperitable!"  
 "Comment?" fait ele. "Est cho estable?  
 "Oïl, par Deu, qui me cria!  
 Jo vos ai dit quanqu'il i a." 4070  
 Or voit la dame qu'il refuse.  
 S'amor crient qu'al roi ne l'encuse  
 U qu'il l'ait lasscié par despit,  
 Si l'a torné en mal respit.  
 Commence ses cevials detraire 4075  
 Si com diâbles le fait faire.  
 Fiert soi el nés de puign a ente:  
 Del sanc se solle et ensanglente.  
 Plore sans noise et sans criër  
 Qu'el velt le fait tant detriër 4080  
 Que li rois Ebayns vient de cache.  
 N'i violt qu'altres que il le sache.  
 Defole sos ses piés se guinple

into the master bedroom, which was made of solid stone. 4040  
 Right away, she locked the door securely.  
 The youth, very surprised at this,  
 ran to the door and shook it.  
 But she grabbed him by the belt  
 and said, "Now where do you think you're going?" 4045  
 "Out, Lady!" "Not just yet,"  
 replied the queen.  
 "Why are you spoiling things for us?  
 I have loved you for a long time,  
 and you insulted me terribly. 4050  
 I gave you every encouragement,  
 and you spurned me.  
 Not long ago, I demonstrated my love for you,  
 and you yelled and screamed  
 and wouldn't listen to me; 4055  
 in fact, you even argued with me.  
 You wouldn't deign to come here any more.  
 I couldn't figure out how to get hold of you.,  
 but, by God, I've tricked you,  
 and I've got you here now. 4060  
 And by very right of possession,  
 I command you to take my matchless body now.  
 Let's make love!"  
 "My queen, I will do no such thing!  
 By the fidelity I owe you, 4065  
 your spouse will not be dishonored by me.  
 No! No! By God in heaven!"  
 "What?" she said. "Is that your final word?"  
 "Yes, by the God who created me!  
 I've said all there is to say." 4070  
 Now the lady saw that he really was refusing her,  
 and she was worried he might denounce her to the king,  
 or that he had rejected her offer because he despised her.  
 She decided to turn the situation to her own evil advantage.  
 Prompted by the Devil, 4075  
 she began to tear her hair.  
 She gave herself a punch in the nose,  
 so that she was covered with blood.  
 She shed tears, but without making noise or crying,  
 because she wanted to keep this up 4080  
 until the king returned from the hunt,  
 and she didn't want anyone else to know.  
 She trampled her wimple underfoot,

- Et tient bien ferm le vallet simple.  
 "Fils a gloton!" fait ele, "fols! 4085  
 Dehet ait hui li vostre cors!  
 Fils a encrieme paltonier!  
 Li rois n'a soig de parçoignier  
 A sa mollier en tel maniere.  
 Malvaise sui et moult lanriere/ 4090  
 Se ne te fac vif escorcier  
 Ki si me volsis efforcier.  
 As me tu por cho losengie?  
 J'en serai, se Deu plaist, vengie.  
 Mais que li rois meïsmes viegne 4095  
 Et que il droit de toi me tiegne."
- Or a grant dol icil al mains:  
 Sue d'angoisse et tort ses mains,  
 Gemist, fremist forment et pleure.  
 Li rois Ebains plus n'i demeure. 4100  
 Dessendus est desos un arbre  
 Sor un perron qui est de marbre;  
 Vient trosques a l'uis de la cambre  
 Ki estoit pavee de lanbre.  
 "Ovrés!" fait [il]. "A i nullui?" 4105  
 "Oïl, tel ki moult a d'anui!"  
 Dist la roïne. "Bials dols sire,  
 Tel a chaëns qui vos desire  
 Et ki de vos a grant mestier,  
 Itel que por plain un sestier 4110  
 De fins besans n'i volroit estre."  
 La roïne est huissiere miestre:  
 Ouvre l'uis et li rois i entre.  
 Reclot la cambre et vient soëntre.  
 Sa feme voit li rois sanglente 4115  
 Et enseigne moult a ente,  
 Ronpus ses crins, mollié son vis.  
 Or n'i a il ne giu ne ris.  
 "Biele," fait il, "qui vos fist cho?"  
 "Bials sire, jal vos dirai jo. 4120  
 Veés chi devant vos celui  
 Ki m'a faite cestui anui.  
 Cuida sa fole avoir trovee.  
 Il m'a soventes fois provee:  
 Cuidai quel fesist par son giu, 4125  
 Mais orains quant il vit son liu

while keeping a firm hand on the wretched youth.  
 "You swine!" she said, "you crazy bastard!" 4085  
 Damn your filthy hide,  
 you dirty scum!  
 The king doesn't like to share his wife  
 with the likes of you!  
 I would be culpable and cowardly 4090  
 if I didn't have you skinned alive  
 for trying to rape me like this!  
 Do you think I'm bluffing?  
 I will be avenged, God willing,  
 as soon as the king himself arrives 4095  
 and gives me the right to deal with you."

Then she went into fits of agony;  
 she perspired with anguish and wrung her hands,  
 she moaned, shuddered dreadfully, and wept.  
 At this point, King Evan returned. 4100  
 He dismounted at the tree-shaded  
 marble steps  
 and came to the door  
 of the paneled room.  
 "Open up!" he said. "Is anyone there?" 4105  
 "Yes, one who has a terrible grievance,"  
 said the queen. "Dear, sweet lord,  
 there is someone inside who wants you  
 and needs you terribly;  
 one who would give a full measure 4110  
 of fine gold coins to be elsewhere."  
 The queen was an expert locksmith:  
 she unlocked the door and the king entered;  
 then she locked the door again and followed him in.  
 The king saw his wife bleeding 4115  
 and dreadfully bloodied all over;  
 her hair disheveled and her face wet with tears.  
 This was no laughing matter to him.  
 "My dear," he said, "who did this to you?"  
 "My lord, I will tell you everything. 4120  
 The one who did this to me  
 is right here in front of you.  
 He thought he had found a loose woman to suit him.  
 He has tried things several times.  
 I thought he was only joking, 4125  
 but just now, he saw his chance,

Et vos fustes el bos alés,  
 Les degrés ot tost sormontés,  
 Entre en la canbre et ferme l'uis.  
 Sire, veés qu'il m'a fait puis! 4130  
 Silences l'a fait, sire, sire,  
 Par sa folor, par sa grant ire.  
 Ne lairai ore sa folie  
 Que trestolte ne le vos die.  
 Quant il m'ot, sire, si blecie 4135  
 Ma guinple rote et depecie,  
 Et il vit bien que g'ere caste,  
 De si faite folie gaste/  
 Pria que jo li pardonasse  
 Et que itant le me lassasce; 4140  
 Mais jo ne vol mie lasscier  
 Por vostre honor si abasscier.  
 Moult volentiers s'en volt estordre.  
 Bials sire, por le desamordre  
 Tolte gens mais de tel oltrage, 4145  
 De tel folie, de tel rage,  
 Prendés de cestui vengeance  
 C'onques n'atendés jugement!"

Li rois en a si gros le cuer:  
 Ne desist .i. mot a nul fuer, 4150  
 Mais que les ioils celui roïlle.  
 Et li roïne s'agenolle  
 As piés le roi et plore et crie  
 Car la vengeance li detrie  
 Par plorer le violt engignier 4155  
 Qu'ele ne violt pas forlignier:  
 Car feme plore par voidie  
 Quant aënplir violt sa boisdie.  
 Et li vallés est en angoisse,  
 Ne set sos ciel que faire puisse. 4160  
 Por poi de duel que il ne muert;  
 Et la roïne se detuert.  
 Moult li est grief que la roïne  
 Li a esmute tel haïne.  
 Entre ses dens dist bielement: 4165  
 "Ele meffait moult malement,  
 Mais, que que face, ele est ma dame:  
 Ne li doi pas alever blasme.  
 Encor desisse al roi le voire

when you had gone off hunting.  
 He climbed the stairs right away,  
 entered the bedchamber, and locked the door.  
 And look what he did to me then, Sire! 4130  
 Silence did this, Sire, he did it;  
 he was mad with lust!  
 I will tell you  
 how vile he was:  
 after he had beaten me, Sire, 4135  
 and torn my wimple to shreds,  
 and saw that I still wouldn't yield,  
 he begged me to forgive him  
 for such vicious and depraved behavior,  
 and just let him go. 4140  
 But I don't ever want to let your honor  
 be so abased as to let him off.  
 He would be very glad to worm his way out of this.  
 Dear lord, in order to deter others  
 from such acts of fury, 4145  
 violence and outrage,  
 take your vengeance on this man immediately!  
 Don't wait for a trial!"

The king's heart was so heavy  
 he couldn't say a word 4150  
 without rolling his eyeballs.  
 And the queen was kneeling  
 at the king's feet and weeping and crying  
 because he was delaying her vengeance.  
 She wanted to trick him with her tears 4155  
 into thinking she was innocent,  
 for a woman always cries as a strategy  
 when she wants to accomplish something deceitful.  
 The youth was in such distress  
 he didn't know what on earth to do; 4160  
 he was almost dead of grief.  
 And there was the queen, writhing in agony.  
 He profoundly regretted  
 that the queen felt such intense loathing for him.  
 He muttered softly, between his teeth, 4165  
 "She is gravely in the wrong,  
 but whatever she does, she is my lady:  
 I must not sully her reputation.  
 Even were I to tell the king the truth,

Il ne m'en poroit mie croire,  
 Se il ne seüst ma nature: 4170  
 Adonc perdroye ma droiture,  
 L'onor mon pere et m'ireté.  
 Et si sai bien, par verité,  
 La roïne estroit malballie 4175  
 Et de s'onor seroit fallie.  
 Certes," fait il, "que que [je] face,  
 Conques li rois Ebayns me hace,  
 Ja n'en sera par moi adrece  
 Se jo nel fac par grant destrece. 4180  
 Dex ki tolt set me puet garir:  
 Cui violt aidier ne puet marir."  
 La roïne fort se demente.  
 Sachies que moult li est a ente  
 Qu'ele ne voit ardoir en cendre 4185  
 Le vallet, u a forces pendre./  
 Mais el roi a bon home et sage  
 Et atenpret de son corage;  
 Et set bien de .ii. mals eslire  
 Quels est li mioldres et quel pire. 4190  
 Voit se vengeance nen est prise,  
 Foible est, malvaise sa justice.  
 Pis est de honir cel enfant,  
 Car il seroit honis par tant,  
 Se honte esparsse et esmeüe 4195  
 Ki pas nen est encor seüe.  
 Por cho se violt il miols retraire  
 De la justice que trop faire.  
 Et cascuns hom se doit pener  
 Por cho qu'il i puist assener 4200  
 De s'onor salver, se il puet:  
 Et se il voit que lui estuet  
 De .ii. mals tols jors l'un passer,  
 Son sens doit en soi amasser  
 Veür liquels li puist mains nuire. 4205  
 Ne se doit pas li hom destruire  
 Por une soie mesestance.  
 Quels hom li fera honerance  
 Tres puis qu'il meïsmes s'aville?  
 Par sa folie tels s'escille\* 4210  
 Et lance tel parole avant  
 Dont on le tient plus por enfant.  
 Nus ne puet en cest siecle vivre

there's no way he would believe me 4170  
 unless he knew my real nature.  
 And then I would lose my standing,  
 my father's honor and my inheritance.  
 And I know for certain  
 that the queen would be punished 4175  
 and deprived of her honor.  
 Clearly," he said, "whatever I do,  
 however much King Evan may hate me,  
 I will never be able to set things right  
 without great cost to myself. 4180  
 Only God the all-knowing can save me:  
 anyone he helps cannot come to a bad end."  
 The queen was throwing a dreadful fit.  
 You must realize that it was very upsetting for her  
 not to see the youth burned to a crisp 4185  
 or swinging from a gallows.  
 But the king was a wise  
 and moderate fellow at heart,  
 one who knew very well  
 how to choose the lesser of two evils. 4190  
 He saw that if he didn't take vengeance,  
 his reputation for justice would be undermined.  
 But it seemed worse to dishonor this youth,  
 because he himself would also be dishonored,  
 if he should spread the news about the shameful deed 4195  
 that nobody knew about yet.  
 Because of this, he would rather do too little  
 justice than overdo it.  
 For each man must do his utmost  
 to figure out a way 4200  
 to save his honor, if he can.  
 And if he sees that he has to  
 choose definitively between two evils,  
 he must be able to make an intelligent choice  
 as to which will harm him less. 4205  
 A man should. not destroy himself  
 merely to avenge an injury done him.  
 Who would respect him  
 if he brought about his own disgrace?  
 A man may be driven by folly to disgrace himself 4210  
 and say things  
 that make him look childish.  
 No one can live in this world

Ki longhes puist estre a delivre  
 Qu'il n'ait encombrer de son cors. 4215  
 Doit il por cho crier alhors  
 Cascune fois que lui mesciet  
 U que se cose li messiet?  
 Si enemy ki l'orront dire  
 N'en feront fors joër et rire. 4220  
 De cho se pense bien li rois;  
 N'est pas ireuls a fuer d'Irois  
 Por faire d'un damage .ii.  
 Le vallet fait traire ensus d'els  
 Et a dit a la dame en oire: 4225  
 "Biele, se vos me volés croire,  
 Bon conseil porons de cho prendre."  
 "Comment?" fail ele. "El que del pendre?"  
 "Oïl! n'avra pas tel martyre."  
 "Que li volés donc faire, sire? 4230  
 Ardoir, u a chevaux detraire?"  
 "Ne mie, bele; on doit moult faire  
 Solvent contre sa volenté.  
 Cis est moult de halt parenté,  
 Et si est fils a moult prodome. 4235  
 Or en gardons tolte la some.  
 Cho qu'il a fait est par enfance:  
 Et vos savés bien a fiance  
 Se gel faisoie ardoir u pendre  
 Par cel feroie as gens entendre 4240  
 Que jo l'aroie o vos trové  
 Ens en la canbre et pris prové.  
 Et, en non Deu, cho est tels plais  
 Que plus l'esmuet on plus est lais.  
 Mais or tornons cho a mençoige, 4245  
 Ma biele amie douce, a songe:  
 Niens fu, niens est, a rien ne tagne."  
 Or a li dame grant engagne  
 Mais ne l'ose pas contredire.  
 Or oiés que li dist ses sire. 4250  
 "Grant dol avés, et jo gregnor.  
 Mais oiés: j'ai un mien segnor,  
 Le roi de France, par mon chief,  
 U jo l'enverrai par brief.  
 Jo sui ses hom, il est mes sire, 4255

for very long without  
 having something go wrong. 4215  
 Is that any reason to carry on and let everyone know  
 every time something happens to you  
 or things don't turn out right?  
 That way, you will only give your enemies  
 something to celebrate when they hear about it. 4220  
 The king considered all this very carefully;  
 he was not inclined to anger, like the Irish,  
 who make everything twice as bad as it is.  
 He had the youth removed from the room  
 and then said at once to the lady, 4225  
 "Trust me, darling,  
 we'll work something out."  
 "What?" she said, "and what about hanging him?"  
 "Yes, well. . . that won't be his punishment."  
 "Then what do you intend to do with him, Sire? 4230  
 Burn him? Have him torn apart by wild horses?"  
 "No, no, dearest. One has to do a lot of things  
 one doesn't want to.  
 Now, this youth comes from a very good family  
 and is the son of an important man. 4235  
 That's the situation in a nutshell.  
 He just acted out of youthful high spirits;  
 and you know very well  
 that if I have him burned or hanged,  
 people are bound to believe 4240  
 that I not only found him with you in the bedroom,  
 but caught him in the act as well.  
 Damn it all, with this kind of mess,  
 the more you stir it up, the more it stinks.  
 So let's pretend it didn't happen. 4245  
 Just think of it all as a dream, sweetheart.  
 Nothing happened, nothing's wrong, nothing should come of  
 it."  
 The lady was furious at this,  
 but she didn't dare to contradict him.  
 Now listen to what her lord told her: 4250  
 "You have received an injury, and I an even greater one.  
 But listen: the king of France  
 is my liege lord. My idea is  
 to send Silence to him with a letter.  
 Since I am his loyal subject and he is pledged to me, 4255

Et, quant il ora mon brief lire,  
 Ne falroit mie por Monmartre  
 Ne face quanque dist la cartre.  
 Biele, bien en serés vengie.”  
 Li rois l'a forment losengie 4260  
 Qu'oster le violt fors de ses mains;  
 Qu'il n'estoit pas fols ne vilains  
 Qu'il destruisist par sa fole ire,  
 Por quanqu'ele li sace dire.  
 Mais ne volt son dit blastengier, 4265  
 Car feme quant se violt vengier  
 En tel maniere est moult trençans,  
 Cho set li rois, et trop tençans,  
 Est el. Quant on le roeve taire  
 Dont s'esforce de noise faire. 4270  
 Sil violt li rois miols aquoisier  
 Ensi qu'il le fesist noisier.  
 Mais ne li valt pas une tille,  
 Car la roïne est bien gopille  
 En son corage et moult destroite. 4275  
 Pense que se li briés esploite  
 Que li rois violt en cire metre  
 Qu'ele mesme fera tel letre  
 Dont cil avra grant destorbance,  
 S'el puet quil portera en France. 4280

Cho dist li rois: “Ma dolce suer,  
 Or faites huimais lié vo cuer.”  
 “Bials sire, jo moult volentiers.”  
 “Loira il,” fait il, “dementiers.  
 Biele, por faire bel sanblant 4285  
 Par couverture a cel enfant,  
 Jel voel trametre dela mer  
 Al roi qui moult me siolt amer,  
 De France, biele, cui moult aim,  
 De cui, sos Deu, jo me reclaim, 4290  
 Car mes sire est, si teng en fief  
 Engletiere. Vois m'en: .i. brief  
 Feraï escrire en parcemin,  
 Et le vallet metre al cemin.”  
 Dont vait a lui, si l'aseüre, 4295  
 Se li a mostré a droiture  
 U il ira et qu'il fera

once he has my letter read,  
 I assure you that even were Montmartre at stake,  
 he won't fail to do exactly as it says.  
 Dearest, you shall have your revenge."  
 The king told her a tremendous lie, 4260  
 in order to get Silence out of her clutches.  
 He wasn't crazy or foolish enough  
 to destroy the lad because of her terrible rage,  
 no matter what kind of story she told.  
 But he also didn't want to contradict her, 4265  
 because he knew that a woman, when she is out to avenge  
 herself,  
 has a very sharp tongue  
 and will never stop arguing.  
 When she is told to keep quiet,  
 she tries all the harder to make noise. 4270  
 So the king thought to appease her [by lying],  
 just as he let her continue to rage.  
 But it didn't do him a bit of good:  
 the queen was cunning as a vixen  
 by nature, and extremely shrewd. 4275  
 She thought that if the message the king planned  
 to seal with wax would really be so efficacious,  
 she herself would send a letter  
 that would cause the youth a great deal of trouble,  
 if she could see to it that hers was the one he carried to France. 4280

The king said, "My sweet sister,  
 take heart and cheer up."  
 "Dear lord and master, I'll be happy to."  
 "You'll have reason to from now on," he said.  
 "Sweetheart, in order to keep up appearances 4285  
 and conceal this youth's deed,  
 I want to send him overseas  
 to the king of France, who has been a true friend to me,  
 and whom I trust, dearest.  
 By God, I can rely on him, 4290  
 because he is my liege lord, from whom I hold  
 England in fief. Look: I will have a letter  
 written on parchment,  
 and send the youth on his way."  
 Then he went to the youth and reassured him, 4295  
 and told him the truth about  
 where he would be going and what he would do

Et con le brief enportera.  
 Al cancelier vait donc li sire  
 Et maintenant li prent a dire: 4300  
 "Amis, escriis me tost un brief,  
 .d. salus el premier cief,  
 A mon segnor le roi de France  
 En cui jo ai moult grant fiânce.  
 Met i que jo li pri et mant, 4305  
 Com hom sor cui il a commant,  
 Silences li soit bien venus,  
 De sa maisnie retenus.  
 Armes li doinst quant il volra  
 Quant ore et tans l'en requerra. 4310  
 Et trosqu'atant od lui le tiengne  
 Que jo le manc et dont se viegne."  
 Cho dist li rois et dont s'en torne,  
 Et cil d'escrire tost s'atorne.

La roïne en la canbre enclose 4315  
 A sor le brief escrit tel cose  
 Ki oués Silence est moult gagnarde,  
 Se Dameldex ne l'en porgarde.  
 Cruauté n'oïstes gregnor.  
 De par roi Ebayn, son segnor, 4320  
 Escrist al roi de France un brief  
 Qu'il tolle al message le cief  
 Qui les letres a lui enporte;  
 Que il por rien ne l'en deportte,  
 Car il a fait al roi tel honte 4325  
 Qu'il ne le violt pas metre en conte.  
 Il est forment de halt parage,  
 Por cho l'a tramis al message.  
 Li rois ne l'ose pas desfaire  
 Por cho qu'il est de halt affaire./ 4330  
 Cest brief a la roïne escrit.  
 Mar l'a cil eü en despit.  
 Cho dist la dame: "Par mon cief!"  
 Ploié enporte puis le brief  
 Desos son doit la u cil est 4335  
 Ki le brief roi Ebayn a prest.  
 "Amis," fait ele, "que est cho?"  
 "Ma dame, jal vos dirai jo.  
 Silences iert tramis en France  
 De par le roi por remanance 4340

and how he would bring the letter with him.  
 And then the king went to the chancellor,  
 and this is what he said to him: 4300  
 "My friend, write a letter for me at once.  
 First convey five hundred greetings  
 to my lord the king of France,  
 in whom I have the utmost confidence.  
 Tell him that I request and entreat of him, 4305  
 as his vassal,  
 that Silence be welcomed at his court  
 and made a member of his household.  
 He should knight him at his discretion,  
 at the appropriate time and place, 4310  
 and keep the youth with him  
 until I ask for him, and then he should return."  
 That's what the king said. Then he left,  
 and the chancellor got busy writing immediately.

In the privacy of her bedchamber, 4315  
 the queen had written the kind of letter  
 that would do Silence a lot of harm,  
 if God didn't save him.  
 You never heard of anything more cruel.  
 In the name of her lord, King Evan, 4320  
 she wrote the king of France a letter  
 saying that he should behead  
 the bearer of this message,  
 and not spare him for any reason,  
 for the disgrace he had brought on the king 4325  
 was too shameful to commit to writing.  
 He was of very high lineage,  
 and that was why he had been sent with a message:  
 the king didn't dare to have him executed  
 because he was from a prominent family. 4330  
 This was the letter the queen wrote.  
 "He'll be sorry for spurning me,"  
 said the lady. "I swear it!"  
 Then she folded the letter and carried it,  
 concealed in her hand, to the chancellor, 4335  
 who had King Evan's letter ready.  
 "My friend," she said, "what's that?"  
 "Madam, I will tell you.  
 The king is sending Silence to France  
 to be part of the royal household 4340

Por sens aprendre et cortesie."  
 La dame respont par boïdie:  
 "Cho poise moi se il i vait."  
 "Si fait il moi, dame, entresait."  
 "Jo cuit," fait ele, "cho est gas." 4345  
 "Roïne, par Deu, non est pas;  
 Et ces lettres enportera."  
 "Amis, jo cuit que no fera.  
 Jo ne cuit pas qu'ensi s'en alle."  
 Li canceliers le brief li balle. 4350  
 "Veés," fait il, "que dist l'escris,  
 Puis que vos mescreés mes dis."  
 Et la roïne el ne demande.  
 Le brief a ore en se commande.  
 Moult [tost] esgarde sor la letre. 4355  
 El n'i violt mie longues metre,  
 Ains a le brief moult tost ploïé,  
 Voiant celui, et ferm loïé.  
 Retient celui, le fals li piure,  
 Et cil le saiele a droiture; 4360  
 Si l'a la dame decheü  
 Qu'il ne s'en a apercheü  
 Que li briés qu'il en cire mist  
 Ne soit cil meïsmes qu'il fist.  
 Li canceliers puis ne s'atarge. 4365  
 Il vient al roi, le brief li charge,  
 Et il le balle al vallet donques, —  
 Se Dex nel fait, quil mar vit onques! —  
 Et dont l'a fait bien atorer.  
 Cil n'i ose plus sejourner. 4370  
 Se harpe et sa viiele enporte,  
 Si s'en ist plorant de la porte.  
 Bien doit plorer et avoir ire  
 Car sa mort porte escrite en cire,  
 Se Dex n'en pense, quil cria 4375  
 Et fist el monde quanque il a.  
 O li plusor mainnent grant duel  
 Por le vallet de Tintaguel/  
 Ki s'a fait moult a tols amer.  
 Plus tost qu'il pot passe la mer 4380  
 Et si s'en vient tolt droit en France.  
 Le roi i trueve sans fallance.  
 Devant lui vient moult bielement.  
 Salué l'a si faitement:

and be schooled in courtly behavior."  
 Deceitfully, the lady replied,  
 "I shall be sorry to see him go."  
 "Indeed, so shall I, Lady."  
 "I think it's all a joke," she said. 4345  
 "No, my queen, it's not.  
 He is going to take this message."  
 "Friend, I bet he's not.  
 I don't believe he's leaving like that."  
 The chancellor handed her the letter. 4350  
 "See for yourself what it says," he said,  
 "since you won't take my word for it."  
 The queen didn't ask for more.  
 Now she had the letter in her possession.  
 She read it carefully; 4355  
 it didn't take her long.  
 She unfolded it very quickly,  
 in full view of the chancellor, and closed it again.  
 She kept this letter, and gave him the false one,  
 and the man sealed it in good faith. 4360  
 The lady deceived him so thoroughly  
 that he didn't notice  
 the letter he sealed with wax  
 wasn't the one he had written.  
 Without further delay, the chancellor 4365  
 went to the king and gave him the letter,  
 and he handed it over to the youth,  
 who is doomed if God doesn't help him!  
 With that, he had given the youth everything he needed.  
 Silence didn't dare postpone his departure. 4370  
 He took his harp and viele  
 and went forth weeping.  
 He had every reason to weep and be upset,  
 for he carried his death sealed with wax,  
 unless God, who created him 4375  
 and made the world and all things in it, is mindful of him.  
 Most people were very sorry  
 to lose the youth from Tintagel,  
 who had made himself very popular with everyone.  
 He crossed the sea as soon as he could 4380  
 and thus went directly to France.  
 He arrived at court straightaway,  
 made a most charming appearance before the king,  
 and greeted him like this:

- “Sire, cil Dex de majesté  
 Ki tols jors iert et a esté 4385  
 Et tolt le mont a en sa main  
 Vos salt de par le roi Ebain.”  
 “Amis, et Dex li doinst grant joie.”  
 Silences son saiel desploie; 4390  
 Livre le al roi qui fraint le cire  
 Et rueve lués les lettres lire.  
 Li canceliers ki tient le brief  
 L’a tost veü de cief en cief:  
 Et quant il voit qu’il senefie 4395  
 Que le vallet de mort desfie,  
 Tel dol en a por poi ne muert.  
 En soi meïsme se detuert  
 Et pense: “Dex! quel creäture!  
 Com chi a bieles engendreüre! 4400  
 Com fait damage a ses amis  
 Qu’il en tel message est tramis!  
 Jo ne volroie por Monmartre  
 Qu’il m’esteüst lire la cartre:  
 Ja se jel di cho iert pechiés, 4405  
 Qu’il iert deffais et depechiés.  
 Pitiés me rueve al roi mentir;  
 Paörs nel violt pas consentir.  
 Pitié ai grant se il i muert;  
 Paör s’il par moi en estuert. 4410  
 De .ii. mals estuet ore eslire  
 Le mains malvais, cho est le dire:  
 Se ne disoie qu’a el brief  
 Li rois me tolroit tost le cief.  
 Mains me nuist donc la vertés dire 4415  
 Que por lui sofrir tel martyre.”
- A le bialté de cel enfant  
 Sont li Franchois moult entendant.  
 Li rois li a dit: “Amis, frere,  
 Car me di ore quist tes pere.” 4420  
 “Sire,” fait il, “se Dex me valle,  
 Li cuens Cador de Cornuälle.”  
 Li rois l’acole dont et baize  
 Si fort que il oblie enaize  
 Le brief, tant por lui conjoïr, 4425  
 Tant por novieles a oïr/  
 Del roi Ebain, dont il demande.

"Sire, may God enthroned in majesty, 4385  
 who always has been and always will be  
 and holds the whole world in his hands,  
 save you: this is the fervent wish of King Evan."  
 "And may God grant him happiness, my friend."  
 Silence took out his sealed letter 4390  
 and presented it to the king, who broke the wax  
 and asked to have the letter read immediately.  
 The chancellor, who was holding the letter,  
 quickly skimmed it from top to bottom,  
 and when he saw what it contained — 4395  
 that it condemned the youth to death —  
 he was so stricken with grief he nearly died.  
 Wracked with sorrow, he thought  
 to himself, "My God, what a gorgeous creature!  
 He must come from a very good family. 4400  
 What a pity for his friends  
 that he has been sent with such a message!  
 By Montmartre, I don't want  
 to have this letter read aloud;  
 if I tell what it says, it will be a pity, 4405  
 for the youth will be executed.  
 Pity tells me to lie to the king,  
 but fear won't let me.  
 I will feel great pity if he dies,  
 but fear if he is spared because of me. 4410  
 Of two evils, I must now choose  
 the lesser, that is, to tell.  
 For if I didn't say what was in the letter,  
 the king would soon have me beheaded.  
 It will harm me less to tell the truth 4415  
 than to suffer such a fate for this youth."

The French were extremely responsive  
 to this young lad's beauty and bearing.  
 The king said to him, "Friend, brother,  
 why don't you tell me who your father is." 4420  
 "Sire," he said, "as God is my witness,  
 Count Cadour of Cornwall."  
 Then the king embraced him and kissed him  
 so heartily that he nearly forgot the letter,  
 he so enjoyed talking with the youth 4425  
 and hearing news of  
 King Evan, whom he asked about.

Puis piece al cancelier conmande  
 A dire que li briés despont.  
 "Volentiers, sire, cil respont. 4430  
 Vos me rovés lé letres lire.  
 Jes lis envis, mais, bials dols sire,  
 Mais que ne vos doi rien taisir,  
 Sire, encontre vostre plaisir,  
 Vos hom, vos parens, vos amis, 4435  
 Rois Ebayns le vos a tramis  
 Por le vallet faire afoler,  
 Que je vos vi ore acoler.  
 Por lui honir et damagier  
 En a fait, sire, messagier. 4440  
 Dex, com mar fu tels créature!  
 Cho me dist ceste letreüre  
 Que il a fait al roi tel honte  
 Que il ne violt pas metre en conte.  
 Ensi com vos amés s'onor 4445  
 Qu'il ne le perde u ait menor  
 Si com il a en vos fiâce  
 De son honte prendés venjance.  
 Por cho l'a tramis a message,  
 Qu'il est forment de halt parage 4450  
 Et si nel violt mie deffaïre  
 Por cho qu'il est de halt affaire.  
 Del dire ai fait grant cruelté  
 Mais jo vos doi tel feëlté  
 Que ne vos doi mençoigne traïre." 4455  
 Li rois a bassé son viaïre.  
 Tel dol a qu'il ne puet mot dire:  
 Puis que fu nés n'ot mais tel ire.  
  
 Cho dist li rois: "J'ai grant anguisse.  
 Ne sai sos ciel que faire puisce, 4460  
 Car li hom el mont ki plus m'ainme  
 De cest message a moi se claïme.  
 Forfais li est, jo ne sai dont,  
 Por cho me prie et me semont  
 Sor quanque il m'a fait d'onerance 4465  
 Que jo en prenge la venjance.  
 Engig[n]ié m'ai et decheü,  
 Que jo si biel l'ai recheü.  
 Sa grans bialtés m'a afolé  
 Que baizié l'ai et acolé. 4470

After a while, he ordered the chancellor  
 to tell him what the letter said.  
 "As you wish, Sire," was the reply. 4430  
 "You ask me to read the letter:  
 I do so with the utmost reluctance, dear, kind lord,  
 but for the fact that I must not conceal anything from you.  
 Sire, contrary to your pleasure, King Evan,  
 your vassal, relative and ally, 4435  
 has sent you this letter  
 in order to cause the death of this youth,  
 whom I saw you embrace a short while ago.  
 He has made him a messenger  
 in order to destroy him, Sire. 4440  
 God, what an unfortunate creature!  
 The letter says  
 that what he did to the king  
 was too shameful to be told.  
 And as you hold his honor dear, 4445  
 and would not wish to see it lost or diminished,  
 he has every confidence  
 that you will avenge his shame.  
 He sent the youth as a messenger  
 because he is of high lineage, 4450  
 and he doesn't want to execute him  
 because his family is very prominent.  
 I have committed an act of terrible cruelty  
 by telling you this, but it is my duty  
 to tell you the truth." 4455  
 The king bowed his head.  
 He felt such grief he could not utter a word;  
 he had never felt such pain in his life.

The king said, "I am in a dreadful dilemma.  
 I don't know what in the world I can do, 4460  
 for the man requesting my help in this message  
 is my most faithful ally.  
 It is contemptible of him; I don't understand  
 why he is asking me secretly,  
 in the name of all the honors he has paid me, 4465  
 to avenge him.  
 As for me, I was a fool  
 to greet the youth so heartily.  
 His beauty and noble bearing moved me  
 to kiss and embrace him. 4470

Ki s'apensast de tel affaire  
 Qu'il fust envoiés por deffaire?  
 Nel puis par raison malballir  
 Ne par raison le roi fallir  
 Qu'il a eü por moi maint soig: 4475  
 Et s'or li fal a cest besoig  
 Dont porra il tols jors bien dire  
 Que jo del mont sui tols li pire  
 Quant por bienfait ne por franchize  
 Ne puet trover en moi servisce. 4480  
 Et se jo cestui li desfac  
 Grant mal et pechié m'i porcac.  
 Et tols li mons me doit haïr  
 Se jo commenc or a traïr.  
 Gel baizai certes, c'est la voire. 4485  
 Ki me porra jamais puis croire?  
 Nus hom voir ne me kerra mais.  
 Li baiziers senefie pais.  
 Nel puis deffaire ne lasscier,  
 Certes, sans moi trop abasscier. 4490  
 Ne sai so ciel que faire puisse  
 En cest estrif, en ceste anguisse."  
 Li rois .iii. contes en apiele:  
 Dire lor violt ceste noviele.  
 Des trois contes m'a un conté: 4495  
 L'uns tenoit de Blois la conté,  
 L'autres cuens ert de Navers sire,  
 Li tiers de Clermont, ch'oï dire.

Li rois ne lor dist plus ne mains  
 Ne mais: "Segnor, li rois Ebayns, 4500  
 Mes hom, mes parens, mes amis,  
 A cest message a moi tramis.  
 Et savés vus por quel affaire?  
 Il le m'a tramis por desfaire;  
 Car cis vallés, ne sai li sien, 4505  
 Ont fait roi Ebayn el que bien,  
 Cho dist li briés, voire, tel honte  
 Qu'il ne le violt pas metre en conte.  
 Et il m'a chier a desmesure  
 Et jo lui plus que criature. 4510  
 Ja savés vos, n'i a celui,  
 L'amor quist entre moi et lui.  
 Il m'a ja fait tamaint servisce.

Whoever would have thought  
 he was sent here to be killed?  
 I cannot, in justice, do him wrong,  
 nor can I rightly fail the king,  
 who has done a good deal for me. 4475  
 And if I fail to grant him this request,  
 he will always be able to say  
 that I am the most dishonorable man in the world  
 because I would not help him  
 either as a favor or from a sense of obligation. 4480  
 And if I kill the youth for him,  
 I will be guilty of a terrible crime.  
 Everyone will have reason to hate me  
 if I betray him now.  
 I greeted him formally, with a kiss. I can't go back on that. 4485  
 Who would ever trust me again?  
 No one would ever return my greeting again.  
 That is the kiss of peace.  
 I cannot undo it or disregard it  
 without bringing terrible dishonor upon myself. 4490  
 I simply don't know what to do  
 in the face of this conflict, this dilemma."  
 The king then summoned three counts,  
 to tell them the news.  
 According to my information, 4495  
 one was the count of Blois,  
 the second the count of Nevers,  
 and the third, the count of Clermont, or so I've heard.

The king said this to them, no more, no less:  
 "Lords, King Evan, 4500  
 my vassal, my relative, my ally,  
 has sent me this messenger.  
 And do you know why?  
 He sent him here to be killed.  
 This youth, or maybe one of his relatives, 4505  
 has done something terrible to King Evan,  
 that's what the letter says, something so shameful  
 he doesn't want to talk about it.  
 And he is utterly devoted to me,  
 and I value him more than anyone else in the world. 4510  
 You all know, each and every one of you,  
 how devoted we are to each another.  
 He has done many things for me;

Or si violt prover ma francisce.  
 Cho qu'il m'a fait violt que li solle 4515  
 Que a cestui le chief en tolle;  
 Et vos si ravés bien veü  
 Coment j'ai cestui recheü./  
 Ne doit trahir li hom qui baize.  
 Segnor, jo sui a grant mesaize. 4520  
 Ne me donai garde de cho!  
 Segnor, por Deu que ferai jo?  
 Selonc l'amor qu'ai viers le roi  
 Et qu'ai bazié cestui en foi,  
 Esgardés que m'est miols a faire 4525  
 U mains puet torner a contraire.  
 Et cil respondent: "Volentiers.  
 Et vos alés endementiers  
 O vos barons ester, bials sire,  
 Qu'enon Deu chi a moult a dire." 4530

Li rois s'en vait et cil remainnent  
 Ki del esgart forment se painnent,  
 Cascuns selonc cho qu'il set miols.  
 Li cuens de Blois ert li plus viols:  
 Por cho si a bele oquoison 4535  
 De parler avant par raison.  
 "Segnor," fait il, "volés le vos  
 Que jo parole?" "Sire, o nos."  
 "Jo volentiers! Si entendés:  
 Si jo mesdi, si m'amendés. 4540  
 Jo ne fac chi nul jugement:  
 Ains parol par amendement  
 De cest esgart u nos a mis  
 Li rois; nos sire est. Ses amis,  
 Segnor, rois Ebayns d'Engletiere 4545  
 Est venus nostre roi requiere  
 Par son seël et par son brief  
 Qu'il tolle a cest vallet le chief.  
 Et vos savés e non Deu bien  
 Onques mais nel requist de rien. 4550  
 Jo croi moult bien qu'encor n'eüst  
 Se il enmioldrer le peüst,  
 Et il n'eüst or moult grant soig.  
 Son ami voit on al besoig.  
 Il s'est por mon segnor penés 4555  
 Plus que hom qui soit de mere nés.

now he wishes to put my good will to the test: 4515  
 in return for his services,  
 he is asking me to behead this youth.  
 But all of you saw quite clearly  
 how I greeted the lad.  
 One cannot kiss a man and betray him.  
 My lords, I am in a quandary. 4520  
 I wasn't expecting this!  
 Lords, what shall I do?  
 On the basis of the obligation I feel towards the king,  
 and the kiss I gave the youth in good faith,  
 I want you to decide which course of action is better,  
 or has less chance of going wrong." 4525  
 They replied, "As you wish, Sire,  
 and in the meantime, you should  
 return to your barons, Sire,  
 in the name of God, who is the best counsellor." 4530

The king left, and those who had to  
 struggle with such a difficult decision remained.  
 Each one did the best he could.  
 The count of Blois was the oldest,  
 therefore it was only fitting 4535  
 that he should give his opinion first.  
 "My lords," he said, "may I speak?"  
 "By all means, good sir."  
 "I should be glad to, then. But first let it be understood  
 that you should correct me if I'm wrong, 4540  
 for I am not trying to pass judgment here,  
 I am trying to find a solution  
 to the matter put before us  
 by our lord the king. Lords,  
 his friend, King Evan of England, 4545  
 has requested our king  
 by means of seal and letter  
 to cut off this youth's head.  
 And, by God, you know very well  
 that he has never asked anything of our king before, 4550  
 and I firmly believe that he wouldn't be now,  
 if he had any choice in the matter,  
 and if he weren't in dire straits.  
 A friend in need is a friend indeed.  
 He has done more for my lord 4555  
 than any other man alive.

Et por cho fait on c'on reface  
 Bien sovent plus que por man[a]ce.  
 Et uns bezoins altre requiert.  
 Vos savés bien qu'il i affiert: 4560  
 Ki mon ami honore, et moi,  
 Ki li fait honte, il le fait moi.  
 Ne proise gaires ma possance  
 Ki mon ami fait mesestance.  
 Li brief tesmoigne de cestui 4565  
 Qu'il a fait al roi tel anui/  
 Qu'il ne le violt pas metre en conte.  
 Dont a il fait mon segnor honte.  
 De honte se doit on vengier,  
 L'onor son ami calengier. 4570  
 Cis vallés est pris a la trape:  
 Ne voi raison com il escape.  
 Mais ne doit avoir mal ne painne  
 En la premiere quarentainne.  
 .xl. jors doit avoir pais 4575  
 Por amor del baisier, ne mais;  
 Tant doit bien nostre rois atendre.  
 Se il le fait adonques pendre  
 U il le fait ardoir en flame  
 Ne li doit on torner a blasme. 4580  
 Cho est al miols que jo sai dire."  
 Li cuens de Clermont s'en aïre.  
 En sa main tint un baston brief:  
 Si vait rumant de cief en cief.  
 A paines qu'il puet dire mot 4585  
 De maltalent de cho qu'il ot;  
 Mais qu'il refrainst son maltalent  
 Com sages hom, si parla gent.  
 Ne le violt mie desmentir  
 Al premier mot, ne consentir: 4590  
 Car cil met le fu en l'estoppe  
 Ki al premier le bouce estoppe  
 De celui que voel contredire.  
 Hom qui cho fait, son plaît empire,  
 Ainz doit premiers tolt otroier, 4595  
 Por miols son per amoloier.  
 Si fist li cuens de Clermont donques.  
 Hom plus atemprés ne fu onques.  
 Otroie al conte tols ses buens  
 Qu'il li otroie tols les suens. 4600

You can catch more flies with honey  
 than with vinegar.  
 One good turn deserves another.  
 You know what it comes down to: 4560  
 honor me, honor my friend;  
 shame him, and you shame me, too.  
 Lay a hand on my friend,  
 and you'll have me to deal with.  
 This letter states that the lad 4565  
 injured the king so seriously  
 that he doesn't want to talk about it.  
 In that case, he has harmed my lord as well.  
 Every wrong must be avenged.  
 The honor of one's friend must be upheld. 4570  
 This youth is trapped.  
 I don't see how he can escape.  
 But he should not be harmed  
 for the next forty days.  
 He should be granted forty days' reprieve 4575  
 on account of the kiss, no more than that.  
 Our king should wait that long.  
 If he should then have him hanged  
 or burned at the stake,  
 he should not be blamed. 4580  
 That is the best advice I can give."  
 The count of Clermont grew very angry at that.  
 He clenched a short staff in his hand  
 and paced back and forth, muttering.  
 He was so angered by what he had heard 4585  
 that he could scarcely utter a word.  
 But he repressed his anger  
 and spoke softly, like a wise man.  
 He didn't want to start off by contradicting  
 the count of Blois, nor did he want to agree with him.  
 He who begins 4590  
 by squelching his opponent  
 only adds fuel to the fire.  
 A man who does that harms his own cause.  
 Instead, he should agree to everything at first, 4595  
 in order to soften up his adversary.  
 That is what the count of Clermont did.  
 There never was a man with more self-control.  
 He agreed with all the count's suggestions,  
 so that he would agree with his. 4600

Et si set tres bien nequedent  
 Qu'il a parlé malvaisement.  
 "Jo sai bien," fait il, "une rien:  
 Li cuens de Blois a dit moult bien.  
 Ichi ne peüst home avoir 4605  
 Ki parlast par si grant savoir.  
 Car moult doit on celui haïr  
 Quant il son segnor violt traïr.  
 Mais que li rois ne sot qu'il fist  
 Quant il cha oltre le tramist: 4610  
 Il l'a delivré par itant  
 Que il envoié l'a avant.  
 Or l'a baisié li rois, messire.  
 Ne li puet faire dont soit pire,/  
 Par nule raison que j'en voie, 4615  
 Tant com il est en ceste voie.  
 Et nos somes si loial conte,  
 Ne li devons loër son honte.  
 Encor fust rois Ebains nos pere  
 Et cis eüst ocis no frere, 4620  
 Ne deveriemes consellier  
 No roi cestui a essillier.  
 N'a loialté el mont gregnor  
 Que salver l'onor son segnor.  
 Bien gart li sires que tels soit 4625  
 Viers ses homes com estre doit.  
 Il soit por lui et nos por nos,  
 Segnor," fait il, "qu'en dites vos?"

Quant l'entent li cuens de Naviers  
 Si l'a esgardé d'entraviers. 4630  
 "Cuens de Clermont, qu'est que vos dites?  
 Doit en dont cis aler si quites?  
 Car prendés garde a vostre dit!  
 Dont n'a il ens el brief escrit  
 Qu'i a fait al roi tel anui 4635  
 Que ne le violt dire nului?  
 Dont a il fait mon segnor honte  
 Se cho est voirs que li briés conte.  
 Jo ne puis veïr de cestui  
 Coment puist aler sans anui: 4640  
 Mais ne doit avoir mal ne painne  
 En le premiere quarentainne.  
 Mais puis le puet, cho m'est viaire,

And yet, he knew very well  
 that what the count of Blois had said was wrong.  
 "I know one thing for certain," he said,  
 "the count of Blois has given us excellent advice.  
 There's no one else here 4605  
 who could have spoken so knowledgeably.  
 Indeed, it is a man's duty to be the enemy  
 of anyone who wants to betray his lord.  
 However, the king didn't know what he was doing  
 when he sent the youth elsewhere. 4610  
 He freed him by the very act  
 of sending him away.  
 Our king has given the youth the kiss of peace, my lords.  
 I do not see how there can be any justification  
 for his doing him any harm, 4615  
 since he started out this way.  
 And we, as the king's loyal subjects,  
 must not give advice that would cause him dishonor.  
 Even if King Evan were our father,  
 and even if the youth had killed our brother, 4620  
 we should not advise  
 our king to have him killed.  
 The first duty of any subject  
 is to safeguard his lord's honor,  
 just as it is the lord's duty 4625  
 to see that he fulfills his obligation to his men.  
 He should do his part and we should do ours.  
 My lords," he said, "What do you say to that?"

When the count of Nevers heard this,  
 he looked at him askance. 4630  
 "Count Clermont, what are you saying?  
 Are we to let him off scot-free?  
 You'd better watch what you are saying!  
 Didn't it say in the letter  
 that he did such a terrible thing to the king 4635  
 that he didn't even want to tell anyone about it?  
 Therefore, he brought dishonor on my lord as well,  
 if what the letter says is true.  
 I cannot see  
 how we can let this youth go free. 4640  
 He must not be harmed  
 for forty days.  
 But after that, as I see it,

Li rois envoier por deffaire  
 A un de ses lointains amis. 4645  
 Li rois Ebayns qui l'a tramis  
 Por cho qu'il est de halt parage  
 Nel violt deffaire par hontage."

Li cuens de Clermont respont donques:  
 "Cuens de Navers, cho n'avint onques! 4650  
 Volés vos le roi consellier  
 Por altrui soi mesme avellier?  
 Quant il le lassça por son honte,  
 Al roi de France puis que il monte,  
 Ki mie avellier ne se violt? 4655  
 Mais se li rois Ebayns se diolt  
 Qu'il a por no roi despendu,  
 Or pensons qu'il li ait rendu!  
 C'est al miols que jo puis savoir  
 Qu'avoir li rende por avoir, 4660  
 Anchois tols jors por .i. marc deus  
 Qu'il devigne por lui honteuls,/
 C'est miols que il s'abandonast,  
 Et por avoir s'anor donast.  
 Tels piert le sien qui puis recuevre, 4665  
 Mais ne puis veïr par quele ouevre  
 On puist s'onor puis recover  
 Quant on le pert par mal overer.  
 Tant com li argens valt mains d'or,  
 Si valt honors miols de tresor. 4670  
 Ja ne l'eüst baisié messire  
 Nel poroit livrer a martyre  
 Lués se presenta por message.  
 Ne tieng pas roi Ebayn a sage  
 Por cho qu'il ait forfait le cief 4675  
 Quant il l'envoia par son brief  
 Al roi de France por desfaire.  
 E n'avés vos oï retraire  
 C'on ne puet faire jugement  
 S'on ne set bien premierement 4680  
 Le fait? Car l'oeuvre juge l'ome:  
 Cho est sivable, c'est la some,  
 Qu'a salver l'a li rois messire.  
 Cho est al miols que jo sai dire  
 Que de lui metre a salveté, 4685  
 Car baisié l'a en feelté.

the king can send him to be killed  
 by some ally of his who lives far away. 4645  
 King Evan only sent him here  
 because he is from a prominent family and he wanted  
 to avoid the disgrace of a public execution."

To this, the count of Clermont replied,  
 "Count of Nevers, that would never do! 4650  
 Would you advise the king  
 to sully his reputation to preserve someone else's?  
 Since the king of England declined to do it for fear of shame,  
 why should it be the king of France's business,  
 when he doesn't want to degrade himself either? 4655  
 But if King Evan complains  
 that he has spent large sums on our king's behalf,  
 let us see him reimbursed.

That's the best solution I can suggest:  
 that our king give back the money, 4660  
 and at the rate of two marks for every one.  
 Rather than be dishonored for King Evan's sake,  
 it's better for our lord to spend freely  
 and pay the money to retain his honor.  
 A man may lose his property and recover it later, 4665  
 but I can see no way  
 to retrieve honor lost  
 through a dishonorable act.

Just as silver is worth less than gold,  
 honor is worth more than wealth. 4670  
 Even if my lord had not kissed him,  
 he couldn't order him executed,  
 because he came here as a messenger.

In my opinion, King Evan acted unwisely:  
 he forfeited the right to the lad's head 4675  
 when he sent him as messenger  
 to the king of France to be killed.

And haven't you heard it said  
 that one cannot pass judgment  
 without knowing the facts first? 4680  
 A man is judged by his actions.

In short, it follows, then,  
 that my lord the king must spare him.  
 That is the best solution I can offer:  
 save the youth's life, 4685  
 because he kissed him in good faith.

Garnir le doit de son contraire.  
 Jo vos ai dit trestolt l'afaire:  
 N'en dirai el, foi que doi vos.  
 Volés le ensi?" "Bials sire, o nos, 4690  
 Mais que li rois ne vos desdie."  
 "Biel segnor, cho ne di jo mie  
 Que li rois ne puist faire bien  
 Trestolt son plaisir malgré mien.  
 Mais puis que dit li averai 4695  
 Al miols que dire li sarai,  
 Puet il faire tolt son plaisir.  
 Doi li jo donc por cho taisir  
 Consel de droit, s'il le demande?  
 Nenil, par foi! s'il le conmande, 4700  
 Consel li doi doner et dire,  
 Et puis si face comme sire!  
 Ja diäbles tant ne m'esmarge  
 Que jo del tolt ne me descarge  
 Viers mon segnor, cui amer doi, 4705  
 Quant conjuré m'avra en foi!  
 Se jo li di le miols tols dis,  
 Quel blasme i ai s'il fait le pis?  
 Encor li soit il contrecuer,  
 Nen istrai del droit a nul fuer/ 4710  
 Por cho que g'i puisse assener.  
 Car alons le roi amener  
 A une part, se li disomes  
 L'esgart que nos ci fait avomes."  
 Donques l'ont d'une part mené 4715  
 Et cil ki miols a assené,  
 C'est cil de Clermont, cil a dit:  
 "Bials sire, entendés un petit.  
  
 Vostre commandement avons  
 Fait tolt al miols que nos poöns. 4720  
 Nos connaissons tolt troi tres bien  
 Que se vos aviés une rien  
 Que rois Ebayns volsist avoir,  
 Si le vos eüst fait savoir,  
 Tel ki valsist .m. mars et plus, 4725  
 Doner le devriés sans refus.  
 Mais honir ne vos devés mie  
 Por nul home ki soit en vie.  
 Por quanque li rois vos a fait

Our king should warn him that King Evan is seeking vengeance.  
 I've told you what I think;  
 that's the way I see it, so help me God.  
 Are you with me?" "My lord, we are, 4690  
 but we hope the king doesn't go against you."  
 "My lords, I have never said  
 that the king cannot act as he sees fit,  
 despite my considered opinion.  
 Even after I have given him 4695  
 the best advice I could,  
 he can still do just as he wants.  
 Is this any reason to keep silent  
 and deny him proper counsel, if he requests it?  
 By God, no! If he asks for it, 4700  
 I am duty bound to give him sound advice,  
 and then let him act as befits a king!  
 Were I tormented by the very Devil,  
 I would still discharge my duty  
 to my lord, whom I am bound to serve, 4705  
 since he asked me in good faith!  
 If I always tell him the best course of action to take,  
 it is not my fault if he takes the worst.  
 Even if I incur the king's displeasure,  
 I will not stray from the right path at any price, 4710  
 as far as I can determine it.  
 Why don't we go and take the king  
 aside, and tell him  
 the results of our deliberations."  
 So they took him aside, 4715  
 and the one who had given the soundest advice,  
 that is, the count of Clermont, said,  
 "Sire, be so kind as to hear us out.  
  
 We have followed your instructions  
 to the best of our ability. 4720  
 All three of us know very well  
 that if you had something  
 King Evan wanted,  
 and he let you know about it,  
 even if it cost a thousand marks or more, 4725  
 you ought to give it to him without hesitation.  
 But you must not bring dishonor upon yourself  
 for any man alive.  
 No matter what the king has done for you, Sire,

Ne por quanque il servi vos ait 4730  
 Ne poriés vos pas vouloir, sire,  
 C'on peüst de vos honte dire.  
 S'uns hom trestolt le mont eüst,  
 Par nul engien que il seüst  
 N'en poroit plus c'uns hom user. 4735  
 Por cho ne doit nus refuser  
 Honor por tantelet d'avoir.  
 Cil n'oirre mie par savoir  
 Ki por richoise honor refuse,  
 Por tantelet que il en use. 4740  
 Nient plus que cierges sans luör  
 Ne luist riçoise sans honor.  
 Por rien que nus de nos en voie  
 Ne poés vos en ceste voie,  
 Bials sire dols, cest messagier 4745  
 En cest message damagier.  
 Et si a plus: bien le savés,  
 Por cho que vos baisié l'avés,  
 Encor l'eüst il envoié  
 Comme larron pris et loié, 4750  
 Nel poriés vos deffaire pas.  
 Saciés que cho n'est mie a gas,  
 Ne on ne doit pas deffaire home  
 Se on ne set de fait la some:  
 Car del fait prent on l'oquaison 4755  
 Del jugement, qui fait raison.  
 Entendés, sire, un poi a mi.  
 Amer devés bien vostre ami/  
 Mais haïr devés sa folie:  
 Car certes jo ne vos lo mie 4760  
 De faire ja ceste merveille  
 Se vostre cuers le vos conselle.  
 Icho ne manda hom mais onques."  
 Cho dist li rois: "Que ferai donques  
 Bien? Car vos estes mi feél 4765  
 Et donet m'avés bon conseil.  
 N'ai soing de faire felenie.  
 Mais or crieng jo a vilonie  
 Le m'atort li rois d'Engletiere:  
 Si vos en voel jo conseil quierre." 4770

Li cuens de Clermont dist: "Bials sire,  
 Se bon vos est, lasciés me dire.

and however he may have assisted you, 4730  
 you could not possibly, Sire, want  
 anyone to be able to say you are without honor.  
 If a man possessed the entire world,  
 no matter how ingenious he was,  
 he couldn't use up more than one man can. 4735  
 Therefore, no man should give up honor  
 for some piddling amount of money.  
 He never acts wisely  
 who gives up honor for wealth,  
 for he will have little use for it. 4740  
 Wealth without honor has no more luster  
 than a candle without a flame.  
 However we may analyze the situation,  
 you cannot, considering the circumstances,  
 Sire, harm this messenger 4745  
 while he is fulfilling his mission.  
 And that's not all: as you know very well,  
 given the fact that you kissed the youth,  
 even if he had been sent  
 as a thief, caught and properly sentenced, 4750  
 you could not have killed him.  
 You should know this is a serious matter.  
 One doesn't kill a man  
 before all the facts are in:  
 one bases a just verdict 4755  
 on the facts of the case.  
 Be so kind as to listen to me, Sire.  
 You should love your friend,  
 but hate his folly.  
 I certainly don't deny 4760  
 your right to fulfill this strange request,  
 if you can do so in good conscience.  
 But I've never heard of anyone sending such a letter."  
 The king said, "What shall I do, then?  
 You are very loyal 4765  
 and have given me excellent advice.  
 I do not care to perpetrate an unjust act,  
 but I am afraid that the king of England  
 will accuse me of misconduct:  
 I'd like to hear your advice about that." 4770

The count of Clermont replied, "Sire,  
 if you please, allow me to tell you.

- Vos cremés vilonie a faire  
 D'endroit le roi de cest affaire.  
 Ki bien volroit la garde prendre 4775  
 El roi Ebayn poroit entendre  
 Moult plus qu'en vos de vilonie  
 Quant vos manda tel felonie.  
 De felonie octroier, sire,  
 Est hontes, honors d'escondire. 4780
- [S]e jo ai un mien buen ami,  
 Honor li doi, et il a mi.  
 Il n'est mes hom ne jo li siens  
 Ne mais c'onors, service et biens  
 Fait l'un de nos viers l'autre sople, 4785  
 Et en amistié nos acople.  
 Mais puis qu'il cose me querra  
 Que il meïsmes bien verra  
 Qu'il me sera torné a honte,  
 De nostre amor deffait le conte. 4790  
 N'ai cure puis de son dangier  
 Por son avoir m'onor cangier.  
 Ne pris s'amor puis .ii. fordines  
 Car c'est li dols miols sor espines.  
 Puis qu'il me violt a honte atraire 4795  
 Ses biensfais me valt un contraire.  
 Mais por les biens qu'il me fist ja,  
 Et por l'amor qu'eüe i a,  
 Le doi haïr mains c'un altre home.  
 Or vos ai jo dite la some. 4800  
 Nel doi amer ne bien haïr  
 S'il ne me prent a envaïr,  
 Mais s'il me laidist et sorquiert,  
 Ferir le doi, se il me fiert.  
 Hom cui ne devrai point d'omage, 4805  
 Et il me quera par halsage  
 Que jo face honte por lui,  
 Il me fait, certes, grant anui.  
 Mais se il est mes liges sire,  
 Ne li puis pas si escondire 4810  
 Une grant cose par amor,  
 Encor me quiere deshonor.  
 Et s'il me mande en liu ho[n]tels,  
 Jo n'i ai pas le honte sels,  
 Ne vient ains l'a mes sire tolt 4815

You fear you will wrong  
 the king in this matter.  
 But a careful assessment of the situation 4775  
 would attribute far more blame  
 to King Evan than to you  
 for asking you to do such a shameful deed.  
 To consent to a vile deed, Sire,  
 is shameful; to reject it is honorable. 4780

If I have a good friend,  
 I owe him honor, and he owes me the same.  
 He is not my friend, nor am I his,  
 unless honors, favors and material rewards  
 bind us in mutual exchange 4785  
 and ties of friendship.  
 But if he should ask something of me,  
 and he himself could see very well  
 that it would damage my reputation,  
 that would be the end of our friendship. 4790  
 I would not care on his account  
 to exchange my honor for his wealth.  
 I wouldn't assess his loyalty at two cents;  
 it would be like honey hiding sharp thorns.  
 Since he wants to bring shame upon me, 4795  
 his kindnesses are the same as hostile acts to me.  
 But for the sake of past favors  
 and previous bonds of friendship,  
 I should be less hostile to him than to another man.  
 Now I have told you what I think. 4800  
 I wouldn't be his friend, or foe, either,  
 unless he should undertake to attack me.  
 But if he should do me wrong and ask more than his due,  
 I must strike him, if he strikes me.  
 A man to whom I owe no homage, 4805  
 and who asks me out of arrogance  
 to do a shameful deed for him  
 is surely doing me an injury.  
 But if he is my liege lord,  
 I cannot refuse him such an 4810  
 important request, because I owe him loyalty,  
 even if it means dishonor.  
 And if he orders me to do something shameful,  
 the shame is not mine alone: on the contrary,  
 as my superior, hasn't he taken it upon himself, 4815

A cui jo doi servir de bolt.  
 Alsi com il a del bien los  
 Sor tols ses homes, dire l'os  
 Que s'il me mainne en liu honi  
 Le blasme en doit avoir alsi 4820  
 Mes sires ki me puet pener  
 Et comme sen home mener;  
 Mais s'il me quiert trop grant hontage  
 Guerpil li puis bien son omage.  
 Guerpil li puis, guerpil li doi, 4825  
 Se jo aim tant honor et foi,  
 Se j'ai plus cier Deu que mon fief,  
 Guerpil li doi tolt, par mon cief,  
 Ançois que jo tel cose face  
 Dont Dex et li pules me hace. 4830  
 Certes, moult fait a home lait  
 Ki le requiert de hontels plait.  
 Et rois Ebayns est vostre hom, sire,  
 Si me consalt Dex nostre sire  
 Que jo l'aim or mains que ne suel 4835  
 Por cest oltrage et cest orguel.  
 Ne mais jo cuit le roi si sage  
 Que ne croi mie en mon corage  
 Si grant sorcuiderie el roi.  
 Ainc ne pensa tel estreloi! 4840  
 Jo ne cuic mie, par mon cief,  
 Qu'il onques envoiast tel brief."  
 "Qui l'envoiast donc, sire cuens?"  
 "Puet s'estre, sire, alguns hom suens  
 Canja son saiel par envie 4845  
 Por tolir a l'enfant la vie,  
 Ki het u lui u son parage.  
 Mais or envoiés un message  
 O vostre brief, sel commandés  
 Al roi Ebayn, se li mandés/ 4850  
 Que il ne seut preu que il fist  
 Quant il cestui si vos tramist.  
 Et vostre cors ne loe mie  
 Qu'il i perde membre ne vie.  
 Le brief que cis aporta, sire, 4855  
 Faites enseëler en cire.  
 Se li mandés par vostre brief  
 Que il escrist el sien meschief

since I am bound to obey him without hesitation?  
 And just as he earns praise for the courageous deeds  
 of all his men, I dare say  
 that if he leads me into dishonor,  
 he should receive the blame for it as well, 4820  
 since he is my lord and I am his man  
 to command and to punish.  
 But if he asks too shameful a deed of me,  
 I can leave his service.  
 I can and I must leave him, 4825  
 if I hold faith and honor as dear,  
 if God is dearer to me than my holdings,  
 I must renounce him completely, so help me,  
 rather than do a deed  
 for which God and man would despise me. 4830  
 Certainly, any man who calls upon another  
 to do something dishonorable, does him great harm.  
 And since King Evan is your man, Sire,  
 our lord God advises me  
 that I should esteem him far less than before 4835  
 for this outrageous and arrogant behavior.  
 However, in my heart of hearts,  
 I believe the king is too wise  
 to be capable of such presumption.  
 He has never thought of anything so outrageous before!  
 In fact, Sire, I would swear to it 4840  
 that he never sent such a letter."  
 "Then who sent it, my lord Count?"  
 "Perhaps, Sire, one of his men  
 changed the seal, wanting 4845  
 to kill the boy  
 because of some grudge against him or his family.  
 But now send a messenger  
 with a letter directly to  
 King Evan, letting him know 4850  
 that he scarcely knew what he was doing  
 when he sent you this youth,  
 and that you yourself do not recommend  
 that he lose life or limb.  
 Also, you should enclose with it the letter 4855  
 the youth brought you, Sire,  
 and let him know in your letter  
 that he has damaged your reputation

A home qui tant doit valoir.  
 N'avés pas mis en noncaloir 4860  
 Ne vostre pris ne vostre los  
 Por metre honor ariere dos.  
 Trop vos a costé ja ariere  
 Honors por perdre en tel maniere.  
 Ki honor porcace et desert 4865  
 Mal fait s'il por petit le pert.  
 Mandé vos a trop grant oltrage.  
 Que tenés, sire, cest message?  
 Se li faites honor et bien;  
 Mais qu'il sos ciel n'en sace rien 4870  
 Coment il est de cest affaire.  
 Trosque li messages repaire,  
 Tant li sera cis plais celés."  
 Li canceliers est apielés.  
 El parcemin le lettre a mise 4875  
 Tolt si com li cuens li devise.  
 Tost a ensaëlé cel brief  
 Et le fals alsì de recief.

A un vallet de sa maison  
 Ki miols sace entendre raison 4880  
 Carge li rois ces lettres donques.  
 Et li vallés ne fina onques  
 Trosques il vint en Engletiere.  
 Ne li covint pas le roi quierre  
 Plus loig que sor mer a Hantone. 4885  
 Cil vint a lui, le brief li done.  
 Priveëment l'a salué.  
 Li brief ne sunt pas eskivé.  
 Li rois meïsmes prent le cire  
 Et voit bien tost que voloit dire. 4890  
 Il a ansdeus les letres lites,  
 Primes les grans, puis les petites.  
 Ens el brief grant si trueve escrit  
 Coment se complaint del petit  
 Li rois de France, ses amis, 4895  
 De cho que il li fu tramis.  
 En l'autre cartre plus petite  
 La est la mors Silence escrite/  
 Que il devoit avoir tramise.

by writing such a thing to a man whom he should hold in the  
 highest esteem.  
 You have never slighted 4860  
 your worth or reputation  
 by turning your back on honor.  
 You have invested too much in the past  
 to lose your honor in such a way.  
 A man who has spent his life in the pursuit and service of  
 honor 4865  
 is wrong to throw it away for a trifle.  
 His request was terribly insulting.  
 Why don't you keep the messenger here, Sire,  
 and treat him well and honorably,  
 and not let him know a single thing 4870  
 about this matter;  
 until the messenger returns,  
 this whole business must be kept secret from him."  
 The chancellor was summoned.  
 He committed the letter to parchment 4875  
 just as the count dictated it.  
 Then he quickly sealed this letter  
 and resealed the false one as well.

The king entrusted these letters  
 to the most dependable young man 4880  
 in his household,  
 and the youth didn't stop  
 until he arrived in England.  
 He didn't have to look for the king  
 any farther than the port of Southampton. 4885  
 He came to him in private,  
 greeted him, and gave him the letters,  
 which did not go astray.  
 The king himself broke the wax  
 and soon saw what it was all about. 4890  
 He read both letters,  
 first the long one, then the short one.  
 The long letter contained  
 the complaint of his ally,  
 the king of France, about the fact that 4895  
 the short one had been sent to him.  
 In the other, shorter letter  
 was Silence's death sentence,  
 which he himself was supposed to have written and sent.

Por Londres, de desor Tamise, 4900  
 S'ele fust tolte confundue  
 U trosqu'en abisme fondue  
 Ne fust il pas si dolans donques:  
 Il nen ot mais si grant dol onques.  
 Dolans est que li rois de France 4905  
 Cuide ore en lui si grant enfance  
 D'avoir nes pensé tel merveille.  
 La face l'en devint vermelle  
 De maltalent, d'angoisce et d'ire.  
 Ne set sos ciel qu'il en puist dire. 4910  
 Celer le velt et si ne puet.  
 Le cancelier savoir l'estuet,  
 Celui l'estuet ore savoir  
 Ki grant honor en puet avoir!  
 Si vait, tant mains hom est bleciés 4915  
 D'altrui mesfais, d'altrui pechiés,  
 Et cil remaint tols sains et sals  
 Par cui est esmeüs li mals.

Li rois le cancelier apiele.  
 Dire li violt tele noviele. 4920  
 Rolle les iolx, crosle le cief.  
 "Connisciés vos," fait il, "cest brief?"  
 Et puis li a dit en secroi:  
 "Vos le veïstes ja, cho croi!"  
 Cil voit l'escrit, li cuers li tramble. 4925  
 Cho dist li rois: "Que vos en samble?"  
 Li canceliers ne sot que dire  
 Car il ne puet nul bien eslire  
 Ne el dire ne el taisir  
 Por quoi il puist al roi plaisir. 4930  
 Et s'on le deüst desmenbrer  
 Ne li poroit il ramenbrer  
 Dont cil escriis peüst venir  
 Qu'il voit illuec al roi tenir.  
 Tols esmaris al roi a dit: 4935  
 "Bials sire ciers, se Dex m'aït,  
 Jo nel li ainc mais que jo sace  
 Cest brief, se ja Dex bien me face."  
 "Comment?" fait il, "fals clers prové!  
 Donc ne r'euc jo l'altrier rové 4940  
 A faire un brief, et tu fesis,

If all of Londontown-on-Thames 4900  
 had been destroyed  
 or had fallen into an abyss,  
 the king wouldn't have been as upset.  
 He had never felt such pain before.  
 He was pained to think that the king of France 4905  
 could think him enough of an imbecile  
 as to even imagine anything that crazy.  
 His face turned crimson  
 with frustration, anguish, and fury.  
 He didn't know what on earth to say. 4910  
 He wanted to keep the matter a secret, but couldn't.  
 The chancellor would have to hear about this,  
 oh, yes! he would have to hear about it;  
 it would certainly redound to his honor!  
 That's the way it goes: how often men suffer 4915  
 for the misdeeds and sins of others,  
 while those responsible for the mischief  
 remain safe and sound.

The king summoned the chancellor.  
 He wanted to tell him this piece of news. 4920  
 He was rolling his eyes, his head shook with rage.  
 "Do you recognize this letter?" he said.  
 Then he said so that only he could hear,  
 "I think you've seen it before."  
 The chancellor saw the letter; his heart quivered  
 inside him. 4925  
 The king said, "What about it?"  
 The chancellor didn't know what to say,  
 for he could not see how it would do him any good  
 to speak or to remain silent;  
 neither would please the king. 4930  
 Even if he had been torn limb from limb,  
 he couldn't have remembered  
 where the letter that he saw  
 in the king's hand came from.  
 Nearly mad with fear, he said to the king, 4935  
 "Beloved Sire, as God is my witness,  
 to the best of my knowledge, I have never set eyes  
 on this letter before, so help me God."  
 "What?" he said. "You're caught in the act, false scribe!  
 Do you deny that the other day I asked you 4940  
 to write a letter, which you did,

Et en le main le me mesis,  
 Et jel ballai Silence en oire?"  
 "Bials sire," fait il, "c'est la voire."  
 "Ba! se tu escresis celui 4945  
 Que tu me ballas et jo lui,/  
 Donques escresis tu cest brief!  
 Car nus nel canja, par mon cief,  
 Puis que al vallet l'euc cargié!  
 Mar acointas, voir, cest mercié!" 4950  
 Et cil n'en set sos ciel que dire.  
 Li rois ki puet avoir grant ire  
 Le fait en sa cartre jeter.  
 De traïson le violt reter,  
 Qu'en lui, cho dist, ne remaint mie 4955  
 Silences n'ait perdu la vie.  
 N'i a celui en la maison  
 Le roi ki sace l'oquoison  
 Por qu'il fu jetés en la cartre.  
 Mar fu escrite cele cartre 4960  
 Par cui est mis en tel martyre.  
 Cho puet Silences et il dire:  
 Mais cil a le pis parti ore  
 Si avra pis puet s'estre encore.  
 Silences ne les crient ormais 4965  
 Qu'il est en France a tote pais,  
 A moult grant joie et a deduit.  
 Moult l'aiment et honorent tuit.  
 Dient buer passast il la mer.  
 Droit ont, qu'il fait moult a amer: 4970  
 De se harpe, de se viiele,  
 Comme vallés, bone puciele,  
 Siert bien le roi et le roïne,  
 Mais ne set mie le covine  
 Del fals brief qu'i porta en oire. 4975  
 Ançois li fait li rois acroire  
 Qu'il fu tramis al roi en France  
 Par les letres por remanance.  
 Ne li desist el por Monmartre.  
 Li canceliers est en la cartre 4980  
 A Wincestre a moult grant torment  
 Et pense nuit et jor forment  
 Dont li briés puist estre venus  
 Par cui est en tele tenus.  
 Il pensa moult, se li covint, 4985

and you delivered it into my own hands  
 and I gave it at once to Silence?"  
 "Sire," he said, "that is true."  
 "Well, if you wrote that letter 4945  
 which you gave to me and I to him,  
 then you wrote this letter!  
 Nobody had a chance to tamper with it, clearly,  
 after I gave it to the youth.  
 You're going to be sorry you ever started this!" 4950  
 And the chancellor didn't know what on earth to say.  
 The king, who was in a very bad temper,  
 had the chancellor thrown into prison.  
 He wanted to have him accused of treason,  
 because, he said, if Silence was still alive, 4955  
 it was no thanks to him.  
 No one in the royal household knew  
 the reason why  
 the chancellor had been thrown into jail.  
 What a misfortune for him that letter was ever written— 4960  
 he was suffering terribly for it.  
 That can be said for both Silence and the chancellor,  
 but right now, the latter is having the worse time of it,  
 and worse may happen to him yet.  
 Silence has nothing to fear from it, now 4965  
 that he is enjoying a peaceful  
 and pleasurable existence in France,  
 where everyone loves and honors him greatly.  
 They blessed the hour he crossed the sea.  
 They were right—he did many other endearing things; 4970  
 with his harp, with his viele,  
 as youth who is a lovely maiden,  
 he served the king and queen well.  
 But he never knew the secret  
 of the false letter he had brought there in such haste.  
 Instead, the king led him to believe 4975  
 that he had been sent to France  
 with a recommendation, to be raised at court.  
 He wouldn't have told him otherwise for Montmartre.  
 But the chancellor was in prison 4980  
 at Winchester, suffering terrible torments,  
 asking himself night and day  
 where the letter might have come from  
 that had caused his incarceration.  
 He thought a great deal about it (and rightly so), 4985

Tant qu'al tierc jor se li sovint  
 Que li roïne tint son brief.  
 "Si nel list pas de cief en cief  
 Non la moitié," fait il, "par foi,  
 Quant ele clost et mist en ploï 4990  
 Tolt alsî qu'ele n'eüst cure  
 Que jo veïssce l'escriture!  
 Mais se jo seüsce a nul fuer  
 Qu'ele l'enfant eüst sor cuer/  
 Bien le poroie cuidier donques, 4995  
 Qu'altres qu'ele ne le tint onques.  
 E las! quels pechiés m'a traï!  
 Ainc, que jo sace, nel haï,  
 Ains li mostra moult biele ciere  
 Qu'a tols les altres, m'ert a viere. 5000  
 Mais nus hom ne puet feme ataindre  
 Quant el se violt covrir et faindre.  
 Feme vait par son bel samblant  
 Le sens del siecle tolt enblant.  
 Sens d'ome sage poi ataint 5005  
 Por feme ataindre qui se faint.  
 Jo ne cuit nul bien entresait  
 El biel samblant qu'ele li fait;  
 Si ne sai de Silence mie  
 Se la roïne quist folie 5010  
 Dont ele eüst le cuer irié  
 De lui avoir si empirié.  
 Car feme nen est pas lanier  
 D'engiens trover en tel maniere.  
 Engignose est por home nuire 5015  
 Plus que por un grant bien estruire.  
 Las! com jo sui en grant anguissce!  
 Ne sai cui jo mescroire en puisce.  
 Mais jo ne puis nul bien noter  
 Que ma dame se vint froter 5020  
 Si priés de moi et tint mon brief.  
 Li en mescroi jo, par mon cief!  
 Onques mais ne li vi venir  
 Mes letres lire, ne tenir.  
 Mal de l'eure qu'ele i vint ore! 5025  
 Se Deu plaist, on sara encore  
 La fin dont li brief est venus,  
 Car Dex nen est ne sors ne mus.

and he thought so hard that on the third day he remembered  
 that the queen had held his letter.  
 "She didn't read it from beginning to end;  
 she hadn't read half of it," he said, "upon my word,  
 when she closed it and folded it up— 4900  
 just as if she had been afraid  
 I might see the handwriting.  
 If I were to find out by some means or other  
 that she had a grudge against the boy,  
 then I could be reasonably certain 4905  
 that no one else had got hold of the letter.  
 Alas! What have I done to deserve this?  
 As far as I know, she has nothing against him.  
 On the contrary, she used to favor him  
 far above all the others, it seems to me. 5000  
 But no man is a match for a woman  
 when she is bent on concealment and deception.  
 A woman goes about putting up such a false front  
 that she fools everyone.  
 A wise man's reason can achieve little 5005  
 against a woman who wants to deceive.  
 I suspect that she was up to no good  
 when she was being so charming to him.  
 I wonder whether the queen  
 tried to seduce Silence, 5010  
 and whether something happened that made her angry  
 enough  
 to seek revenge on him like that.  
 A woman is always quick  
 to think of something clever in such circumstances.  
 She is much quicker at finding ways to harm a man 5015  
 than at thinking up something beneficial.  
 Alas! I am in terrible straits!  
 I don't know whom to suspect.  
 But I can see no good in the fact  
 that my lady came nosing around 5020  
 so close to me and had her hands on my letter.  
 She is the one I suspect, so help me!  
 I have never known her to come around  
 and read or touch my letters before.  
 What bad luck for me that she came this time! 5025  
 But if it pleases God, the reason why  
 the letter was brought will yet be revealed,  
 for God is neither deaf nor dumb.

Si voirement, Dex, com Tu vois,  
 Tols tans seras et aidier dois 5030  
 Çals qui T'apielent de bon cuer,  
 Ne suefres Tu ja a nul fuer  
 Mon cors a tort estre blecié  
 Si vilment por altrui pechié.  
 Mais li viés pechiet ki m'enconbrent — 5035  
 Si m'ait Dex, jo cuit m'enconbrent.  
 Li viés pechié, on le tiesmoigne,  
 Renovielent sovent vergoigne.  
 La moie vergoigne est parans,  
 Mais Dameldex me soit garans 5040  
 Viers cui riens ne se puet mucier."  
 Le carrier prent dont a hucier:/  
 "Amis," fait il, "por Deu merchi,  
 Car di al roi que jo perc chi  
 Ma vie, a tort me fait destruire. 5045  
 Fai m'i parler ains que jo muire.  
 Por Deu, ne m'ait si en despit  
 Que jo n'aie de moi respit."  
 Et cil l'a fait al roi savoir  
 Ki li a fait respit avoir. 5050  
 Et quant il vient devant le roi  
 Ne l'aparoie par derroi.  
 Chiet li as piés et s'umelie:  
 Com cil ki a mestier si prie.  
 "Merchi!" fait il, "bials sire ciers! 5055  
 Jo ne fui onques costumiers  
 D'enseëler faus brief, bials sire."  
 "Comment? viens tu chi por cho dire?"  
 Respont li rois. "Ne fu cho el?"  
 "Sire, se Dex me gart de mel, 5060  
 Et por icho dire et por plus  
 Desirai jo venir cha sus.  
 Ensi puisse jo Deu avoir  
 Com jo sos ciel ne puis savoir  
 Dont cis fals briés [vos] peut venir; 5065  
 Mais il me prist a sovenir  
 D'une rien, mais jo vos criem si."  
 Li rois respont: "Di tost! di! di!"  
 "[S]ire, ma dame vint a moi.  
 Ne sai sos ciel por quoi, n'a quoi, 5070  
 Mais forment m'ala costiant,

If it is true, God, that you see all,  
 and are eternal, and help 5030  
 those who call upon you in good faith,  
 you will certainly not allow  
 me to suffer unjustly  
 and so wretchedly for the sins of another.  
 True, I am burdened with the weight of former sins— 5035  
 yes, I know they weigh me down, so help me God!  
 Old sins, as we all know,  
 are a constantly renewed source of shame.  
 My shame is all too apparent.  
 But may the lord God from whom no creature can hide 5040  
 preserve me from harm."  
 Then he began to shout for the jailer.  
 "Friend," he cried, "for the love of God,  
 tell the king I am perishing here,  
 that he is doing me in unjustly. 5045  
 Let me speak to him once before I die.  
 For God's sake, don't let him be so angry with me  
 that I am not allowed a reprieve."  
 And the jailer notified the king,  
 who granted him a reprieve. 5050  
 And when he came before the king,  
 he was so distraught he couldn't speak.  
 He fell at his feet and prostrated himself,  
 like a churchgoer saying his prayers.  
 "Mercy, dear, sweet Sire!" he cried, 5055  
 "I have never made a habit  
 of sealing false letters, Sire!"  
 "What? Did you come here to tell me that?  
 replied the king. "Nothing else?"  
 "Sire, may God preserve me from evil, 5060  
 I wanted to come here  
 to tell you this and more.  
 I swear to God,  
 there is no way I can ever know for certain  
 where this false letter could have come from; 5065  
 however, I did start to remember something,  
 but I'm so afraid of you."  
 The king replied, "Speak up! Out with it!"  
  
 "Sire, my lady came to see me.  
 I don't have the faintest idea why or for what purpose, 5070  
 but she came and stood very close to me

Mes lettres, sire, manoiant;  
 Et quant ele ot mon brief ploïé  
 Sil me rendi bien ferm loïé  
 Et jo l'enseëlai en oïre. 5075  
 Ne puis bien croire, ne mescroire,  
 Car ne me denai de l[i] garde.  
 Mals fus et male flame m'arde,  
 Ne sai s'ele l'enfant haï,  
 Mais moult malement m'a trahi. 5080  
 Ensi me consalt Dex, bials sire,  
 Jo n'en sai altre verté dire,  
 Et s'escondire me leüst  
 Feroie quanque vos pleüst,  
 Et quanque droit vostre cors." 5085  
 Li rois n'est pas ne fols ne lors./  
 Il nen a soig de faire rien  
 C'on li atort a el qu'a bien,  
 Ne de faire tel commençalle  
 Ki ait malvaise definalle. 5090  
 Ne proïse gaires sa venjance  
 Qui li acroïsse sa viltance.  
 Il rueve al cancelier qu'il cuevre,  
 Si com a chiers ses membres, [l]'oeuvre.  
 Car il set bien que la roïne 5095  
 Escrist le faus brief par haïne;  
 Et se blastange en a la dame  
 Bien set que il i avra blasme.  
 Al cancelier coïle son honte;  
 Dist que li brief vint par un conte 5100  
 Ki het l'enfant et son parage.  
 Un brief fait cargier al message  
 Ki mioldres fu del premerain.  
 Cil prent congié al roi Ebayn.  
 Plus tost qu'il puet en France vient, 5105  
 Droit a Paris son cemin tient.  
 Le roi i trueve en un praël  
 Se li presente son seël.  
 Salue le de par le roi  
 Et se li a dit en secroi 5110  
 Com li escrivans fu ballis  
 Et c'uns cuens paltoniers fallis  
 Canja les lettres par envie  
 Por tolir a l'enfant la vie.

and picked up my letter, Sire.  
 And when she had folded my letter,  
 she returned it to me all tightly fastened,  
 and I sealed it right away. 5075  
 I can't prove a thing one way or another,  
 since I wasn't paying close attention to what she was doing.  
 [If I'm lying] may an evil fire consume me,  
 I don't know whether she had it in for the boy,  
 but she played a terrible trick on me. 5080  
 That's the God's truth, Sire,  
 I don't know any other.  
 And if it is possible to pardon me,  
 I will do whatever you wish,  
 whatever you say." 5085  
 The king was neither a fool nor a madman.  
 He did not wish to take any action  
 that could possibly be used against him,  
 or begin anything  
 that might not end well. 5090  
 He had no use for the sort of vengeance  
 that might reflect badly on him.  
 He told the chancellor to cover up the matter,  
 as he valued life and limb.  
 For he knew very well that the queen 5095  
 had written the false letter out of hatred,  
 and if suspicion should fall upon the lady,  
 he knew he would bear the blame.  
 He concealed his shame from the chancellor,  
 and said the letter came from a count 5100  
 who had a grudge against the boy and his family.  
 He gave the messenger a letter  
 that was a big improvement over the first one.  
 He took leave of King Evan,  
 came to France as quickly as he could, 5105  
 and made his way straight to Paris.  
 He found the king in a meadow  
 and presented him with the sealed letter.  
 He gave him King Evan's greetings  
 and told him privately 5110  
 how the scribe had been imprisoned  
 and that a deceitful, wicked count  
 had switched the letters because he hated  
 the boy and wanted to kill him.

Quant li rois entent la noviele 5115  
 Moult par li est amee et bieie.  
 Et quant il ot le cartre lire  
 Dont par est il liés al voir dire.  
 Or est Silences bien de cort:  
 Le roi est por qu'il i demort, 5120  
 Qu'il est moult frans et honorables,  
 Cortois et pros et amiâbles.  
 Et si vos puet on dire bien  
 Si per ne valent a lui rien.  
 Ses los torne le lor a blasme, 5125  
 Que tant en est bone la fame  
 C'on ne parole tant ne quant  
 Des autres fors de cel enfant.  
 Par les novieles qui en sunt,  
 Dont si ami joïols s'en funt, 5130  
 Sont moult dolant si enemî.  
 A .xvii. ans et a demi  
 Tolt droit a une Pentecoste,  
 Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui il coste,/  
 L'adoba li rois a Paris, 5135  
 Et por s'amor bien jusque a dis.  
 Es prés dejoste Saint Germain  
 Vit on liquel erent certain  
 D'armes porter et de bien poindre  
 Et de lor josteörs bien joindre, 5140  
 Car moult i ot bons behordis.  
 Liquels qui i fust estordis  
 Silence en ot le jor le pris  
 Por cui li behordis fu pris.

Moult le fist bien ens en l'arainne 5145  
 Entre .ii. rens a la quintainne.  
 Ainc feme ne fu mains lanriere  
 De contoier en tel maniere.  
 Kil veïst joster sans mantel  
 Et l'escu porter en cantiel 5150  
 Et faire donques l'ademise,  
 La lance sor le faltre mise,  
 Dire peüst que Noretüre  
 Puet moult ovrer contre Nature,  
 Quant ele aprent si et escole 5155  
 A tel us feme et tendre et mole.  
 Tels chevaliers par li i vierse

The king was very happy 5115  
 to hear this welcome news.  
 and when he had the letter read,  
 he was absolutely delighted, to tell the truth.  
 Now Silence was really part of the court;  
 the king wanted him in his household 5120  
 because he was so noble, honorable,  
 courteous, valiant, and kind.  
 Anyone will tell you  
 that his peers were nothing compared to him;  
 the praise he won put theirs to shame. 5125  
 He was so famous  
 that no one talked of anyone else  
 except this boy.  
 The news of his successes  
 gladdened his friends 5130  
 and saddened his enemies.  
 When Silence was seventeen and a half,  
 exactly at Pentecost,  
 whether it was a good thing or not,  
 the king dubbed him knight in Paris, 5135  
 and, in his honor, ten others with him.  
 In the meadows beside Saint-Germain  
 you could see which knights  
 excelled in bearing arms and leading the charge  
 and joining with their opponents courageously. 5140  
 The jousting was superb.  
 Many were knocked senseless that day,  
 but Silence, for whom the tournament had been held,  
 won the prize.

In the tilting-field, between the two rows, 5145  
 Silence excelled at hitting the target.  
 There never was a woman less reluctant  
 to engage in armed combat.  
 Whoever saw him jousting, stripped of his mantle,  
 carrying his shield on his left arm, 5150  
 charging in the tournament  
 with well-positioned lance,  
 might well say that Nurture  
 can do a great deal to overcome Nature,  
 if she can teach such behavior 5155  
 to a soft and tender woman.  
 Many a knight unhorsed by Silence,

Que se il le tenist envierse  
 Et il peüst la fin savoir  
 Que grant honte en peüst avoir 5160  
 Que feme tendre, fainte et malle,  
 Ki rien n'a d'ome fors le halle,  
 Et fors les dras et contenance,  
 L'eüst abatu de sa lance.  
 Et savés que dist mes corages? 5165  
 Que bien ait tols jors bons usages.  
 Bons us tolt moult vilonie  
 Et fait mener cortoise vie.  
 Car bons us a qui bone vie uze  
 Et vilonie le refuse. 5170  
 Mains hom fait tols jors desonor  
 Que s'il eüst flairié honor  
 Et maintenue dé l'enfance  
 Ki n'avroit cure de viltance.  
 S'il fait le honte n'en puet nient 5175  
 Qu'a cho qu'il a apris se tient.  
 Silences ne se repent rien  
 De son usage, ains l'ainme bien.  
 Chevaliers est vallans et buens,  
 Mellor n'engendra rois ne cuens. 5180  
 Ne vos puis dire la moitié  
 De si com il a exploitié./  
 Ains que li ans trasist a fin  
 A bon chevalier et a fin  
 Le tienent tolt cil de la terre. 5185  
 La avint si qu'en Engleterre  
 Mut une guerre fors et fiere,  
 Qu'avierse gent et poltoniere  
 Se revelerent viers le roi  
 Par grant orguel et par derroi. 5190

De Silence vait la noviele  
 En maintes terres bone et biele.  
 Ja set on bien par fais, par dis,  
 Qu'il est pros, sages et hardis.  
 Quant li rois Ebayns l'a seü 5195  
 Ne l'a mie longues teü.  
 A la roïne anchois a dit:  
 "Suer dolce, or m'oiés un petit.  
 Un don vos quier, sel me donés."

if he had known the truth  
 at the time she knocked him down,  
 would have been terribly ashamed 5160  
 that a tender, soft, faint-hearted woman,  
 who had only the complexion,  
 clothing and bearing of a man,  
 could have struck him down with her lance.  
 And do you know what I really think? 5165  
 One should behave properly every day.  
 Good manners refine one's behavior  
 and help one lead a courtly life.  
 Proper behavior is the sign of a good life  
 and of moral refinement. 5170  
 Many act dishonorably every day,  
 but if they had had a taste of honor  
 and had been raised with it from infancy,  
 they would reject base deeds.  
 If they behave improperly, they can't help it; 5175  
 they're only practicing what they've learned.  
 Silence had no regrets  
 about his upbringing, in fact, he loved it.  
 He was a valiant and noble knight;  
 no king or count was ever better. 5180  
 I can't tell you the half  
 of his exploits.  
 Before the year was over,  
 all the people in the land  
 considered him an outstanding and accomplished knight.  
 Then it so happened that 5185  
 a fierce war broke out in England:  
 hostile and dastardly men  
 rebelled against the king  
 out of great pride and folly. 5190

Silence's fame spread  
 throughout many lands.  
 Everyone knew that he was valiant,  
 wise, and brave in word and deed.  
 When King Evan heard the news, 5195  
 he didn't keep it to himself for long,  
 oh, no indeed! He said to the queen,  
 "Listen, my sweet,  
 I have a favor to ask of you, if you're willing."

"Et il vos soit abandonés," 5200  
 Dist la roïne. "Que est cho?"  
 "Gel vos dirai, avrai le jo?"  
 "Bials sire, o vos, jel vos creänt."  
 Cho dist li rois: "Plus ne demant.  
 Or ne vos soit contre cuer mie, 5205  
 Ma dolce suer, bele Eufemie.  
 Jo voel Silence o moi ravoïr,  
 Car on m'a fait bien asavoir  
 Que il n'a chevalier en Franche  
 Tant valle d'escu ne de lance. 5210  
 Et vos veés le grant besoig."  
 La roïne ot le bon tesmoig  
 Et le vallance de celui,  
 Et qu'il n'a eü nul anui  
 Par le fals brief que li canja. 5215  
 Onques ne but, ne ne manja,  
 Ki tel dol eüst com ele eut  
 Quant ele sain et sauf le seut.  
 Mais d'autre part, por sa bonté,  
 Por les biens c'on en a conté 5220  
 Si l'aime un petit la roïne  
 Cui amors valt une haïne.  
 Ele ainme, oiés en quel maniere,  
 Qu'ele ne sera pas laniere  
 De porcacier son honte et querre 5225  
 Se il repaire en Engleterre,  
 Por cho qu'il ne le voelle amer.  
 Einsi amer est moult amer,  
 Ensi amer est amertume,  
 Maldehait ait hui sa costume. / 5230  
 Ensi amer est bien haïr  
 Et home mordrir, et traïr.  
 Faintice feme paltoniere,  
 Quant violt d'ome estre parçoniere,  
 Pasmer et plorer est sa guise. 5235  
 Mais ja n'iert d'ome si surprise,  
 Por cho qu'il n'ait de s'amor cure,  
 Ne voelle sa male aventure.  
 Feme faintice n'ainme mie,  
 Ains faint pur furnir sa folie. 5240  
 Moult a a dire en fainte feme.  
 "Sire," dist la roïne Eufeme,

"Whatever you want, it's yours," 5200  
 said the queen. "What is it?"  
 "If I tell you, can I still have it?"  
 "Absolutely, dear sir, I promise."  
 Then the king said, "I can't ask for more.  
 Now please don't get upset, 5205  
 my lovely Eufeme, sweet sister mine—  
 I want to have Silence back with me,  
 because I have heard  
 that of all the knights in France  
 he is the most skillful with shield and lance. 5210  
 And you must be aware of the fact that we need him badly."  
 The queen then learned of the youth's  
 prowess and excellent reputation,  
 and found out that her switching the letters  
 hadn't hurt him a bit. 5215  
 She was sure she would never eat or drink again,  
 she was so distressed  
 to learn that he was safe and sound.  
 Yet, on the other hand, his prowess  
 and the flattering things people were saying about him 5220  
 made the queen fall a little bit in love with him again.  
 But for her, love was the same as hate.  
 She loved him, but wait till you hear how:  
 she won't hesitate  
 to seek his disgrace and pursue his destruction 5225  
 if he returns to England,  
 because he refuses to be her lover.  
 This kind of love is very bitter;  
 this love is bitterness itself.  
 A curse on the queen's behavior! 5230  
 This kind of love is really hatred,  
 betraying a man and killing him.  
 When a treacherous whore of a woman  
 wants to get her claws into a man,  
 she gets her way by weeping and swooning. 5235  
 Yet she's never so taken with a man  
 that she doesn't want to destroy him  
 if he rejects her advances.  
 A deceitful woman never loves,  
 she only deceives to feed her lust. 5240  
 There is much that could be said on the subject of woman's  
 deceitfulness.  
 "Sire," said Queen Eufeme,

- “Ne cuidiés vos ja a nul fuer  
 Silences me soit contre cuer,  
 Se il vos puet mestier avoir.” 5245  
 “Suer douce, or dites vos savoir.”  
 “Bials sire, cuidiés que jo soie  
 Si fole que jo haïr doie  
 Home qui vos puist rien aidier?  
 Se jel peüssce soshaïdier, 5250  
 Jo l’i\* soshaïderoie, sire.”  
 Li rois fait metre un brief en cire:  
 .d. salus al roi de France  
 Et grans merchis de l’onerance  
 Que pur s’amor Silence a fait. 5255  
 Or le violt ravoïr entresait.  
 Viegnent od lui si compaignon,  
 Car si voisin li sont gaignon  
 Entre icele gent haïe,  
 Car or ont grant mestier d’aïe 5260  
 Ke\* moult l’ont assalli de guierre.  
 Li mes s’en part tost d’Engletierre.  
 Passe la mer tost d’Engletierre,  
 Par le plus droit cemin atierre.  
 A Mont Loön en France vient. 5265  
 Li rois i est, grant fieste i tient,  
 Et cil les lettres li presente  
 Cui li exploitiers atalente.  
 Cho qu’il dut dire, cho li dist.  
 Ki lire dut le brief si list, 5270  
 Et si a fait al roi savoir  
 Que li rois Ebyns violt ravoïr  
 Silence ariere en Engletierre,  
 Et de ses pers, qu’il a grant guierre.
- Li rois fait Silence atorner 5275  
 Ki plus ne violt la sejourner.  
 De ses pers mainne trosqu’a .xxx.  
 Tolve la cors en est dolente;/  
 Plorent Silence a desmesure:  
 “Ahi!” font il, “quel noretüre 5280  
 Et quels atrais est d’estränge home!  
 Quant on l’a norri, c’est la some,  
 Et miols apris, sil pert on donques.”  
 Mais Silences ne fina onques

“you mustn’t think that I bear  
any sort of grudge against Silence,  
if you have need of him.” 5245

“My sweet sister, tell me your thoughts.”

“Dear sir, do you think I am  
so foolish as to be the enemy  
of a man who can be of service to you in any way?  
If I could wish him here, 5250  
I would, Sire.”

The king had a message prepared and sealed:  
he sent five hundred greetings to the king of France  
and thanked him for having honored Silence  
for the sake of their friendship. 5255

But now he wanted him back at once,  
and his companions should come with him,  
because his neighbors were turning against him,  
together with these rebels,  
and he and his men were in urgent need of reinforcements, 5260  
for his assailants were numerous in this war.

This messenger left England at once,  
quickly crossed the English Channel,  
and landed at the nearest port.

In France, he went to Laon, 5265  
where the king was holding a great feast.

Eager to accomplish his mission,  
the messenger greeted the king properly  
and presented him with the letter.

The appropriate official read the letter 5270  
and informed the king

that King Evan wanted to have  
Silence back in England,  
and his peers with him, because he was faced with a serious  
uprising.

The king had Silence prepare for departure; 5275  
he left at once,

taking thirty of his companions with him.

The whole court was plunged into sorrow;  
they mourned Silence’s absence.

“Alas!” they cried, “see what happens when you 5280  
raise a stranger in your midst!\*

It’s always the same story! You nurture him,  
you teach him all you know, and then he leaves you.”  
But Silence didn’t stop

Ne por haïr ne por amer 5285  
 Entros qu'il a passé la mer.  
 Et quant il vint en Engletierre  
 A Cestre se traist a la guierre.  
 Al roi en vait grant aleüre  
 A sa moult grant male aventure, 5290  
 Et tols ses compagnons enmainne.  
 Tres or commence sa grans painne.  
 Al roi est venus, lui trentisme.  
 Or est entrés en male lime.  
 Trestolt i sont moult bien venu, 5295  
 Si com drois est, et retenu.  
 Tolt mainnent de Silence joie  
 Gregnor que jo dire vos doie.

Droit al tierc jor que li François  
 Vinrent al roi, un poi ançois 5300  
 Que il presist a ajorner,  
 Li rois fait sa gent atorner,  
 Car aler violt desor un conte  
 Ki li a fait et tort et honte.  
 Trois contes ot ains amatis, 5305  
 Or s'est moult forment aätis  
 Que de cestui sera vengiés,  
 U ja nen iert longues engiés  
 De quanque il el siecle tient.  
 En la contree al conte en vient 5310  
 Ki li a cele honte faite.  
 Li rois del vengier s'en afaite.  
 Joste le mont, en un pendant,  
 Vait li rois sa gent atendant.  
 Descendent dont, si s'arment tuit, 5315  
 Cols i avra ferus ains nuit.  
 Li cuens avoit Cestre tenue  
 Sor cui l'os le roi est venue.  
 Li rois li toli par effors,  
 Mais moult i ot navrés et mors 5320  
 Ains que li cuens partist de Cestre.  
 Or puet li rois tres bien fis estre  
 Que li cuens a or tel ferté  
 Ki n'iert prise a oan, par verté,  
 Si n'est par oltrecuiderie 5325  
 Ki honist moult chevalerie./

for love or hate 5285  
 until he had crossed the sea.  
 And when he arrived in England,  
 he made his way to the war at Chester.  
 He hastened to join the king,  
 to his very great misfortune, 5290  
 and took his companions with him  
 (his troubles will start very soon now).  
 He came to the king, his thirty men with him.  
 Now he has fallen into a nasty trap.  
 They were all warmly welcomed, 5295  
 as was fitting, and urged to remain.  
 Everyone was overjoyed at Silence's arrival,  
 more than I can tell you.

Right on the third day after the French  
 had joined the king, a little before 5300  
 it began to grow light,  
 the king ordered his men to arm themselves,  
 for he wanted to attack a count  
 who had wronged and betrayed him.  
 He had already defeated three counts; 5305  
 now he had sworn a solemn oath  
 to get revenge on this one,  
 or else forfeit  
 all his earthly possessions.  
 The king reached the estates 5310  
 of the count who had defied him so.  
 He prepared to take vengeance.  
 Next to a mountain, on a sloping plain,  
 the king went to await his men.  
 They all came down and armed themselves. 5315  
 There would be blows exchanged before nightfall.  
 The count whom the king's army  
 was attacking had held Chester.  
 The king had wrested it from him,  
 but there were many dead and wounded 5320  
 before the count left Chester.  
 Now the king could be very sure of the fact that  
 the count held a fortress  
 that certainly wouldn't be taken quickly,  
 unless reckless chances were taken, 5325  
 with heavy loss of life.

Segnor, dejoste la montagne  
 Dont jo vos di, ens en la plagne,  
 S'arme rois Ebayns et li sien;  
 Car il le set et dist tres bien 5330  
 Que li cuens lués l'enconterra  
 Quant en sa tiere les verra.  
 Se bon vos est, et atalente,  
 De Silence et des François .xxx.  
 Dirai, mais qu'escoltés en soie. 5335  
 Desor un ganbizon de soie  
 Giete l'obienc malié menu  
 Que li rois de France ot tenu  
 En tel cierté qu'il nel donast  
 Por rien c'on li abandonast. 5340  
 Legiers est, ne puet faire falle.  
 Calces de meïsmes la malle  
 Li lacent qui moult bones sunt.  
 Si esporon a proisier funt:  
 De fin or sunt bien avenant, 5345  
 Se li fremerent maintenant.  
 Doi sien vallet de gregnor los  
 Li gietent donc l'obienc el dos.  
 Sa bone espee a donques çainte  
 C'uns siens vallés li a atainnte. 5350  
 Et maintenant ainz qu'il s'en alle  
 Li ont fremee la ventalle.  
 Moult tost li ont puis lacié l'elme:  
 Nen a si bon en nul roialme.  
 Pieres i a et cercle d'or 5355  
 Ki valent bien tolt un tressor.  
 Li rois de France li dona.  
 Bien ait quant il l'abandona.  
 Il ot esté a un sien oncle:  
 El nasal a un escarboncle. 5360  
 Li auferrans est amenés.  
 Uns siens vallés li plus senés  
 L'estraint moult bien et donc li rent.  
 Puis monta sus, qu'arçon n'i prent.  
 Des esporons d'or qu'il avoit 5365  
 Com cil qui faire le savoit  
 Le tolce es costés et il salt  
 .xiiii. piés, que rien n'i falt.

Lords, from the mountainside  
 I just mentioned to the plain,  
 King Evan and his men were arming themselves,  
 for he knew very well, and let it be known, 5330  
 that the count would attack him  
 as soon as he saw them on his land.  
 If it amuses and pleases you,  
 I shall tell you of Silence and the thirty Frenchmen,  
 as long as you care to listen. 5335  
 Over a padded silken tunic,  
 Silence put on the finely-meshed hauberk  
 which the king of France had valued  
 so highly that he wouldn't have exchanged it  
 for anything anyone could have offered him. 5340  
 It was light and flawless.  
 Leggings of the same mesh  
 and of excellent quality were laced upon him.  
 His spurs were very valuable,  
 they were of fine gold and very beautiful; 5345  
 these were fastened upon him now.  
 Two of his most renowned young companions  
 now pulled the hauberk down over his back.  
 Then he girt on his good sword,  
 which one of the youths handed to him. 5350  
 And now, before he left,  
 they fastened his mesh hood  
 and quickly laced his helmet upon him.  
 There wasn't another like it anywhere.  
 It was covered with precious stones and a golden circlet  
 that were worth a fortune. 5355  
 It was a gift from the king of France—  
 may he prosper for having given it to him—  
 and had belonged to an uncle of his.  
 The nose-piece held a deep-red ruby. 5360  
 The war-horse was led forth;  
 one of the most seasoned squires  
 curbed it well and gave him the reins.  
 He mounted without holding onto the saddle-bow.  
 With his golden spurs 5365  
 he expertly  
 touched its flanks and it leapt  
 a full fourteen feet.

Armé sunt li .xxx. François  
 Alsí tost com il, u ançois, 5370  
 Et montent o lor avoé,  
 Dont ont soshaidié et voé  
 Que ja ne puist entrer en glize  
 Uns d'als, s'il i fait coãrdize. /  
 Scilense parla com senés: 5375  
 "Segnor, jo vos ai amenés  
 Par vos mercis en ceste tiere.  
 Or si vos voel jo moult requierre  
 Que vos soiés ensi par vos  
 Que nus ne puist dire de nos 5380  
 Orguel, oltrage, ne folie,  
 Se il nel dist par droite envie.  
 Jo sui a vos et vos a mi."  
 Et cil respondent com ami:  
 "Sire," funt il, "tolt somes un, 5385  
 Et bien et mal avrons commun."

Li François sunt bien a conroi.  
 Bien pert qu'il vienent de bon roi.  
 Il ont tramis estor furnis,  
 Des obiers, des elmes burnis, 5390  
 Et des escus a l'or d'Espagne  
 Dont resplendist tolte la plagne.  
 Jo le vos di, bien le sachiés,  
 Que li cuens ot esté cachiés  
 De Cestre, car n'ert pas garnis, 5395  
 Et uns siens fils bien enbarnis  
 I fu ochis. Cho poise lui,  
 Et moult li torne a grant anui.  
 Mais or a grant gent aünee,  
 Viande atraite et amasee. 5400  
 Dist bien qu'il iert vengüés del roi  
 Car il li a fait grant desroi.  
 Li cuens a moult de gent haïe  
 Et les .iii. contes en s'aïe  
 Cui li rois ot jetet d'estor. 5405  
 Mais jo vos di li tors fu lor.  
 Car li .iii. et li cuens de Cestre  
 Volrent par force segnor estre  
 Desor le roi, qui nen ot cure  
 De perdre vilment sa droiture, 5410

The thirty French were armed  
 as soon as he was, or sooner. 5370  
 They mounted together with their chosen leader,  
 for whose sake they had sworn a vow  
 that not one of them might ever enter a church again  
 if he showed any signs of cowardice.  
 Silence spoke as an experienced leader: 5375  
 "Lords, you have consented  
 to follow me to this land.  
 Now I should like to urge you  
 to conduct yourselves in such a way  
 that none may accuse us 5380  
 of arrogance, excess, or folly  
 unless they do it out of sheer envy.  
 I am pledged to you and you to me."  
 And they replied as loyal companions:  
 "Sire," they said, "we are all one; 5385  
 we will face triumph or defeat together."

The French were a well-disciplined troop.  
 It was clear that a good king had sent them.  
 They were extremely well equipped:  
 hauberks, shining helmets, 5390  
 and shields embossed with Spanish gold;  
 the entire plain was ablaze with their splendor.  
 I've already told you, as you well know,  
 that the count had been driven from Chester,  
 because it wasn't fortified; 5395  
 also, one of his sons, a seasoned warrior,  
 was killed there. This was a heavy blow,  
 and he suffered terribly from it.  
 But now he had gathered large numbers of men,  
 and was very well provisioned. 5400  
 He declared he would take vengeance on the king  
 for causing him such serious losses.  
 The count had many rebels on his side  
 and three counts as his allies,  
 the ones the king had defeated in battle. 5405  
 But I want you to know they were in the wrong,  
 for the three counts and the count of Chester  
 wanted to usurp supreme power  
 from the king, who didn't care  
 to lose his rights illegitimately. 5410

Ains lor fera, cho dist, anui.  
Il remanacent forment lui.

Encor ne furent pas veü  
Icil de l'ost quant l'a seü  
Li cuens, dont s'arme isnielement 5415  
Et s'en ist moult hasteëment,  
Il et li .iiii. conte en s'aïe  
Ki moult mainnent de gent haïe.  
Durement vont aproçant l'ost  
Et li roial le sevent tost. 5420  
Trestolte l'os est la montee,  
Cui la noviele estoit contee/  
Que li cuens estoit issus fors.  
Mervellols soneïs de cors  
Et de buisines i a donques; 5425  
Et li roial ne finent onques  
Trosques il sunt en la montagne.  
Lor enemis ens en la plagne  
Voient porprendre les lairis.  
Sempres i avra des mari[s]. 5430  
Li hardeme[n]s qui les atise  
Et li haste qui les justisce  
De combatre et venir ensamble  
Les desmesure, cho me sanble,  
Si qu'il n'i a eschiele faite: 5435  
L'une os viers l'autre s'est atraite.

Moult par est bieles la contree.  
Li une oz a l'autre encontree.  
Cui qu'il fust biel, ne cui costast,  
Nus ne devisa qui jostast. 5440  
Tolt i ferirent premerain,  
U tolt ferirent daërrain,  
Car tolt ont feru a un frois,  
Ainc nus hom n'oï mais tel crois.  
Quant vint as lances abasscier 5445  
.m. en covint a mort quasscier.  
Dont veïssciés tronçons voler,  
Tamainte jovente afoier,  
Escus estoër et percier.  
Nus hom ne poroit entiercier 5450  
Ne savoir el premier enbronc  
Al quel fu miols u pis adonc.

Rather than that, he said, he would oppose them.  
But they presented a considerable threat to him.

The king's army was still out of sight  
when the count learned of its approach.  
He armed himself at once 5415  
and left with the utmost haste,  
he and the three counts who were his allies,  
and with them many hostile forces.  
They rode hard toward the enemy,  
and the royal forces were soon aware of it. 5420  
The entire army was mounted  
as soon as they heard the news  
that the count had sallied forth.  
Then there were terrible blasts  
of horns and trumpets, 5425  
and the royal troops didn't stop  
until they reached the mountain.  
From the plain, their enemies  
saw that the heights were occupied:  
someone always has to lose. 5430  
Fearlessly daring, eager to attack,  
driven by the urge  
to close and fight,  
they are out of control, it seems to me.  
They didn't even pause to regroup: 5435  
each army rushed upon the other.

The countryside was very beautiful.  
The armies closed upon each other.  
Whoever would win or lose,  
the sides were evenly matched. 5440  
Everyone was first—  
or last—to strike,  
for everyone struck at the same time.  
You never heard such a clash of weapons.  
When it came to lowering of lances, 5445  
a thousand were determined to strike a fatal blow.  
You could see shattered fragments fly,  
and many young men in battle-frenzy,  
and shields pierced and perforated.  
As soon as battle was joined, 5450  
no one could tell  
who was getting the better or worse of it.

- Mais cui qu'il fust u pis u miols  
 Si s'entrefierent des espiols  
 Qu'escu n'i vallent plus que palle, 5455  
 N'obierc, tant aient bone malle,  
 O les trenchans de alemieles  
 N'estuece espandre lé boieles.  
 Et quant les lances sont perdues  
 Dont traient les spees nues. 5460  
 A l'acointier des brans tallans  
 Parut liquels fu plus vallans.  
 La commencierent tel estor  
 Dont li plus hardis ot paör.  
 Li brant de l'acier poitevin 5465  
 Sont a tels .m. si mal voisin,  
 Ja ne rediront en lor tierre  
 A cui estait pis de la guerre.  
 Mais bien vos puis par verté dire  
 C'ainc mais n'oï gregnor martyre./ 5470  
 Gregnor! Ba, Dex! comment gregnor?  
 .m. per de castials et d'onor  
 I sont ochis, fust drois u tors,  
 Dont i a moult des altres mors.
- Li .iiii. conte desloial 5475  
 Ont ja tant fait que li roial  
 Vont durement afoibloiant.  
 Moult vilment les vont manioiant.  
 N'est hom qui tolt le vos pardie  
 Com le cuens ot la car hardie 5480  
 Ki Cestre tint, tant com lui lut.  
 Mais or a il tel plaît esmut  
 Jamais n'i enterra al mains  
 Mais que li rois le tiegne as mains.
- Li rois est forment de grant ire 5485  
 Et li cuens alsì, al voir dire.  
 Il voit le roi, li rois voit lui;  
 L'uns fera sempres l'autre anui.  
 L'uns ne violt l'autre deporter.  
 Tant com chevaux les puet porter 5490  
 Et randoner les sals menus  
 Est l'uns d'als viers l'autre venus.  
 Si s'entrefierent de ces lances  
 U ot moult bones conisances,

But whoever was winning or losing,  
 they struck each other so hard with their lances  
 that shields were as much use as straw, 5455  
 as were hauberks, no matter how strong their mesh;  
 nor did the sharp edge of the lance's blade  
 spare the spilling of entrails.  
 And when the lances were gone,  
 they drew their naked swords. 5460  
 And when the sharp swords met,  
 it was clear who the most valiant were.  
 The hand-to-hand combat was so violent  
 that even the bravest were afraid.  
 The blade of a Poitevin sword 5465  
 was an unwelcome intruder to some thousand men  
 who would never tell stories at home  
 about who had won or lost the war.  
 I can tell you in all honesty, however,  
 that I have never heard of a greater slaughter. 5470  
 Greater? Bah, how can I say greater,  
 when a thousand men with castles and fiefdoms  
 were killed, whether they deserved it or not,  
 along with many others.

The four rebel counts 5475  
 had already done so much damage  
 that the royal troops were seriously weakened.  
 They were under savage attack.  
 No one could possibly tell you  
 how bravely the count of Chester 5480  
 defended himself, as long as he could.  
 And now he had unleashed such a serious conflict  
 that he would never be beaten  
 unless he fell into the king's hands.

The king was furiously eager for combat; 5485  
 so was the count.  
 He saw the king; the king saw him.  
 One was bound to harm the other;  
 neither wished to spare the other.  
 As quickly as the horses, galloping, 5490  
 with short strides, could carry them,  
 they rushed upon each other.  
 They struck each other with those lances  
 whose pennants bore such noble coats-of-arms,

Et li tronçon en volent sus. 5495  
 Li rois versa et chaï jus.  
 Li cuens sovine sor l'arçon,  
 N'ot pas senti colp de garçon.  
 Li rois est cheüs en la presse.  
 .c. en i muerent sans confesse. 5500  
 Un chevalier i pert li cuens,  
 Li rois i pert .iiii. des suens.  
 El conte ot chevalier moult fort  
 Mais que il ot viers le roi tort.  
 Li rois l'ot bien priés desjué 5505  
 Ki n'avoit mie a lui jué;  
 Mais [il] recovra tost sans falle.  
 Çals a mostré que ses brans talle  
 Ki vinrent la le roi secorre:  
 Com leus les moltons lor cort sore. 5510  
 Fiert sor ces helmes gentiors  
 Qu'il en abat pieres et flors.  
 Durement les vait costiänt.  
 As grans cols qu'il lor va donant  
 Il fait ces helmes enbarer 5515  
 Et maint chevalier esgarer:  
 Sanc et cerviele fait espandre.  
 Il contrefait roi Alixandre./  
 Se li rois n'a proçaine aïe  
 La le prendront la gens haïe. 5520

Silence en l'ost est d'altre part.  
 O ses François fait grant essart.  
 Il ont piece a les lances fraites  
 Et si ont les espees traites  
 Et fierent tolt en un tenant: 5525  
 Moult les vont laidement menant.  
 Entre Silence et ses Francois  
 Orent fait pais de .c. anchois  
 Qu'il onques oïsscent noviele  
 Del roi, ki lor fust laide u bieles. 5530  
 Moult vont les rens aclaroïant.  
 Il nes vont mie tariänt  
 Li Francois a fuer de garçons:  
 Des fols voidierent les arçons  
 Par tel covent que puis n'i montent. 5535  
 Doi chevalier Silence content  
 Coment li rois est contenus.

and sent the splinters flying. 5495  
 The king was unseated and fell to the ground.  
 The count reeled in his saddle;  
 he had been dealt a manly blow.  
 The king fell in the thick of the fray.  
 A hundred were dying there unshriven. 5500  
 The count lost a knight there;  
 the king lost four of his.  
 The count was a very valiant knight,  
 except for the fact that he was a traitor.  
 He dealt the king a blow that was no joke; 5505  
 the king came close to ending his game,  
 but the count rallied immediately.  
 He showed those who came to the king's aid  
 that his sword was sharp enough:  
 he fell upon them like a wolf among sheep. 5510  
 He rained such heavy blows upon their helmets  
 that he struck off jewels and ornaments.  
 He closed on them relentlessly.  
 The terrible blows he kept on giving them  
 smashed through the helmets 5515  
 and befuddled many knights:  
 their blood and brains were spattered all over.  
 He was a second Alexander.\*  
 If the king didn't get help soon,  
 the enemy would capture him right then and there. 5520

Silence was on the other side of the fray,  
 mowing down the foe with his Frenchmen.  
 They had shattered their lances some time ago,  
 and drawn their swords  
 and rained blows ceaselessly: 5525  
 they inflicted terrible wounds upon them.  
 Between them, Silence and the French  
 had finished off more than a hundred,  
 before they ever heard any news  
 of the king, whether good or bad. 5530  
 They thinned out the enemy ranks considerably.  
 The French weren't fighting  
 at all like mercenaries:  
 they cleared the foolhardy from their saddles  
 in a way that ensured they would never remount. 5535  
 Two knights informed Silence  
 that the king was surrounded.

Silences i est tost venus.  
 L'espee tint que fist uns Mors:  
 Ne se trast pas a l'un des cors 5540  
 De le grant presse, mais enmi.  
 Mar l'i virent si enemi.  
 Sor ces helmes fait retentir  
 Son brant, que il lor fait sentir.  
 Riens ne lor puet avoir garant. 5545  
 Al conte fait honte aparant,  
 C'un sien neveu a estoné,  
 Car un tel colp li a doné  
 Qu'il chiet devant le conte mors.  
 Li Francois voient son effors. 5550  
 Accueilient gregnor hardement  
 Quant voient son contement.  
 "Tels hom," font il, "fait a amer.  
 Bien ait quant il nos passa mer.  
 Monjoie!" escrient. "Dex i valle! 5555  
 C'est li vallés de Cornuälle!"

[U]ns des Francois, Gui de Calmont,  
 Et uns Rogiers nés de Bialmont,  
 Et Hyebles de Castiel Landon  
 Se lasscent chaïr a bandon 5560  
 Desor le roi. Font li bonté,  
 Car par effors l'ont remonté.  
 Silences lor voide la place.  
 Il tua un ki tant le hace  
 Qu'il voelle son acointement. 5565  
 Or vait al conte malement.  
 Enviars Silence a gros le cuer.  
 Il nel puet amer a nul fuer  
 Ne les Francois, et si ne set  
 Quels gens il sunt, mais moult les het. 5570  
 Orains oï en la bataille:  
 "C'est li vallés de Cornuälle!"  
 Mais ne set pas la verté fine,  
 Tant c'uns des suens viers lui s'acline,  
 Se li a dit: "Dont estes nés? 5575  
 Et des Francois qua[nz] amenés?"  
 Dont ont recommencié l'estor  
 Ki sera tornés a tristor  
 A tels i a, ains qu'il anuite.

Silence rode there at once,  
 brandishing a Moorish sword.  
 He didn't skirt the edge of the battle, 5540  
 but went straight through the middle.  
 His presence there was not to the enemy's advantage.  
 He made them feel the weight of his sword  
 and made their helmets resound with the blows.  
 Nothing could save them. 5545  
 He did the count some obvious damage:  
 he dealt one of his nephews  
 such a stunning blow  
 that he fell dead at the count's feet.  
 The French saw this exploit 5550  
 and redoubled their own efforts  
 at the sight of his exemplary conduct.  
 "A man like this," they said, "inspires loyalty.  
 We did well to follow him across the sea.  
 Montjoie!" they cried. "May God prevail! 5555  
 Hurrah for the youth of Cornwall!"

One of the Frenchmen, Guy de Calmont,  
 and another, Roger de Belmont,  
 and Ibles de Castel Landon\*  
 dismounted, exposing themselves to terrible danger, 5560  
 and by their efforts succeeded  
 in helping the king remount.  
 Silence cleared the way for them,  
 killing one who rushed upon him,  
 eager to attack. 5565  
 Now things were going badly for the count.  
 He was filled with hatred for Silence.  
 He simply couldn't manage to like him  
 or the French. He didn't know  
 who they were, but he certainly disliked them. 5570  
 Just a moment ago, he had heard a shout in the midst of  
 battle:  
 "Hurrah for the youth of Cornwall!"  
 But he didn't know who he was  
 until one of his men leaned toward Silence  
 and asked him, "Where are you from? 5575  
 And how many French did you bring with you?"  
 Then they started up the fight again,  
 which would prove disastrous to  
 many of those present before nightfall.

Li cuens est forment en grant luite 5580  
 Qu'il soit acointiés as Francois:  
 Si sera il, jo cuit, anchois  
 Que il gaaint ne tant ne quant.  
 Prent une lance d'un enfant.  
 Silences en a une prise 5585  
 Deseur le cheval qu'il justise.  
 Tant com chevaux puet randoner  
 Se vont donques entredoner.  
 Çaingles n'estrier n'i ont valu  
 Ne çaient andoi el palu. 5590  
 Salent en piés isnielement,  
 Si se requierent vivement  
 Des brans forbis trenchans d'acier.  
 Se Dex Silence nen a chier  
 Que il le mece en noncaloir, 5595  
 Ne li pora gaires valoir  
 Elmes, ne brogne, ne escus.  
 Li cuens est forment irascus,  
 Et vos savés benignement  
 Que il rest plains de hard[em]ent. 5600  
 Grans cols i ot a l'envaïr.  
 Li uns fiert l'autre par aïr  
 Qu'il funt de lor escus astieles.  
 Silences dist: "Bials Dex, chaieles,  
 Ki m'a jeté de maint anui, 5605  
 Done moi vertu viers cestui!  
 Cho qu'afoiblie en moi Nature  
 Cho puist efforcier T'aventure.  
 Mais se Tu viols ne me puet nuire  
 Rois, n'amirals o son empire." / 5610  
 Li cuens atant son elme enpire  
 [Li cuens atant son elme enpire]  
 Qu'il en abat pieres et flors.  
 Ja l'eüst mort, cho fust dolors,  
 De l'espee que tint trenchant, 5615  
 Mais que li brans torna en chant.\*  
 Par tant est guaris de la mort.  
 Silences dist: "Trop s'i amort  
 Li cuens Conans\* a moi ferir.  
 Jo li volrai sempres merir 5620  
 Et le torture et le desroi  
 Que il a fait enviers le roi."  
 Moult vivement dont le requiert.

The count was making a desperate effort 5580  
 to get acquainted with the French.  
 And so he will, I think,  
 but it will hardly be to his advantage.  
 He seized a lance from one of his men.  
 Silence positioned his own weapon firmly, 5585  
 spurred his horse forward,  
 and they both galloped toward each other  
 as fast as their horses could carry them.  
 Neither cinch nor stirrup prevented  
 either of them from falling into the mud. 5590  
 They jumped to their feet immediately  
 and went at each other fiercely  
 with sharp and furbished sword-blades.  
 If God is indifferent  
 to Silence's plight, 5595  
 neither helm nor cuirass nor shield  
 can help him!  
 The count was in a frenzy,  
 and you know very well  
 that Silence was resisting with all his strength. 5600  
 He was assailed by dreadful blows.  
 They struck each other so savagely  
 that their shields were shattered to pieces.  
 Silence said, "Dear God, for heaven's sake,  
 you who have rescued me from many a peril, 5605  
 let me prevail against this foe!  
 Only your intervention can strengthen  
 that in me which Nature has made weak.  
 If it is your will, none can harm me,  
 neither king nor emir with his whole army." 5610  
 Just then the count damaged Silence's helmet so badly  
 [line repeated]  
 that he knocked gems and ornaments off it.  
 He would have killed Silence with his sharp sword,  
 which would have been a pity, 5615  
 except that the blow was deflected;  
 only this saved Silence from death.  
 Silence said, "Count Conant is relentless  
 in his efforts to strike me down.  
 I must continue to seek vengeance 5620  
 for my own suffering and for his rebellion  
 against the king."  
 Then he went at the count with renewed vigor

- Del branc d'acier le conte fiert  
 Si que del destre brac l'afole. 5625  
 Del puig perdu l'espee vole,  
 Et li cuens chiet, pert sa valor,  
 Pasmés chaï por la calor.  
 Silence l'a feru a ente.  
 Or est li cuens en grant tormente. 5630  
 Mais que valt longues aconter?  
 Silences le fist remonter.  
 Al roi le rent, revient en l'ost,  
 Ne mais icil de la, si tost  
 Com il sorent lor segnor pris 5635  
 Dont Silences a tolt le pris,  
 S'en vont fuiant a moult grant honte.  
 O als s'enfuient li .iii. conte.
- Silences n'a soig de juër:  
 Ne violt pas le guerre attriüer, 5640  
 Cui colpe jambe, u piet, u puig.  
 Li Franchois viennent al besoig;  
 A "Monjoie!" que il escrie  
 N'i a un seul qui se detrie,  
 Cil del fuïr, cil del cacier. 5645  
 Savoir poés que Dex l'a cier,  
 Silence, ki le guerre fine.  
 Et quant l'ot dire la roïne  
 Qu'ele a le verté entervee  
 Dont par est ele si dervee 5650  
 Enaise li sens ne marist.  
 Donc dist, se Dex celui guarist,  
 Qu'il le garra de sa dolor.  
 Mue le jor .m. fois color.  
 "U il," fait ele, "me garra, 5655  
 U ses orghols voir li parra."
- La roïne est de maint porpens:  
 Ne cuide ja veïr le tens,  
 S'il violt u por son cors deduire  
 U s'il ne violt por li destruire. 5660  
 En le viés derverie rentre.  
 Maldis soit li cuers de son ventre!  
 Mar le vit ainc Silences nee!  
 Il a le guerre al roi finee,  
 Les .iiii. contes pris, et mors 5665

and struck him with his steel blade,  
 severing his right arm. 5625  
 The sword flew from the severed fist;  
 the count fell, lost his strength,  
 and fainted from the searing pain.  
 Silence had dealt him a dreadful blow.  
 Now the count was in terrible anguish. 5630  
 But why prolong the story?  
 Silence had him remount,  
 handed him over to the king, and returned to the fight.  
 But as soon as the enemy knew  
 that their leader had been taken prisoner— 5635  
 for which the full credit belonged to Silence—  
 they turned tail and fled ignominiously,  
 and the three counts with them.

Silence didn't feel like fooling around,  
 he didn't want to stop fighting; 5640  
 he kept on slicing off enemy legs and feet and fists.  
 The French came and helped him.  
 There was not one who failed to respond  
 to his cry of "Montjoie!":  
 the enemy fled; the French pursued. 5645  
 God was on Silence's side, as you can plainly see,  
 for he won the war.  
 And when the queen heard the news,  
 and knew it was true beyond a doubt,  
 she flew into such a rage 5650  
 that she nearly lost her senses.  
 Then she said to herself, if God had saved Silence,  
 then Silence could cure her of her pain.  
 She changed color a thousand times in one day.  
 "Either he will cure what ails me," she said, 5655  
 "or he will be punished for his insolence."

The queen was obsessed with thoughts of Silence:  
 she could not wait to find out  
 whether he would agree to be her lover  
 or choose his own destruction. 5660  
 Her old mad passion was renewed.  
 Damn her, body and soul!  
 It was a sad day for Silence when she set eyes on him!  
 Through his efforts, he had put an end to the rebellion,  
 captured the four counts, and killed 5665

Moult de lor gent par son effors.  
 De le cort al roi est moult bien.  
 Li rois nen aime avant lui rien.  
 A Cestre sunt puis revenu.  
 Issent li viel et li kenu. 5670  
 Por veïr Silence et coisir.  
 Li Franchois puis par bon loisir  
 Prendent congié. Bien les soldoie  
 Li rois, adonc s'en vont a joie.  
 Moult [est] Silences dolans ore, 5675  
 Mais il iert plus dolans encore.  
 Il mar vit onques sa bonté:  
 Et les biens c'on en a conté  
 Et les bons cols del brant d'acier  
 Eufeme li vendera chier, 5680  
 Car moult [est] plainne de grant rage.  
 Or est il priés de son damage.  
 Car quant li hom plus s'aseüre  
 Dont sorvient sa male aventure  
 Bien sovent por ses grans pechiés; 5685  
 Et mains hom est sovent blechiés  
 Par les pechiés qu'il ainc ne fist.  
 Mais nostre sire Jhesu Crist  
 Le set tres bien qu'il les feroit  
 Quant il et liu et tans verroit, 5690  
 Por cho que faire li leüst  
 Et que il lassor en eüst;  
 Mais ains qu'il ait le plaît basti  
 Le retrait Dex par son casti.  
 Mais Silences ainc ne forfist 5695  
 Ne ne fesist, se il vesquist  
 .m. ans, les mals que li violt faire  
 La dame, cui Dex doinst contraire.  
 Piuls Dex, et plains de pasience,  
 Or Te soviegne de Silence! 5700  
 Car il ne se set preu gaitier.  
 Eufeme le cuide afaitier  
 D'aspre dit, ains que il anuite,  
 Se ses espoirs ne li afruit.  
 Ele a ja tant a lui jenglé 5705  
 Qu'a une part l'a enanglé.  
 "Sovient vos or," fait ele, "amis,  
 De la viés amor de jadis?"  
 "Dame," fait il a la roïne,

many of the enemy.  
 He was the darling of the court  
 and the favorite of the king.  
 When the army returned from Chester to Winchester,  
 the elders of the city came forth 5670  
 to admire Silence and honor him.  
 The French were given leave to depart  
 at their leisure. The king rewarded them generously,  
 and they left in high spirits.  
 Silence was very sorry to see them go, 5675  
 but he would be even sorrier before long.  
 His admirable behavior had done him little good:  
 Eufeme would make him pay dearly  
 for the good deeds to his credit  
 and the fine blows of his steel blade, 5680  
 for she was filled with dreadful rage.  
 Now Silence was threatened with destruction.  
 When a man is feeling most secure,  
 that is when misfortune strikes.  
 Frequently, it is a punishment for sin, 5685  
 but often a man is punished  
 for sins he never committed.  
 This is because our lord Jesus Christ  
 knows very well that a man might commit  
 such crimes if he saw the proper time and place 5690  
 and occasion to do so,  
 and felt the urge;  
 so before he even decides to sin,  
 God deters him by chastizing him.  
 But Silence had never committed, 5695  
 nor would he, even if he lived  
 to be a thousand, commit the sins that the lady,  
 confound her, wanted him to.  
 Merciful, patient God,  
 may you now be mindful of Silence, 5700  
 because he's defenseless in this situation.  
 Eufeme plans to dispose of him  
 in a most unpleasant way  
 if her hopes don't come to fruition before nightfall.  
 She has already sweet-talked him so much 5705  
 that she has pretty well cornered him.  
 "Do you remember, friend," she said,  
 "the love we used to share?"  
 "Lady," he said to the queen,

- "L'amors valut une haïne. 5710  
 Et quant si fait sont vostre amer  
 Et por noient, dame, clamer,  
 Bien doit on vostre amor haïr,  
 Car vostre amer valt bien traïr,  
 Et tuer home, et desmenbrer." 5715  
 "Amis, trop vos puet ramenbrer  
 De males ouevres d'en arriere.  
 Nos somes or d'autre maniere.  
 Plus sage et plus atenpré somes,  
 Bials dols amis, qu'adonc ne fomes. 5720  
 Dur vos trovai et vos moi dure,  
 L'un contre l'autre. N'aiés cure."  
 "Si ai, ja nel vos celerai.  
 A nul jor ne vos amerai,  
 Cho ne cuidiés vos jamais mie, 5725  
 Car allors ai faite une amie.  
 Nient plus que vos cangiés vo cuer  
 Ne puis jo le mien a nul fuer.  
 Vos ne poés vo cuer retraire  
 De moi amer, ne jo tant faire 5730  
 Que m'amors vos soit ja donee,  
 Car altrui l'ai abandonnee.  
 Ja ne l'arés, n'ensi, n'ensi,  
 Ensi me consalt Dex, espi!"  
 Dist la dame: "Creés vos cho? 5735  
 Créés vos cho, dites, que jo  
 Vos aparlasse ensi a certes?  
 Anchois vos doinst Dex males pertes  
 Que jo deüsce a vos entendre;  
 Ains me lairoie ardoir en cendre. 5740  
 Ahi!" fait ele, "quel delit  
 Avroit en vos!" Dont vait el lit.  
 Tranble d'angoissce et de pute ire.  
 "Ahi!" fait ele, "u est mes sire?"  
 "Dame," cho dist sa camberiere, 5745  
 "Li rois est alés en riviere."  
  
 Contre le soir li rois repaire:  
 Vient a la dame de pute aire  
 Et si a trové le malfet,  
 Son cors esprís, et escalfet. 5750  
 "Biele," fait il, "com vos esta?"  
 "Bials sire, vos le sarés ja.

"that love was the same as being hated. 5710  
 When your love is so false  
 that you scream for no reason,  
 one should obviously shun it,  
 for what you call love is betrayal;  
 it kills and dismembers a man." 5715  
 "Friend, you seem to dwell too much  
 on past grievances.  
 We have both changed now:  
 we are older and wiser,  
 dear sweet friend, than we were before. 5720  
 I found you harsh, as you did me.  
 We were adversaries then. Don't worry about that now."  
 "But I am worried, and I want you to know it.  
 I won't ever be your lover;  
 get that out of your head once and for all. 5725  
 I am in love with someone else.  
 I can't change my feelings,  
 any more than you can change yours.  
 You can't stop loving me,  
 and I can never 5730  
 give my love to you,  
 for I have given my heart to someone else.  
 You will never have it, no way, never!  
 so help me God! Understand?"  
 The lady said, "Is that what you think? 5735  
 Do you really believe that I  
 would talk to you this way seriously?  
 I'd rather have God strike me dead  
 than listen to another word from you.  
 I'd rather be burned to a crisp! 5740  
 But ah!" she said, "what pleasure  
 you could give me!" Then she retired.  
 She was trembling with anguish and impure rage.  
 "Alas!" she said, "Where is my lord?"  
 "Lady," her lady-in-waiting said to her, 5745  
 "the king has gone to hunt waterfowl."  
  
 Toward evening, the king returned.  
 He came to this whorish lady  
 and found the wicked slut  
 aroused, inflamed with lust. 5750  
 "Sweetheart," he said, "how are you?"  
 "Good Sir, you'll soon find out,

Mais ne vos calt preu que jo face,  
 Ki maint sos ciel, ne qui me hace. /  
 Tres donc que vos veïstes, sire, 5755  
 Que Silences me volt ochire  
 Por cho que jo nel vol amer,  
 Quant l'envoïastes de la mer  
 Ne vos calut gaires de moi.  
 Vos me proisiés, certes, moult poi 5760  
 Quant vos le sofrés en vo terre.  
 S'il a fenie vostre guerre  
 Trop violt chier vendre son servisce,  
 Car il se painne en tolte guise  
 De vostre honor, sire, abasscier, 5765  
 Qu'il ne me violt en pais lasscier."

Li rois l'entent, sin a tel ire  
 C'on nel vos puet conter ne dire.  
 Soffle de maltalent, s'a dit  
 A la roïne: "Prent respit! 5770  
 Mains hom porcace et quiert son honte  
 Por fol atrait et se desmonte  
 Si com j'ai fait par mon fol sens.  
 Or sai jo bien et voi et pens  
 Que j'ai tort et vos avés droit. 5775  
 Savés vos or en nul endroit  
 Coment jo vengier m'en peuïssce  
 Sans moi honir, gré vos seuïssce."

La dame est plaine de grant rage.  
 L'engien a prest en son corage, 5780  
 Et dist al roi: "Bien le ferés  
 Que vos ja blasmés n'en serés."  
 "Puis donc ensi c'on ne men fierne?"  
 "Oïl!" "Comment?" "Rois Fortigierne  
 Fist une tor jadis overer 5785  
 Mais ne pot machon recovrer  
 Ki peüst faire ester la tor.  
 Ja tant n'i atrasist d'ator,  
 L'uevre del jor fondi la nuit.  
 Sire, oiés, si ne vos anuit. 5790  
 La tor ne pot nus faire estable  
 Fors sol Merlin, fil al diäble,  
 Car altre pere n'oït il onques.  
 Merlins ert petis enfes donques.

although you obviously don't care what happens to me  
 or what's going on or who my enemies are.  
 From the time, Sire, that you saw 5755  
 that Silence wanted to kill me  
 because I wouldn't sleep with him,  
 and you just sent him abroad,  
 you haven't cared a thing about me.  
 You certainly think very little of me 5760  
 by tolerating his presence in this land.  
 He may have won the war for you,  
 but he's asking too much for his services:  
 he never stops trying to reduce  
 the value of your honor at any cost, Sire;  
 he doesn't give me a minute's peace." 5765

When the king heard this, he was so furious  
 that there are no words to describe it.  
 He was panting with rage, and said  
 to the queen, "Enough! 5770  
 Many a man is crazy enough to seek  
 his own disgrace and undoing,  
 as I have been fool enough to do.  
 Now I can see very well, I think, I know  
 that I was wrong and you were right. 5775  
 Now, if you know of any way  
 I could get revenge  
 without getting caught, I would appreciate hearing it."

The lady was filled with violent rage.  
 She had a clever plan all prepared, 5780  
 and said to the king, "There is a way to do it  
 so that you will never be blamed for it."  
 "Can I really do it without losing face?"  
 "Yes!" "How?" "King Vortigern  
 once wanted a tower built,\* 5785  
 but couldn't find a mason  
 who could make the tower stand.  
 Whatever was built by day  
 collapsed during the night.  
 Listen to me, Sire, if you please. 5790  
 No one could make the tower stand  
 but Merlin—son of the devil,  
 for he had no other father—  
 who was only a child at the time.

Il fist la tor al roi ester, 5795  
 Et donc n'i volt plus arester;  
 Mais il dist donc, ains qu'en alast  
 Et que la tor adevalast,  
 Qu'il seroit encor si salvages  
 Et si fuitils par ces boscages, 5800  
 Ja n'estroit pris, n'ensi, n'ensi,  
 C'est verité que jo vos di,/  
 Se ne fust par engien de feme.  
 Bials chiers sire," cho dist Eufeme,  
 "Il a bien averé encore. 5805  
 Et savés que vos ferés ore?  
 Dites Silence que il pregne  
 Merlin et prison le vos renge  
 Por une visión despondre.  
 S'orés qu'il vos volra respondre; 5810  
 Et, se il Merlin ne puet prendre  
 Faites li, sire, bien entendre  
 Mar renterra en ceste terre.  
 Mais il le pora .m. ans quierre  
 Anchois que il le prenge mie. 5815  
 U cho n'est mie prophezie  
 Icho que Merlins dist adonques,  
 U cis ne revenra mais onques.  
 Et se chose est que Merlins mente,  
 Qu'il pris soit, drois est qu'il s'en sente." 5820  
 "Biele, vos avés dit moult bien.  
 Se Dameldex me face rien,  
 Tost si ferai." Fiert sor sa main.  
 Et quant cho vint a l'endemain  
 Si a fait Silence apieler. 5825  
 "Amis," fait il, "nel quier celer,  
 Vos m'avés fait moult grant servize.  
 Or si vos pri par vo franchize  
 Et conmanç un gregnor affaire  
 Por moi geter d'un grant contraire." 5830  
 "Sire, cho sachiés vos tres bien,  
 Jo volentiers. N'a sos ciel rien  
 C'om de mon poöir faire puet."  
 Cho dist li rois: "Cho vos estuet.  
  
 Or escoltés que vos dirai. 5835  
 Tolt mon conseil vos gehirai.  
 Jo et ma feme giziöns

He made the king's tower stand, 5795  
 and then was ready to leave.  
 But before he left,  
 before he came down from the tower,  
 he said that he would take to the woods  
 and be so wild and hard to catch 5800  
 that he could never be taken,  
 I'm telling you the truth,  
 except by a woman's trick.  
 Dear, sweet lord," said Eufeme,  
 "the prophecy still holds true. 5805  
 And you know what to do now:  
 tell Silence to capture Merlin  
 and bring him back to you as prisoner  
 in order to interpret a vision.  
 See what he has to say to that! 5810  
 And make it very clear to him, Sire,  
 that if he can't capture Merlin,  
 he will return to this land at his peril.  
 But he could search a thousand years  
 without ever being able to capture him. 5815  
 Either Merlin is no prophet,  
 or Silence will never come back.  
 And if Merlin happens to be lying,  
 it is only right that he be caught  
 and have to face the consequences." 5820  
 "Well said, dearest.  
 So help me God,  
 I'll do it right away." He gave her his hand on it.  
 And the very next day  
 he had Silence summoned. 5825  
 "Friend," he said, "I do not deny  
 that you have been of great service to me.  
 Now I am appealing to your generous nature  
 and asking an even greater favor of you,  
 to help me out of serious trouble." 5830  
 "Sire, you know very well  
 that I will do it willingly. There is nothing on earth  
 I wouldn't do for you."  
 "So be it," said the king.  
  
 "Now listen to what I tell you. 5835  
 I will confide in you completely.  
 When my wife and I were asleep

L'altrier et une viziõns  
 Me vint devant qui m'espoënte.  
 Or si vos convient metre entente 5840  
 Que Merlins soit pris, qui me die  
 La visiõns que senefie  
 Car il set bien qu'ele despont,"  
 "Coment, sire?" cil le respont.  
 "Coment prendroie jo celui 5845  
 C'ainc ne se lassça a nului  
 Baisier, ne prendre, ne tenir,  
 N'a cui nus hom puist avenir?"  
 Li rois respont: "Bien vos coviegne.  
 Mais il n'est hom qui vos retiegne/ 5850  
 Tant com sos ciel ma tiere dure.  
 Se il vos falt, par aventure,  
 Que vos Merlin nen amenés,  
 Vos n'estes mie bien senés  
 Qui mon comant avés desdit." 5855  
 Silences n'a poi[n]t de respit.  
 Vait a son ostel, si s'atorne,  
 Monte el cheval et seuls s'en torne,  
 Pensius et tristres, tolt plorant  
 Et Dameldeu sovent orant 5860  
 Que il son travail li aliege,  
 Qu'il puist prendre Merlin a/ piege  
 Et qu'il soit vengiés de la dame  
 Ki por noient l'alieve blame.  
 Li grant travail et li dur lit 5865  
 Li atenuissent son delit.  
 Atenuissent? Nenil pas!  
 Car il n'a nul delit, li las!  
 Et quant en lui n'a point de joie,  
 N'a delit nul, plus que je voie, 5870  
 Car de joie naist li delis:  
 Il est moult las et moult delis.  
 Tant ne porquant d'anchois assés  
 Que li demis ans fust passés  
 Li vient uns hom tols blans al dos, 5875  
 Tolt droit a l'oriere d'un bos.  
 Salue le moult gentement,  
 Or escoltés confaitement:  
 "[C]il qui fait son solet luisir,  
 Doinst que riens ne vos puist nuisir. 5880

the other day, I had a dream  
 that frightened me.  
 If you could manage 5840  
 to capture Merlin, he will tell  
 me what the dream meant,  
 for he is skilled in interpretation."  
 "What, Sire?" Silence replied to him.  
 "How could I capture the one 5845  
 who has never let anyone  
 kiss, catch, hold  
 or come anywhere near him?"  
 The king replied, "You'd better find a way.  
 Otherwise, no one will accept you as retainer 5850  
 as long as my kingdom endures on this earth.  
 If you should by any chance fail  
 to bring back Merlin,  
 you will find it wasn't such a good idea  
 to have disobeyed my command." 5855  
 Silence hadn't a moment's reprieve.  
 He went to his room, got his things together,  
 mounted his horse and went off alone,  
 pensive and sad, weeping bitterly,  
 and praying frequently to God 5860  
 to ease his burden  
 and help him trap Merlin  
 and let him be avenged on the lady  
 who persecuted him for no reason.  
 The difficult task and physical discomfort 5865  
 attenuated his happiness.  
 No, wait, that's hardly the way to put it,  
 for he hasn't any happiness at all, poor wretch!  
 Because he had no joy,  
 as I see it, he had no happiness, 5870  
 for happiness is born of joy.  
 He was very miserable and discouraged.  
 And yet, not quite  
 half a year later,  
 a man with long white hair flowing down his back 5875  
 came right up to him at the edge of a grove  
 and greeted him very courteously.  
 This is what he said:  
  
 "May he who makes the sun shine  
 protect you from all harm, 5880

- Et vos otroit si bien ovrer  
 Que vos puïssciés Deu recovrer.”  
 Silences li respont: “Bials sire,  
 Vos dites bien, Dex le vos mire.”  
 “Amis,” fait il, “se Dex vos salt,  
 5885  
 Quels bezoins vos chace en cest galt?  
 Chi n’a cemens, ci n’a sentiers,  
 Si passe bien li ans entiers  
 C’om ne repaire en ceste agaïse.  
 Jo cuit vos avés grant mesaise.”  
 5890  
 “Ciertes, bials sire, cho ai mon,  
 Car très le tans al viel Aïmon  
 Ne cuit c’uns hom fust vis ne nés  
 Ki por niënt fust si penés.”  
 “S’il fait a dire, dites moi  
 5895  
 Que vos querés et se jo voi  
 Qu’aidier vos puïssce si n’ensi,  
 Gel feraï, por voir le vos di.”  
 Silences respont: “Par ma vie,  
 Jo ne sai preu que jo vos die  
 5900  
 Ne que jo vois querant, amis.  
 Mais [par] haïne m’a tramis  
 Li rois Merlin cerkier et querre  
 Por moi banir fors de la terre:  
 ‘N’i rentre mais,’ cho m’a rové,  
 5905  
 ‘Trosque Merlin aïe trové.’  
 Et par les .iii. iols de ma tieste,  
 Ne sai s’il est u hom u bieste;  
 Ne nus ne sot aïnc qu’il devînt  
 Tres puis que Fortg[i]e[r]ne le tint  
 5910  
 Por la soïe tor compasser.  
 Mais on me fait niënt lasser.”
- Cil voit celui, si l’enorta  
 D’esleechier, sel conforta.  
 “Amis, lasscier le dementer.  
 5915  
 Jo ai veü jadis enter  
 Sovent sor sur estoc dolce ente,  
 Par tel engien et tele entente  
 Que li estos et li surece  
 Escrut trestolt puis en haltece.  
 5920  
 Alsi pora en ceste voie  
 Sor vostre dol naistre tels joïe  
 Ki tolte amenrira encore

and may you succeed in your undertaking,  
 with the help of God."  
 Silence replied, "Good sir,  
 these are courteous words. May God reward you for them."  
 "Friend," he said, "God save you, 5885  
 what harsh necessity drives you forth into this wasteland?  
 No roads or pathways lead to it;  
 whole years can go by  
 without anyone coming to this place of desolation.  
 I think you are in desperate trouble." 5890  
 "Yes, good sir, I am indeed,  
 Since the time of old Aymon,  
 I don't think a man was ever born  
 who was so tormented for no reason."  
 "If you deem it appropriate, tell me 5895  
 what it is you are seeking, and if I see  
 that I can help you in any way,  
 I will certainly do so."  
 Silence replied, "Upon my soul,  
 I scarcely know what to tell you 5900  
 or what I'm looking for, friend,  
 except that the king has sent me  
 to seek out Merlin, because he hates me  
 and wants to banish me from the land.  
 'Do not return,' he said to me, 5905  
 'until you have found Merlin.'  
 And I swear by the two eyes I have in my head,  
 I don't know if he's man or beast,  
 and no one has any idea what has become of him  
 since he was commissioned by Vortigern 5910  
 to build his tower.  
 I am being made to suffer for no reason."

The old man looked closely at the youth  
 and told him to rejoice and be comforted.  
 "Friend, cease your lamentation. 5915  
 I have often seen  
 a young bud grafted onto a sterile stock  
 with such skill and purposefulness  
 that both stock and graft  
 soon grew and flourished. 5920  
 Similarly,  
 such joy may be born of your sorrow  
 that it will completely transform

La dolor que vos avés ore.  
 Amis, ne vos esmaiés rien, 5925  
 Car Merlin prendrèrés vus bien.  
 Jo vos dirai tolt son affaire,  
 Et se maniere, et son repaire.  
 Cho est uns hom trestols pelus  
 Et si est com uns ors velus; 5930  
 Si est isnials com cers de lande.  
 Herbe, rachine est sa viânde.  
 Chi a un bos u il soloit  
 Venir boire, quant il voloit,  
 Mais .v. jors a voie n'i tint 5935  
 Car l'aigue i falt por quoi il vint.  
 Li lius est ses, n'i a que boivre.  
 Se vos le volés bien deçoivre  
 Faites cho donc que jo dirai.  
 Vos remanrés, et g'en irai, 5940  
 Et jo vos di en mon latin  
 Que jo revenrai le matin. /  
 Or ne vos soit d'atendre lait:  
 J'enporterai vin, miel et lait,  
 En trois vasscials, et car bien fressce. 5945  
 Tenés chi mon fural et m'esce.  
 Si faites demain u anuit  
 Un fu, que trop ne vos anuit.  
 Le car cuisiés, quant vos l'arés,  
 Al miols que vos sos ciel sarés, 5950  
 En rost, sans flame et sans lumiere,  
 Car donc jetra forçor fumiere.  
 Et quant Merlins le flaërre,  
 A la car lués repaiërre.  
 S'il a humanité en lui, 5955  
 Il i venra, si com jo cui,  
 Par la fumiere et par le flair  
 Del rost qu'il sentira en l'air.  
 Abandonés li soit li fus,  
 Et si vos traiés bien en sus. 5960  
 Li car sera tres bien salee,  
 Et quant l'ara adevalee,  
 Et mangie al fu d'espine,  
 Angoisçols iert por la saïne.  
 Metés le miel si priés qu'en boivie 5965  
 Anchois que del lait s'aparçoivie.  
 Le lait metrés un poi mains pres,

the sorrow you feel now.  
 Friend, don't worry about anything: 5925  
 you will surely capture Merlin.  
 I will tell you all about him,  
 his appearance, habits and hiding-places.  
 He is a man all covered with hair,  
 as hairy as a bear. 5930  
 He is as fleet as a woodland deer.  
 Herbs and roots are his food.  
 There is a grove here, where he used to  
 come and drink when he wanted to,  
 but he has not been there for five days 5935  
 because the water he came for was lacking:  
 the watering-place was all dried up.  
 If you want to trap him,  
 do as I tell you.  
 Stay here, and I will go, 5940  
 and I promise you  
 I will be back in the morning.  
 Don't be annoyed at the wait:  
 I'll bring back wine, milk and honey  
 in three containers, and good fresh meat. 5945  
 Keep my flint and tinder here.  
 That way, you can make a fire tonight or tomorrow,  
 so that your stay will be more pleasant.  
 When you get the meat, cook it  
 the very best way you know how. 5950  
 Grill it without open flames:  
 that way, there'll be a lot of smoke.  
 As soon as Merlin smells the scent and smoke,  
 he'll come running.  
 If there is any human nature left in him, 5955  
 he will come here, I'm certain,  
 attracted by the smoke and the scent  
 of the roasting meat in the air.  
 Leave the fire to him,  
 and withdraw to a safe distance. 5960  
 The meat will be very salty,  
 and when he has seized it from the  
 fire of thorn-branches and eaten it,  
 he will be terribly thirsty.  
 Place the honey close by so that he will drink it 5965  
 before he catches sight of the milk.  
 Place the milk a little farther away:

Car s'il avient qu'en boivie adiés,  
 Plus enflera, plus avra soi,  
 Et plus iert tormentés en soi. 5970  
 Le vin li metés tolt en sus:  
 Se il en boit, tolt iert confus.  
 S'i[l] boit del vin, tost iert sorprís,  
 Car il n'est pas del boivre aprís.  
 S'il dort, ainz qu'il soit esvellíés, 5975  
 Soíés, amis, apparellíés."  
 Cho dist li blans hom, puis s'en vait.  
 Si a porcacié entresait  
 Miel, lait et vin, et car avoec.  
 Si s'en revient tolt droit illuec 5980  
 U il Silence avoit lasscié,  
 Entre .i. bos et .i. plasscié.  
 Que vos diroie? Tolt li livre,  
 Se li a mostré a delivre  
 Le bos u Merlins vait et vient. 5985  
 Dont prent congié, sa voie tient.

Silences s'en fu a estruit.  
 Or l'en doinst Dex venir a fruit.  
 Le miel, le sait, le vin i mist,  
 Tolt si com li blans hom li dist. / 5990  
 La car salee cuist en rost  
 Et li fumiere en va moult tost  
 Par tolt le bos destre et senestre.  
 Et Merlins qui estoit en l'estre  
 Flaire la car, met se a la voie, 5995  
 Quant Noretüre le desvoie.  
 "Ahi!" fait Noretüre. "Ahi!  
 Com cil sont malement trahi  
 Ki noriscent la gent a faire  
 Cho que lor nature est contraire. 6000  
 Quanque jo noris et labor  
 Me tolt Nature a un sol jor.  
 Tant a esté noris en bos  
 Bien deüst metre ariere dos  
 Nature d'ome, si voloit 6005  
 Herbes user, si com soloit."  
 Or est Merlins en male luite.  
 "Qu'as tu a faire de car cuite?"  
 Dist Noretüre. "Est cho dangiers?  
 Herbes, rachines est tes mangiers." 6010

if he should happen to drink it next,  
he will be even more bloated and thirsty,  
and extremely uncomfortable. 5970

Place the wine farthest away:  
if he drinks it, that will be his undoing.  
If he drinks the wine, he will soon be captured,  
because he is not used to drinking.  
If he falls asleep, be ready to make your move 5975  
before he wakes up, my friend."

That's what the white-haired man said; then he went off.  
In the interval, he obtained  
honey, milk, wine and meat  
and came right back to where 5980  
he had left Silence,  
in a clearing near the grove.

What can I tell you? He gave him everything,  
showed him all around  
the grove that Merlin frequented, 5985  
then took his leave and was on his way.

Silence went about his preparations.  
May God bring them to fruition!  
He placed the honey, milk and wine  
exactly where the white-haired man had told him to. 5990

He roasted the salted meat,  
and the smoke soon spread  
right and left throughout the woods.  
And Merlin, who was nearby,  
smelled the meat and was on his way 5995  
when Nurture forced him to turn aside.

"Alas!" said Nurture. "Alas!  
How badly deceived are those  
who condition people to do  
what is contrary to their nature! 6000

Whatever I work for and accomplish,  
Nature deprives me of in one day.  
Merlin was nurtured in the woods for so long  
that he certainly should have put  
his human nature behind him, and should have wanted 6005  
to continue eating herbs, the way he was used to."

Now Merlin felt a fierce inner conflict.  
"What have you to do with cooked meat?"  
asked Nurture. "Is that what you want?  
Herbs and roots are what you eat." 6010

Donques se choroce Nature.  
 Dist: "Ahi! ahi! Noretur!  
 Tant anui m'as ja fait, par dis,  
 Tant gentil home abastardis."  
 "Ja non fac, voir, ains faites cho," 6015  
 Dist Noretur, "plus que jo.  
 Ki cors a gentil, cuer malvais,  
 S'il honte fait, qu'en puis jo mais?  
 Ne jo ne il n'en poöns nient,  
 Mais Nature dont cho li vient. 6020  
 Home qui violt a *honte* tendre  
 Ne voel, car ne li puis deffendre.  
 Ains le norris bien a honir,  
 Puis qu'il n'a cure d'enbonir.  
 Et mains hom qui tent a honor 6025  
 N'apreng jo nule deshonor.  
 Contre un malvais par noretur,  
 Sont il .m. malvais par nature.  
 Tu as grant tort qui si m'asals  
 Car de Nature mut li mals 6030  
 Dont Adans fu primes honis.  
 Tes drois n'est pas al mien onis.  
 Tolte gens sont estrait d'un home  
 Et d'une feme, c'est la some.

Adans fu li premerains pere 6035  
 Et Eve li premiere mere.  
 Nuls hom ne fu devant als mie,  
 Ki lor apresist felonie./  
 Quant par Nature de pute aire  
 Comencierent le mal a faire 6040  
 Et al boizier et al pechier  
 Et Deu lor segnor a boisier,  
 Trestolt cho fu par toi. Nature,  
 Et nient par moi," dist Noretur.  
 Cho dist Nature: "Or doi jo dire, 6045  
 Cho sache Dex, li nostre sire,  
 Tu m'oposas del premier home  
 Ki pecha par mangier la pome.  
 Dex le fist certes com le suen,  
 Net, sans pechié, et biel et buen. 6050  
 Ainc de Nature ne li vint  
 Que il les males voies tint.  
 Car se cho de Nature fus.

Then Nature grew angry.  
 She said, "Alas, alas, Nurture!  
 By the gods, you cause me so much trouble!  
 You have brought many a good man low."  
 "No I haven't! You're the one!" 6015  
 said Nurture. "You do it more than I do!  
 If a man has a noble body and a vile heart,  
 what can I do if he acts dishonorably?  
 Neither he nor I can do anything about it;  
 only Nature, who made him, can. 6020  
 I don't want anything to do with a man inclined to evil,  
 because I can't protect him from his nature.  
 I'd much rather raise him to be bad,  
 since he has no inclination to improve himself.  
 I don't go around teaching dishonor 6025  
 to those who value honor.  
 For every man evil because of nurture,  
 there are a thousand evil by nature.  
 You are very wrong to attack me like this,  
 Nature, because you are the source 6030  
 of that evil which claimed Adam as its first victim.  
 We are not equally to blame.  
 All human beings are descended from one man  
 and one woman, that's a fact.

Adam was the first father, 6035  
 and Eve the first mother.  
 There was no man in existence before them,  
 to teach them transgression.  
 It was corrupt Nature  
 that caused them to begin to do evil 6040  
 and deceive and sin.  
 and lie to their lord God.  
 All that was done by you, Nature,  
 and not by me!" said Nurture.  
 Nature replied, "Now I must say, 6045  
 as our lord God well knows,  
 you have opposed me ever since the first man  
 sinned by eating that apple,  
 God most assuredly created him in His own likeness,  
 pure, without sin, beautiful and good. 6050  
 Nothing in his nature  
 caused him to go bad.  
 For if Adam's original sin

Qu'Adans pecha ensi el fust,  
 Dont peüst on par cho prover 6055  
 Et bone provance trover  
 Que deüst faire el que bien.  
 Car en Adan n'ot onques rien  
 Que Dex ne creäst et fesist  
 Et qu'il en Adan ne mesist. 6060  
 Dex n'est pas tels qu'en lui lassast  
 Male nature quil quassast,  
 Ne nule rien mesavenant  
 Qui l'empirast, ne tant ne quant.  
 Car Dex ne fist ainc male choze. 6065  
 Noreture, car te repoze?  
 Quanques Adans fist de rancure,  
 Fu par toi, certes, Noreture.  
 Car li diäbles le norri  
 Par son mauvais conseil porri. 6070  
 Tant l'enasprist, tant l'enorta,  
 Que la pome le sorporta.  
 Quantque gens font de vilonie  
 Tolt naist de cele felonie.  
 Tant si delitent li alquant, 6075  
 Li honi, et li recreänt,  
 Qu'il font alsı com par nature,  
 Mais tolt lor vient de Noreture.  
 Dont l'enemis Adan enbut\*  
 Quant par la pome le deçut. 6080  
 De cel pechié et de cel visce  
 Naist envie et avarissce,  
 Escarsetés et gloternie,  
 Et malvaistiés et felonie.  
 Jo te conmanc que tu t'en vois 6085  
 Et que tu mais ichi n'estoises./  
 A Merlin as tu tolt falli."  
 Et Noreture en enpali,  
 Et la place li relenqui.  
 Et Nature, qui le venqui, 6090  
 Tient Merlin por maleöit fol,  
 Si l'a enpoint deviers le col  
 Et tant le coite et tant le haste  
 Qu'il va sı tost enviers le haste  
 Que les ronsces et les espines 6095  
 Ronpent ses costés, ses escines,  
 Si que sor lui n'a point d'entier

were the fault of Nature,  
 that would be clear 6055  
 and irrefutable proof  
 that he was meant to do other than good.  
 Nothing was ever in Adam  
 except what God created  
 and placed there. 6060  
 It is not like God  
 to leave an evil nature in him to claim him  
 or anything negative  
 that would impair him in any way,  
 for God never did anything evil. 6065  
 Nurture, why don't you give up?  
 Whatever evil Adam did  
 was due to you, Nurture, without a doubt,  
 for the Devil fed him  
 evil, rotten advice. 6070  
 He urged him and inflamed him until  
 he succumbed to the apple.  
 Whatever evil men do  
 all stems from this transgression.  
 Some, knaves and cowards, for example, 6075  
 err so much  
 that it seems like second nature to them,  
 but all that is due to nurture,  
 with which the Enemy imbued Adam  
 when he deceived him with the apple. 6080  
 From this sin and vice  
 arose envy and avarice,  
 gluttony and stinginess,  
 spitefulness and evil-doing.  
 I command you to leave 6085  
 and never return.  
 You have completely failed with Merlin."  
 At this, Nurture turned pale  
 and relinquished her position.  
 And Nature, triumphant, 6090  
 treated Merlin like a wretched madman:  
 she grabbed him by the scruff of the neck  
 and pushed and shoved him along so fast  
 toward that piece of meat  
 that the brambles and thorns 6095  
 tore his back and sides.  
 No part of his body was left unscathed,

C'ainc n'i tint voie ne sentier;  
 Ne s'i tenist pas cers de lande.  
 Moult est golis sor le viānde. 6100  
 A la car vient, si fait tolt suen.  
 "Oho!" fait il, "chi fait moult buen!"  
 Silences el bos se destorne,  
 Et Merlins al mangier s'atorne.  
 La car a trestolte envaïe. 6105  
 Se Dex fait a Silence aïe  
 Merlins, jo cuit, le paiera,  
 Anchois que il s'en parte ja.  
 Tant est golis de la car calde  
 Merlins, que trestols s'en escalde 6110  
 De la car qu'il prist sor le fu;  
 C'ainc ne demanda s'ele fu  
 Cuite u crue, salee u fresce,  
 Mais al plain puig a es i pesce.  
 De la car se refait moult bien. 6115  
 Or ne violt il fors boire rien.  
 Encoste garde, et del miel voit,  
 Met a sa boce et si en boit  
 Ki miols valut d'un esterlin.  
 Ki donc veïst enfler Merlin! 6120  
 Com plus en goit, plus en puet boire,  
 Et si ne fait fors lui deçoivre.  
 Ki donc veïst home a mesaise!  
 Merlins crieve d'anguissce enaise.  
 Il voit le lait, si en boit donques. 6125  
 Or n'ot il mais tele angoissce onques.  
 Ki donc veïst ventre eslargir,  
 Estendre, et tezîr, et bargîr,  
 Ne lairoit qu'il n'en resist tost!  
 Mar i manja la car en rost 6130  
 Et la composte al fuer d'Escot.  
 Jo cuit qu'il iert a chier escot.  
 Dont voit le vin, se s'i est trais,  
 Et si en boit a moult grans trais./  
 S'est endormis com hom soppris. 6135  
 Silences salt et si l'a pris.  
 Ki donc dolans, se Merlins non!  
 "Amis," fait il, "com as tu non?  
 Et por quoi me maines ensi?"  
 "Silences ai non, si isci 6140  
 De mon ostel por toi tracier.

for she didn't keep to road or path;  
 a woodland deer could not have stood the pace.  
 He was greedy for the meat. 6100  
 He came to the roast and seized the whole thing.  
 "Oh!" he said. "This looks good!"  
 Silence hid in the woods,  
 and Merlin got ready to eat.  
 He tore into the meat at once. 6105  
 If God is on Silence's side,  
 Merlin will pay dearly for it  
 before he leaves.  
 Merlin was so greedy for the hot meat  
 he had seized from the fire 6110  
 that he burned himself.  
 He didn't stop to ask whether it was  
 raw or cooked, fresh or salted—  
 he dove into it eagerly with his bare hands.  
 He made an excellent meal of that meat. 6115  
 Now all he wanted was something to drink.  
 He looked around and saw the honey,  
 put the jar to his lips, and drank it,  
 more than a pound sterling's worth.  
 Then you should have seen Merlin swell up! 6120  
 The more he swallowed, the thirstier he got—  
 all he accomplished was his own undoing.  
 You never saw a man in greater discomfort;  
 Merlin was nearly dying in agony.  
 He saw the milk and drank it then. 6125  
 He had never been in such pain!  
 If you ever saw how his belly swelled up,  
 expanded, inflated and dilated,  
 you would burst out laughing!  
 It was bad luck for him that he ate the roasted meat 6130  
 and the mixture worth a Scottish pound.  
 I think he'll pay dearly for it!  
 Then he saw the wine and went for it,  
 and drank it in giant gulps  
 and fell into a drunken stupor. 6135  
 Silence jumped out and seized him.  
 Now Merlin was sorry!  
 "Friend," he said, "what is your name?  
 And why are you doing this to me?"  
 "I am called Silence, and I left home 6140  
 in order to track you down.

Ta mort te volrai porcacier."  
 "Ma mort?" dist Merlins. "Tu por quoi?"  
 "Mes ancestres fu mors par toi,  
 Gorlains, li dus de Cornuaille. 6145  
 Tu en morras, comment qu'il alle.  
 Merlin, assés le me tuas  
 Quant Uterpandragon muas  
 En le forme al duc mon a[n]cestre  
 Et toi fesis altretel estre 6150  
 Com fu ses senescals avoec.  
 Uter en menas droit illuec  
 U il o la feme al duc giut,  
 Quant a Artu le preu conciut."  
 Dist Merlins: "Cho fu graindres prels, 6155  
 Qu'Artus nasqui, qui fu si preus  
 Qu'il fust damages del duc mie."  
 Silences dant Merlin enguie.  
 Merlins ne se fait gaires morne,  
 Qu'il set ja bien u li viers torne. 6160

Silences dant Merlin enmainne.  
 A lui mener rent moult grant painne,  
 Car il le prist moult loig de la  
 Li rois Ebayns sejournet a.  
 Se Deu plaist, qui ainc ne menti, 6165  
 Ki por nos p[e]chiés consenti  
 Longin son costé a percier,  
 Or pora l'on bien entiercier  
 Et conoistre sa felonie.  
 Se Merlins est tels qu'il le die 6170  
 Or sera la cose asomee.  
 Al roi en vient la renomee  
 Qu'or vient Silences et Merlins.  
 Por .c. .m. livres d'esterlins  
 Ne volsist pas li rois adonques 6175  
 Que Silences repairast onques.  
 Or est il viers Merlin espris  
 Por cho qu'il dist ja n'estroit pris,  
 Se ne fust par engien de feme.  
 Et moult en est dolante Eufeme. 6180

Or a Merlins moult mal tissu.  
 Plus de .vii. .c. en sunt issu/  
 Por Merlin garder a merveille.

I sought your death."

"My death?" said Merlin. "Whatever for?"

"You killed my ancestor,

Gorlain, duke of Cornwall.\*

6145

You shall die for it, whatever happens.

Merlin, you as good as killed him

when you transformed Uther Pendragon

into the likeness of my ancestor, the duke,

and you yourself likewise pretended

6150

to be his seneschal and accompanied him.

You led Uther right to the spot

where he lay with the duke's wife,

and she conceived the noble Arthur."

Merlin said, "that was for a greater good:

6155

Arthur was born of it; one as worthy as he

was no disgrace to the duke."

Silence forced Lord Merlin to get underway.

Merlin isn't exactly worried,

for he knows how things will turn out.

6160

Silence brought Lord Merlin back with him.

It wasn't at all easy,

because he had captured him very far

from where King Evan was staying.

If it please God, who has never failed us,

6165

who suffered Longinus to pierce

his side for our sins,

the king's wrongdoing

will soon be revealed and made known.

If Merlin is all he says he is,

6170

the matter will soon be cleared up.

The king heard the news

that Silence and Merlin were coming.

Not for a hundred thousand pounds sterling

would the king ever have wanted

6175

Silence to come back.

And now he was furious with Merlin

because he had said he would never be taken

except by a woman's trick.

Eufeme was also very upset.

6180

Now Merlin was really in a fix.

More than seven hundred people turned out

to gaze in wonder at him.

Trestols li païs s'en esvelle.  
 Il tienent or Merlin por sot, 6185  
 Mais il decouverra le pot,  
 Si fera tels i a maris.  
 En son la ville en .i. lairis  
 L'encontrent et Silence avoec  
 Ki Merlin mainne droit illuec. 6190  
 Voit Merlins venir un vilain:  
 Uns nués sollers porte en sa main  
 Bien ramendés de cuir de tacre.  
 Merlins le voit de deseur l'acre,  
 Si en commenche fort a rire 6195  
 Mais ne volt onques un mot dire  
 Por quele oquoison il a ris.  
 Un roi i ot qu'ot a non Ris.  
 Cil ne li pot ainc tant proier  
 Si tangoner, ne si broier, 6200  
 Que l'oquoisons li fist gehir. . .  
 Dont vien/ devant une abeÿe  
 Et voit un mezel tarteler  
 Et por Deu l'almosne apieler.  
 Dont rit Merlins, por poi ne derve, 6205  
 Et quant il les povres enterve  
 Et cil prient que il lor die  
 L'oquoison, mais il nel violt mie,  
 Et cil muerent enaises d'ire.  
 Illueques ot un cimentire 6210  
 Joste l'eglize; a un des cors  
 Voit Merlins enfoir un cors,  
 Entre .ii. pieres ensierer.  
 Uns priestres cante a l'entier  
 Et uns prodom i crie et pleure. 6215  
 Et Merlins en rist en es l'eure.  
 Assés i a ki li enquiert  
 Por quoi il rit, n'a quoi affiert,  
 Mais ne degne un mot respondre,  
 Son ris esclairier, ne despondre. 6220  
 Se li tornent a grant desroi.  
 Dont le mainnent devant le roi,  
 Se li ont dit de ses ris donques,  
 Mais il ne volt mot soner onques.  
  
 Li rois par maltalent respont: 6225  
 "S'il orendroit ne le despont,

The whole country was excited.  
 They thought that Merlin was a fool, 6185  
 but he was about to lift the lid off the pot,  
 and make things unpleasant for certain people.  
 On a hillside above the city,  
 they met Merlin and Silence,  
 who was leading him right to them. 6190  
 Merlin saw a peasant approach,  
 carrying a new pair of shoes,  
 nicely mended with brand-new leather.  
 Merlin saw him in the field below  
 and began to laugh heartily, 6195  
 but wouldn't say a word  
 about why he was laughing.\*  
 A king named Ris was there.  
 He couldn't force Merlin  
 by asking or needling or thrashing him 6200  
 to confess the reason.  
 Then they came to an abbey  
 and saw a leper shaking his rattle  
 and begging for alms in the name of God.  
 Merlin laughed so hard at this he almost had a fit. 6205  
 And when he was amusing himself at the expense of the poor  
 and they asked him to tell them  
 the reason why, he refused to say:  
 they almost died of rage, they were so mad.  
 In that same place, there was a cemetery. 6210  
 In a corner, next to the church,  
 Merlin saw a body being buried,  
 enclosed between two stones.  
 A priest was chanting the burial service  
 and a man was weeping and crying there. 6215  
 Again, Merlin burst out laughing at this.  
 Plenty of people asked him  
 why he was laughing and what was going on,  
 but he didn't deign to answer a word  
 to enlighten them or explain his laughter. 6220  
 This made them very angry,  
 and they took him before the king  
 and told him about Merlin's laughter,  
 but he still refused to utter a word.  
  
 Vexed at this, the king replied, 6225  
 "If he doesn't come up with an explanation right here and now,

Gel ferai livrer a martyre."  
 Et Merlins en comence a rire,  
 Desor le roi, qu'il n'en a cure.  
 Ains li promet male aventure:/ 6230  
 Et nonporquant forment se duelt  
 Que il respondre ne li vult.  
 Dire ne conter ne vos puis  
 Com rist de soi meësme puis.  
 Ainc por blecier, ne por quasscier, 6235  
 Ne por le roi ne volt lasscier,  
 Et li rois derve enaises d'ire,  
 Que Merlins ne li volt mot dire.  
 Dont prent Silence a regarder  
 Et s'on le deüst dont larder 6240  
 Ne se tenist il pas de ris,  
 Mais ne dist mot, tant lor fist pis.  
 Cil ont veü le roi irier.  
 Prendent Merlin a enpirier.  
 L'uns le sache, l'autres le boute. 6245  
 Or est li cor sor Merlin tolte.  
 L'uns l'enpaint, l'autres le tangone.  
 O la roïne ert une none.  
 Cele va Merlin deruant:  
 "Oho!" fait ele, "quel truant! 6250  
 Confaite prophesie il dist!"  
 Merlins l'esgarde, si en rist.  
 Tels voloirs de parler li vient  
 Qu'il a moult grant painne se tient.  
 Demandent li, mais c'est en vain, 6255  
 Por quoi [il] rist de la nonain.  
 "Ahi!" dist donques la roïne,  
 "Confait vassal! com il devine!  
 Et confaite bachelerie!  
 Ahi! et quel chevalerie 6260  
 D'amener a cort tel devin!  
 Cil doit boire moult bien de vin!  
 Ki tel vassal a amené  
 Honiement a assené."  
  
 Silences respont: "Tort avez, 6265  
 Dame roïne, et ne savez  
 Que li rois le fist amener  
 Et si m'en a moult fait pener.  
 Vos m'en rendés tel gueredon

I will have him executed."  
 And Merlin began to laugh at this,  
 right in front of the king, to show he didn't care.  
 The king continued to threaten him, 6230  
 and was nonetheless very upset  
 that he wouldn't answer him.  
 I can't begin to tell you how hard  
 Merlin laughed at himself then.  
 Neither wounds nor blows 6235  
 nor the presence of the king could make him stop,  
 and the king was nearly beside himself with rage,  
 because Merlin wouldn't tell him a thing.  
 Then he began to look at Silence,  
 and even if they had burned him alive, 6240  
 he couldn't have stopped laughing,  
 but he didn't say a word, no matter how upset they were.  
 Those who had witnessed the king's fury  
 now began to attack Merlin.  
 One shook him, another knocked him down;  
 then they all jumped on Merlin. 6245  
 One beat him, another jabbed him.  
 There was a nun in the queen's entourage  
 who began to gibe at Merlin:  
 "Oho!" she said, "what a rascal,  
 coming out with false prophecies like that!" 6250  
 Merlin looked at her and laughed.  
 He wanted to speak out so badly  
 that he could scarcely restrain himself.  
 They asked him in vain 6255  
 why he laughed at the nun.  
 "Oh my!" said the queen then,  
 "what a vassal! what a phony!  
 and what a hero we have here!  
 My, what an act of chivalry 6260  
 to bring such a great magician to court!  
 What an old wine-bibber!  
 And whoever brings such a vassal to court  
 has succeeded in covering himself with disgrace."  
  
 Silence replied, "You are wrong, 6265  
 my lady queen. Are you perhaps unaware  
 that the king ordered him brought here  
 and that this has caused me tremendous hardship?  
 And now you reward me thus,

- U il nen a se tolt mal non. 6270  
 Mais Dameldex qui tolt cria  
 Voit bien et set quanque il i a."  
 Dont respondi la dame fole:  
 "Silences, trop avés parole!  
 Vos le devriez avoir plus brieve." 6275  
 Merlins en rit, por poi ne crieve  
 Sor la roïne et ne dist mot;  
 Et il le tienent tuit por sot. /  
 Ne sevent pas dont li ris naist.  
 Com plus l'enquierent plus se taist. 6280  
 Tant li delite li taisirs  
 Que parlers li est nonplaisirs.  
 Escoltés dont. Il prist a rire,  
 Atant a parler, et a dire  
 Que grief li est a comencier. 6285  
 Li rois n'a cure de tencier,  
 N'onques ne pot tençon amer.  
 Or violt il Merlin afamer,  
 S'il le peüst par cho destraindre.  
 En le cartre le fait empaindre 6290  
 Et sel fait .iii. jor geüner.  
 Et al quart jor fait aüner  
 Et ses barons et ses princiers  
 Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers.  
 Verront quel fin Merlins fera: 6295  
 U ochis, u pendus sera.  
 Se il ne dist sa prophesie,  
 N'en portera, cho dist, la vie.
- [M]erlins est menés en la place.  
 Jo ne cuit pas que tant se hace 6300  
 Qu'il ne parolt ains c'on le tue.  
 Li rois tient une espee nue.  
 Dist li: "U tu diras, dant fol,  
 U jo te trenceraï le col."
- Or voit bien Merlins qu'il morra 6305  
 S'il ne parole, et qu'il pora  
 Salver sa vie par le dire.  
 Al roi a dit: "Or oiés, sire,  
 Jo ne vos puis pas par taisir  
 Servir a gré, ne rien plasir. 6310  
 Or ne voel jo mal gré avoir.

when the exploit was hardly that unworthy. 6270  
 But the Lord God who created all things  
 sees and knows the truth."  
 To this, the lady harlot replied,  
 "Silence, you talk too much.  
 You had better keep your mouth shut." 6275  
 Merlin laughed so hard at the queen  
 he nearly died, but he didn't say a word,  
 and they all thought he was a fool.  
 They didn't know the cause of his laughter.  
 The more they questioned him, the more silent he was. 6280  
 He took such great delight in silence  
 that speech could offer him no pleasure.  
 Listen to what happened then: he began to laugh  
 and then to speak and then to say  
 that it was too hard for him to begin. 6285  
 The king didn't feel like arguing;  
 he never had much use for disputes.  
 He preferred to starve Merlin,  
 to see if he could force him to talk by this means.  
 He had him thrown into prison 6290  
 and starved for three days.  
 And on the fourth day, he called together  
 the most trusted and valued  
 lords and counsellors of the realm.  
 They would decide Merlin's fate: 6295  
 whether he would be beheaded or hanged.  
 If he did not reveal the truth,  
 he would not escape with his life, the king said.

Merlin was brought to the place of judgment.  
 I don't think he is so self-destructive 6300  
 that he won't talk to save his own life.  
 The king held a naked sword.  
 He said to him, "Either you shall speak, Sir Fool,  
 or I will cut your head off."

Then Merlin saw he would surely die 6305  
 if he didn't speak, and that he could  
 save his life by talking.  
 He said to the king, "Now listen, Sire.  
 I cannot please you and do your will  
 by remaining silent, 6310  
 but I have no wish to incur your wrath

- Se jo vos di de mo[n] savoir.”  
 “Non avrés vos, amis, par foi!”  
 “Jo ris, bials sire, oiés por quoi.  
 Quant ens en la cité entr’ai, 6315  
 Un fol vilain i encontraï  
 Si com il venoit del marchié.  
 Uns nués sollers ot encargié:  
 Sis ot fais ramender tols nués  
 Mais onques ne li orent wés. 6320  
 De rire oi jo bone oquoison,  
 Car ains qu’il venist en maison/  
 Morut li vilains, c’est la voire.”  
 Li rois l’a fait enquerre en oïre,  
 Si l’a tolt altressi trové. 6325  
 Et donques a Merlin rové  
 Que li vertés li soit jehie  
 Por que il rist devant l’abeÿe.  
 “Sire, por Deu qui tolt conselle,  
 Jo ris, mais ne fu pas merveille, 6330  
 Des povres gens qu’illuec estoient  
 Et por Deu l’almosne apieloient.  
 Il demandoient la le mains,  
 Et li plus ert devant lor mains.  
 Desos lor piés ot un tresor 6335  
 Moult mervellols d’argent et d’or,  
 A .ii. piés et demi sos terre.”  
 Et li rois fait le tresor querre.  
 Cil ki le quist moult bien le trueve,  
 Si en fait cho que li rois rueve. 6340
- “Merlin, Merlin, li rois a dit,  
 Or t’ai jo plus chier un petit,  
 Por cho que m’as dit verité.  
 Mais, se Dex me gart m’ireté,  
 Jo te rehac moult d’altre part 6345  
 Car tu desis que ja par art  
 N’estroies pris, n’estoit par feme.  
 Par cele foi que doi Eufeme,  
 Sor cuer te rai por ta mençoigne,  
 Car tes dis torne ichi a songe.” 6350  
 Merlins respont: “N’aiés paör,  
 Qu’al wespre loe on le biel jor.  
 N’ai soing encore de fuïr.”  
 “Merlin, tu veïs enfoïr

by telling what I know."  
 "You won't, my friend, I swear it!"  
 "Then I will tell you why I laughed, Sire.  
 As I was about to enter the city, 6315  
 I came across a foolish peasant  
 who was coming from the marketplace.  
 He was carrying a pair of new shoes:  
 he had had them made brand-new,  
 but he would never have any use for them. 6320  
 I had good reason to laugh,  
 because the peasant died  
 before he reached home. And that's the truth."  
 The king quickly sent messengers to look into the matter,  
 and found it was just as Merlin had said. 6325  
 And then he asked Merlin  
 to tell him the truth about  
 why he had laughed at the abbey.  
 "Sire, by God who gives us good counsel,  
 it's no wonder I laughed 6330  
 at the paupers who were standing there  
 begging for alms in the name of God.  
 They were asking for so little,  
 when there was so much within their grasp.  
 Under their feet was a treasure, 6335  
 huge quantities of gold and silver,  
 just two and a half feet beneath the surface."  
 The king sent someone to search for the treasure;  
 the one who looked for it found it with ease,  
 and did with it what the king commanded. 6340

"Merlin, Merlin," said the king,  
 "now I like you a little better,  
 because you are telling the truth.  
 But, may God preserve my inheritance,  
 I still dislike you, on the other hand, 6345  
 because you said you would never be tricked  
 or captured, except by a woman.  
 By the loyalty I owe Eufeme,  
 I am still disturbed by your lying,  
 for your prophecy has turned out to be false." 6350  
 Merlin replied, "Don't fret.  
 It's always darkest before dawn.  
 I'm not ready to run away yet."  
 "Merlin," said the king,

- L'altrier," cho dist li rois, "un cors  
 El chimentire a l'un des cors.  
 Por quoi en presis tu a rire?"  
 Cho dist Merlins: "Ja l'orés, sire.  
 Uns priestres cantoit por le mort,  
 Et uns prodom i ploroit fort. 6355  
 Li prodom en deüst liés estre  
 Car li enfes estoit le priestre,  
 Ki en deüst par droit plorer  
 Et li prodom Deu aörer  
 De cui feme li enfes fu. 6360  
 Por verité le vos desnü.  
 [Por verité le vos desneu]  
 Li prodom n'i fist fier ne cleu  
 Mais li priestres l'aida a faire,  
 Et Dameldex li doinst contraire." 6370  
 "Merlin," dist la roïne Eufeme,  
 "Com tu ses mesdire de feme!  
 Quels joies est de ton mesdire?  
 Ja nel deüst sofrir mes sire!  
 Ains te deüst faire tuer, 6375  
 U en .i. malvais liu jeter."
- Que que la dame die u face,  
 Merlins n'a soig de sa manace.  
 El le tient or por menteör,  
 Por medisant, por trecheör, 6380  
 Mais il le fera veritable  
 Et la dame fera menachable  
 Ki dist qu'il ne set deviner.  
 Or primes vient a merliner:  
 Jo croi bien qu'il devinera 6385  
 Huimais, et qu'il merlinera  
 Par tel engien et tele entente  
 Que la roïne en iert dolente.  
 Si est ele orendroit moult fort,  
 Manace Merlin de la mort. 6390
- "Tort avés, dame," dist li rois.  
 "Si uns Escos u uns Irois  
 Me disist folie u savoir,  
 Se deüst il bien pais avoir  
 Chi devant moi. Ne sui jo sire? 6395  
 Moi lasciés convenir et dire,

“the other day you saw a body  
 being buried in a corner of the cemetery.  
 Why did you burst out laughing at this?”  
 Merlin said, “I’ll tell you, Sire.  
 A priest was chanting for the dead  
 and a man was weeping bitterly there. 6355  
 But the man should have been happy,  
 because the child was the priest’s,  
 who should by all rights have been weeping,  
 while the man whose wife had the child  
 ought to have been thanking God. 6360  
 I will solve the mystery for you:  
 [line repeated]  
 it wasn’t the man who hammered the nail home:  
 the priest helped him do it,  
 may God punish him.” 6370  
 “Merlin,” said Queen Eufeme,  
 “you certainly know how to speak ill of women.  
 What good will come of your slander?  
 My lord shouldn’t tolerate it.  
 We should have you killed, 6375  
 or thrown into some foul place.”

Whatever the lady said or did,  
 Merlin was unmoved by her threats.  
 She thought he was a liar,  
 slanderer and trickster, 6380  
 but he would reveal the truth  
 and prove the lady a liar  
 for saying he was a false prophet.  
 Now he will finally be himself.  
 I am certain that he will reveal the truth 6385  
 and show that he is Merlin  
 with such skill and such results  
 that the queen will regret it.  
 But right now she was feeling strong enough  
 to threaten Merlin with death. 6390

“You are wrong, lady,” the king said.  
 “If a Scotsman or Irishman  
 were to tell me something, wise or foolish,  
 he would be entitled  
 to have peace in my presence. Am I not king? 6395  
 You will kindly allow me to speak and act

Faire mon bon et mon plasir.  
 Sens de feme gist en taisir.  
 Si m'ait Dex, si com jo pens,  
 Uns muïals puet conter lor sens. 6400  
 Car femes n'ont sens que mais un,  
 C'est taisirs. Toltes l'ont commun,  
 Se n'est par aventure alcune,  
 Mais entre .m. nen a pas une  
 Ki gregnor los n'eüst de taire 6405  
 Que de parler. Lasciés me faire,  
 Et vos alés en vostre cambre."  
 Merlins, ki siet desos le lanbre,  
 Ki voit et set trestolte l'uevre,  
 Destemparra ancui tel suevre, 6410  
 Ki sera tels i a moult sure  
 Anchois que viegne nuis obscure.

Li rois dist: "Merlin, par ta foi,  
 Di por quoi resis tu de moi,  
 De toi, et de Silence puis. 6415  
 Moult bielement te proi et ruis  
 Que vertés ne me seit celee:  
 Et puis de la nonain velee,  
 Et savoir voel la verté fine  
 Por quoi resis de la roïne." 6420  
 Merlins respont: "Moult volentiers,  
 Si faites pais endementiers.  
 Sire, jo ris, bien le savés  
 Trestolt si con vos dit avés.  
 N'en puis mais se jo ris de vos, 6425  
 Car, par la foi que jo doi vos,  
 N'a home el mont qui ne resist  
 Por quoi que ses cuers li sesist  
 Si com li miens cuers siet, bials sire,  
 Et s'il seüst altretant dire 6430  
 Con vos orés ains que j'en voise,  
 Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui en poise."

Quant cho entendi la roïne  
 Forment se diolt, la teste encline;  
 Sue, sospire moult a trait, 6435  
 Moult crient qu'ele ait tel baing atrait  
 Qu'ele n'est mie par tolt vraie.  
 Et li none forment s'esmaie.

according to my pleasure.  
 A woman's role is to keep silent.  
 So help me God, I think  
 a mute can tell what women are good for, 6400  
 for they're only good for one thing,  
 and that is to keep silent. They are all alike,  
 and it's hardly a coincidence  
 that there isn't one in a thousand  
 who wouldn't earn more praise by keeping silent 6405  
 than by speaking. Let me handle this.  
 You go to your room."  
 Seated in the carved and gilded hall,  
 Merlin, who sees and knows everything,  
 is preparing a sauce so spicy 6410  
 that it will give several people indigestion  
 before nightfall.

The king said, "Merlin, swear  
 that you will tell me why you laughed at me,  
 at yourself, and then at Silence. 6415  
 I beseech you in all earnest  
 not to hide the truth from me.  
 Tell me also about the veiled nun,  
 and I want to know the real reason  
 you laughed at the queen. 6420  
 Merlin answered, "I'll tell you gladly,  
 if you'll keep quiet during the telling.  
 Sire, it is true that I laughed  
 just as you have said.  
 I couldn't help laughing at you, Sire, 6425  
 because, by the good faith I have pledged you,  
 there's not a man in the world who wouldn't have laughed  
 if his heart had been so full of laughter  
 as mine was, Sire,  
 and if he could tell you as much 6430  
 as I will tell you before I leave,  
 regardless of how some people may feel about it."

When the queen heard this,  
 she was profoundly disturbed. She lowered her gaze,  
 sighed profoundly, and broke out in a sweat. 6435  
 She was so afraid of being in hot water  
 that she was no longer completely sure of herself.  
 And the nun was exceedingly dismayed.

Ne vos puis dire de Silence.  
 Con le remort sa consiënce. 6440  
 "Dolans," fait il, "por que amenai  
 Merlin? com mar i assenai!  
 Jo ai fait al fuer de serjant  
 Ki quiert meïsmes le verjant  
 Dont on le destraint et castie, 6445  
 C'or ai jo tel coze bastie  
 Dont g'iere tols desiretez.  
 Cho est la fine veritez!  
 Voirs est li respis al vilain:  
 Mains hom atrait a une main 6450  
 Par folie desor lui plus  
 Qu'il puist a .ii. boter en sus.  
 Si ai jo fait qui Merlin pris.  
 Par lui perdrai jo tolt mon pris,  
 Car il fera descoverture 6455  
 De quanque ai fait contre nature  
 Jo cuidai Merlin engignier,  
 Si m'ai engignié. Forlignier  
 Cuidai a tols jors us de feme.  
 Cho m'a tolt porchacié Eufeme. 6460  
 Mais Demeldex, qui tols jors velle  
 Sor les bons homes qu'i conselle,  
 Me consalt si con moi estuet  
 Et com Il set et doit et puet;  
 Et se la dame a recovré 6465  
 Selonc qu'ele a tols jors ovré,  
 Ja certes ne m'en pesera.  
 Et jo sai bien que cho sera:  
 Novielement n'avra garant,  
 Merlins fait tres bien l'aparant." 6470

Merlins s'estost, dist: "Oïés, sire,  
 Dirai por quoi jo pris a rire  
 Primes de vos et puis de moi,  
 Puis de Silence que chi voi,  
 De la nonain qui la se cline, 6475  
 Et en apriés de la roïne.  
 De nos .v. ris, cho sachiés vos,  
 Car il n'i a celui de nos  
 Ki nen ait l'un l'altre escarni.  
 Mais or vos ai jo, rois, garni. 6480

As for Silence, I cannot tell you  
 how much his secret thoughts and desires were tormenting  
 him. 6440  
 "What a fool I was," he said, "why did I bring  
 Merlin here? What a catastrophe!  
 I've acted like the sergeant  
 who goes himself to fetch the club  
 with which he will be beaten, 6445  
 for now I have fixed things  
 so that I will be disinherited.  
 There's no getting around it.  
 There is much truth to the old peasant proverb:\*  
 'By their own folly, many bring 6450  
 more trouble upon themselves with one hand  
 than they can push away with two.'  
 That's what I've done by capturing Merlin.  
 Because of him, I will lose everything,  
 for he will reveal 6455  
 what I have done that is contrary to nature.  
 I thought I was tricking Merlin,  
 but I tricked myself. I thought  
 to abandon woman's ways forever,  
 but Eufeme has ruined any chance of that. 6460  
 But may God, the guardian  
 and counsel of upright men,  
 counsel me according to my needs,  
 according to his wisdom, as he has pledged to, as only he can,  
 and if the lady receives her just deserts, 6465  
 in keeping with her behavior,  
 I will certainly not be sorry.  
 And I know this will happen:  
 there'll soon be confirmation of it,  
 for Merlin is clearly doing very well." 6470

Merlin cleared his throat and said, "Listen, Sire,  
 I will tell you why I burst out laughing,  
 first at you, then at myself,  
 then at Silence here,  
 at the downcast nun over there, 6475  
 and finally at the queen.  
 I want you to understand that I laughed at the five of us  
 because there is not one of us  
 who has not tricked one of the others.  
 But now I give you fair warning, King: 6480

Li escars nen est pas honis,  
 Car l'uns de nos en est honis.  
 Li doi de nos, cho sachiés vos,  
 Ont escarnis les .ii. de nos,  
 Sos fainte vesteüre et vaine." 6485  
 Li sale est de chevaliers plaine:  
 Oiant trestols Merlins devine  
 Alques priés de la verté fine,  
 Mais la parole est moult obscure  
 Car dite est par couverture. 6490  
 Ne mais li .iiii. qui i sont  
 Sevent bien priés qu'ele despont;  
 Merlins, Silences et la none  
 Sevent que la parole sone.  
 Si set la roïne altressi, 6495  
 Ele le set tres bien de fi.

Cil de le cort s'esmaient fort,  
 Li uns a droit, l'autres a tort.  
 Cascuns s'esmaie moult de s'uevre:  
 Criement que Merlins ne descuevre. 6500  
 Ne mais icil sont esmaïable  
 Ki sevent bien qu'il sont copable.  
 Or commence mals a monter.  
 Ne vos puis dire ne conter  
 Com sont en male sospechon. 6505  
 Merlins a liute tel lechon  
 Que s'il le recomence a lire,  
 A recorder, et a redire,  
 Et a descovrir tolt le blasme,  
 Honie en iert al mains la dame. 6510  
 Et li none en sera honie  
 Qu'ele n'est pas par tolt onie  
 As autres nonains par le mont.  
 Atant li rois Merlin semont/  
 Que parolt plus apertement. 6515  
 "Merlin, jo voel savoir coment  
 L'uns de nos puet l'autre escarnir.  
 Merlin, tu m'en dois bien garnir,  
 Et si me fai descoverture  
 Puis de le fainte vesteüre. 6520  
 Quel sont li doi qui gabé sont  
 Et li doi qui gabés les ont?  
 Quels est li honis, par ta foi?

the share in the deception is not equal for all parties  
 concerned,  
 for one of us is dishonored by it.  
 Two of us, I'll have you know,  
 have tricked two of us  
 by wearing borrowed finery." 6485  
 The hall was filled with knights,  
 all listening to Merlin  
 almost revealing the complete truth,  
 but obscuring his meaning  
 by means of veiled statements. 6490  
 Only the four in question  
 knew very well what was being said:  
 Merlin, Silence and the nun  
 knew what his words meant.  
 The queen knew as well — 6495  
 she knew very well indeed.  
 The courtiers were greatly alarmed,  
 some with good reason, others needlessly.  
 Each was worried about his own deeds;  
 all feared that Merlin would reveal everything. 6500  
 Those who knew they were guilty  
 were not more frightened than the others.  
 The atmosphere became increasingly tense.  
 I cannot find words to tell you  
 what dreadful suspicions were aroused. 6505  
 Merlin has begun to give such a lecture  
 that if he picks up where he left off  
 and continues to confirm, affirm  
 and uncover all the wrongdoings,  
 the lady will be disgraced at the very least. 6510  
 So will the nun,  
 for she is not exactly like  
 the rest of the nuns in the world.  
 Then the king admonished Merlin  
 to speak more plainly. 6515  
 "Merlin, I want to know how  
 we have deceived one another.  
 Merlin, you must let me know what is happening.  
 Tell me the truth  
 about the borrowed finery: 6520  
 which two have been tricked,  
 and which two are the tricksters?  
 You swore to tell the truth — who is dishonored?

Merlin, jo voel savoir par toi.”  
 “Sire rois, c’est la verté fine 6525  
 Que honi vos a la roïne.  
 Si sarés bien coment, ains none.  
 Cil doi, Silence et la none,  
 Sont li doi qui gabés nos ont,  
 Et nos li doi qui gabé sunt. 6530  
 Rois, cele none tient Eufeme.  
 Escarnist vos ses dras de feme.  
 Rois, or vos ai jo bien garni.  
 Silences ra moi escarni  
 En wallés dras, c’est vertés fine, 6535  
 Si est desos les dras meschine.  
 La vesteüre, ele est de malle.  
 La nonain, qui n’a soig de halle,  
 Bize, *ni vent*, ki point et giele.  
 A vesteüre de femiele. 6540  
 Silences qui moult set et valt,  
 Bials sire rois, se Dex me salt,  
 Ne sai home qui tant soit fors  
 Ki le venquist par son effors.  
 Et une feme, tendre cose, 6545  
 Vos poet honir et set et ose.  
 Et c’une feme me ra pris,  
 Quele merveille est se j’en ris,  
 Qu’ansdeus nos ont ensi deçut,  
 Qu’eles nos ont tel plaît esmut 6550  
 Comme .xx. .m. ne porent faire.  
 Sire, jo ris de cest affaire.”

Or est plus angoissçols li rois  
 Que nus Escos ne nus Englois.  
 Enaïses que mors fust son vuel: 6555  
 Onques encor n’ot mais tel duel.  
 Trestolt l’ont oï li baron,  
 C’aïnc n’i ot dit mot a laron.  
 Ne lor ert rien fors por le roi,  
 Car la dame ert de grant desroi, 6560  
 Et plaine de grant vilonie  
 Et d’orguel et de felonie. /  
 Moult ot cruels tols jors esté  
 Et souffraitolse d’onesté.  
 Poi prometoit et mains donoit 6565  
 Et moult vilment s’abandonoit.

Merlin, I want you to tell me!"  
 "My lord king, the truth is 6525  
 that the queen has dishonored you.  
 You shall know how before noon.  
 These two, Silence and the nun,  
 are the deceivers;  
 you and I are the deceived. 6530  
 King, this nun is Eufeme's lover;  
 he is deceiving you in woman's dress.  
 Now I've spoken plainly enough, King.  
 Silence, on the other hand, tricked me  
 by dressing like a young man: in truth, 6535  
 he is a girl beneath his clothes.  
 Only the clothing is masculine.  
 The nun, who has no need to fear the scorching sun  
 or the north wind's blast that stings and freezes,  
 is a woman in clothing only. 6540  
 Silence is wise and valiant,  
 good Sir King, so help me God,  
 I don't know any man, however strong,  
 who could have conquered him in combat.  
 A woman, a tender little thing, 6545  
 knows she can dishonor you and does.  
 And it was a woman who captured me.  
 Is it any wonder I'm laughing,  
 when they have deceived both of us like this,  
 when they have set a snare for us 6550  
 such as twenty thousand men couldn't?  
 Sire, I think this is really funny."

Now the king was much more upset  
 than anyone else in his kingdom, Scot or Englishman.  
 He almost wished for death: 6555  
 he had never felt such anguish.  
 His men had heard everything  
 and could not even whisper a word.  
 They cared only for the king's honor:  
 the lady's wickedness knew no bounds; 6560  
 she was malicious,  
 arrogant and perfidious.  
 She had always been cruel  
 and dishonest.  
 She had promised little and given less; 6565  
 she was vile and depraved.

Sor cuer l'avoit la cors trestol[t]e.  
 Li rois en est encor en dolte.  
 Fait Merlin fermement tenir  
 Et dont a fait avant venir 6570  
 La nonain, sil fait despollier, . . .  
 Et Silence despollier roeve.  
 Tost si com Merlins dist les trueve.  
 Tolt issi l'a trové par tolt.  
 En la sale ot moult grant escolt: 6575  
 Nus n'i parla se li rois non,  
 U s'il nel conmanda par non.  
 Li rois a dit oiant trestols:  
 "Silence, moult as esté prols,  
 Bials chevaliers, vallans et buens; 6580  
 Mellor n'engendra rois ne cuens.

[O]r te conjur jo par le foi  
 Que tu dois Dameldeu et moi,  
 Por quoi tu t'as si contenu  
 Et coment cho est avenu? 6585  
 Nos veöns bien que tu iés feme.  
 Di por quoi se clama Eufeme  
 Que tu le voisis efforcier.  
 Son wel te fesist escorcier."  
 "Sire, se Dex bien me consente 6590  
 Il n'est pas drois que jo vos mente.  
 Mes pere fist de moi son buen. . .  
 Et quant jo ving a tel aäge  
 Que gent comencent estre sage  
 Mes pere me fist asavoir 6595  
 Que jo ja ne poroie avoir,  
 Sire, ireté en vostre tierre.  
 Et por mon iretage quierre  
 Me rova vivre al fuer de malle,  
 Fendre mes dras, aler al halle, 6600  
 Et jo nel vol pas contredire.  
 A .xv. ans vig a cort, bials sire.  
 Si m'enama lués la roïne.  
 Ne li vol dire men covine  
 Ne m'encusast par aventure 6605  
 Et mostrast avant *ma* nature. /  
 Ele cuida que jel lassasce  
 Por orguel, qu'amer nel degnasce.  
 Venistes en la cambre o nos:

The courtiers had no trouble believing the whole thing.  
 The king still had his doubts.  
 He had Merlin seized and held firmly,  
 and then had the nun 6570  
 brought forward and disrobed,  
 and he ordered Silence to be undressed.  
 It was just as Merlin had said:  
 he found everything in its proper place.  
 There was complete silence in the hall: 6575  
 no one would speak except the king himself,  
 or whomever he commanded by name.  
 The king said so that everyone could hear,  
 "Silence, you have been a very valiant,  
 courageous and worthy knight; 6580  
 neither count nor king ever fathered better.

Now I conjure you, by the faith  
 you owe God and myself, to tell  
 why you have conducted yourself in this manner  
 and how it came about. 6585  
 We can see for ourselves that you are a woman.  
 Tell me why Eufeme claimed  
 that you were trying to rape her.  
 Her ill-will might have cost you dear."  
 "Sire, if God will allow it, 6590  
 it is only right that I should tell you the truth.  
 My father did with me as he saw fit. . .  
 and when I reached  
 the age of understanding,  
 my father explained to me 6595  
 that I could never inherit  
 in your land, Sire.  
 And in order to claim my inheritance,  
 he asked me to live like a man,  
 to wear men's dress and not protect my complexion. 6600  
 I didn't want to go against him.  
 When I was fifteen and came to live at court, Sire,  
 the queen immediately fell in love with me.  
 I didn't want to reveal my secret to her,  
 for I feared she might denounce me 6605  
 and reveal my true nature.  
 She thought I was resisting her  
 out of arrogance, that I scorned to love her.  
 And so, when you came into the chamber where we were,

Ele se clama lués a vos 6610  
 Que jo le vol a force amer.  
 Vos m'envoïastes dela mer.  
 Cuidastes le, par verité.  
 Jo me celai por m'ireté;  
 Ne vos vol pas le verté dire. 6615  
 Or savés comment il est, sire.  
 D'autre part ne vos vol irer,  
 La dame viers vos empirer.  
 Puis reving jo en vostre tierre,  
 S'aidai a finer vostre guierre, 6620  
 Et la dame me rasali.  
 N'euc cure de parler a li:  
 Por cho me volt, sire, avillier  
 Et fors del país essillier.  
 La vertés nel puet consentir 6625  
 Que jo vos puïssce rien mentir,  
 Ne jo n'ai soig mais de taisir.  
 Faites de moi vostre plaisir."

Li rois a dit .iii. mos roials:  
 "Silence, moult estes loials. 6630  
 Miols valt certes ta loialtés  
 Que ne face ma roialtés.  
 Il n'est si preciose gemme,  
 Ne tels tresors com bone feme.  
 Nus hom ne poroit esproisier 6635  
 Feme qui n'a soig de boisier.  
 Silences, ses qu'as recovré  
 Por cho que tu as si ovré?  
 Amer te voel *et* manaidier."\*  
 "Sire, cho me puet bien aidier." 6640  
 "Ses que jo ferai por t'amor,  
 Que jamais nen oras clamor?  
 Femes raront lor iretage."  
 Silence respont come sage:  
 "Chi a gent don, Dex le vos mire, 6645  
 Et al fait pert quels est li sire."  
 Cil del palais en sont moult lié.  
 Le roi enclinent trosqu'al pié.  
 Prendent Silence a beneïr  
 Et dient Dex le puist tehir. 6650

she immediately claimed 6610  
 that I was trying to take her by force.  
 You sent me abroad.  
 You believed that she was telling the truth,  
 but I was disguising myself for my inheritance,  
 and didn't want to tell you the truth. 6615  
 Now you know how things stand, Sire.  
 I also didn't want to arouse your anger  
 and compromise the lady's position as queen.  
 Then I returned to your land  
 to help put down your rebellion, 6620  
 and the lady went at me again.  
 I didn't even want to speak to her,  
 and that is why, Sire, she wanted to ruin me  
 and send me into exile.  
 Truth does not permit me 6625  
 to keep anything from you,  
 nor do I care to keep silent any longer.  
 Do with me what you will."

The king said a few royal words:  
 "Silence, you are very loyal. 6630  
 Indeed, the price of your loyalty  
 is far above that of my royalty.  
 There is no more precious gem,  
 nor greater treasure, than a virtuous woman.  
 No man can assess the value 6635  
 of a woman who can be trusted.  
 Silence, know that you have saved yourself  
 by your loyal actions.  
 I give you my friendship and protection."  
 "Sire, I certainly have need of them." 6640  
 "Do you know what I will do for you,  
 so that you will never have cause for complaint—  
 women will be allowed to inherit again."  
 Silence replied judiciously,  
 "This is a noble gift. May God reward you for it. 6645  
 It is by his acts that one knows who is truly king."  
 The courtiers were very happy.  
 They bowed deeply to the king,  
 and blessed Silence,  
 asking God to exalt her. 6650

Li rois ot Eufeme en despit.  
 Onques ne volt doner respit,  
 Ne nus nel quist ne demanda.  
 Si com li rois le conmanda/  
 I fu la none donc deffaite, 6655  
 Et la dame a chevals detraite.  
 Li rois en a fait grant justice.  
 Or est la roïne as las prise  
 Dont el volt Silence lachier.  
 Si vait: tels cuide porcachier 6660  
 Honte et damage avoec altrui  
 Ki soi meïsme quiert anui.  
 Nus hom qui fust ne plainst Eufeme.  
 Silence atornent come feme.  
 Segnor, que vos diroie plus? 6665  
 Ains ot a non Scilensiüs:  
 Ostés est -us, mis i est -a  
 Si est només Scilentiä.

D'illuec al tierc jor que Nature  
 Ot recovree sa droiture 6670  
 Si prist Nature a repolir  
 Par tolt le cors et a tolir  
 Tolt quanque ot sor le cors de malle.  
 Ainc n'i lassa nes point de halle:  
 Remariä lués en *son vis*\* 6675  
 Assisement le roze al lis.  
 Li rois le prist a feme puis —  
 Cho dist l'estorie u jo le truis —  
 Par loëment de ses princhiers,  
 Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers. 6680  
 Et dont i vient li cuens ses pere,  
 Et Eufemie avoec, sa mere.  
 Grant joie en ont, cho est a droit.  
 Maistre Heldris dist chi endroit  
 C'on doit plus bone feme amer 6685  
 Que haïr malvaïse u blasmer.  
 Si mosterroie bien raison:  
 Car feme a menor oquoison,  
 Por que ele ait le liu ne l'aise,  
 De l'estre bone que malvaïse, 6690  
 S'ele oeuvre bien contre nature.  
 Bien mosterroie par droiture  
 C'on en doit faire gregnor plait

The king despised Eufeme.  
 He had no wish to spare her,  
 nor did anyone ask him to.  
 In accordance with royal decree,  
 the nun was executed, 6655  
 and the queen was drawn and quartered.  
 Thus was the king's justice accomplished.  
 The queen was caught in the trap  
 she had set for Silence.  
 That's how it goes: he who plots 6660  
 to harm others  
 seeks his own undoing.  
 No one was sorry for Eufeme.  
 They dressed Silence as a woman.  
 Lords, what more can I say? 6665  
 Once he was called Silentius:  
 they removed the -us, added an -a,  
 and so he was called Silencia.

After Nature  
 had recovered her rights, 6670  
 she spent the next three days refinishing  
 Silence's entire body, removing every trace  
 of anything that being a man had left there.  
 She removed all traces of sunburn:  
 rose and lily were once again 6675  
 joined in conjugal harmony on her face.  
 Then the king took her to wife —  
 that's what it said in the book where I found this story —  
 on the advice of his  
 most loyal and trusted advisers. 6680  
 And then the count her father  
 and her mother, Eufemie, came to court.  
 They were overjoyed, as was only fitting.  
 Master Heldris says here and now  
 that one should praise a good woman 6685  
 more than one should blame a bad one.  
 And I will tell you why:  
 a woman has less motivation,  
 provided that she even has the choice,  
 to be good than to be bad. 6690  
 Doing the right thing comes unnaturally to her.  
 I put it to you directly  
 that one should take far greater account of these circumstances

Que de celi qui le mal fait.  
 Se j'ai jehi blasmee Eufeme 6695  
 Ne s'en doit irier bone feme.  
 Se j'ai Eufeme moult blasmee  
 Jo ai Silence plus loëe.  
 Ne s'en doit irier bone fame,  
 Ne sor li prendre altrui blasme, 6700  
 Mais efforcier plus de bien faire.  
 Chi voel a fin mon conte traire./  
 Beneöis soit qui le vos conte,  
 Beneöis soit qui fist le conte.  
 A cials, a celes qui l'oïrent 6705  
 Otroit Jhesus cho qu'il desirent.

Explicit.

S I L E N C E

than of the woman who does wrong.  
If I have blamed Eufeme today, 6695  
a good woman should not take offense,  
for if I have censured Eufeme,  
I have praised Silence more.  
A good woman should neither take offense  
nor blame herself for someone else's faults, 6700  
but simply strive all the harder to do what is right.  
I want to bring my story to a close.  
God's blessing on the narrator,  
God's blessing on the author.  
And as for those—male and female—who listened to it, 6705  
may Jesus grant them their dearest wish.



## APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF "GRISANDOLE"

AVENABLE, daughter of Mathem, a German duke exiled by Frole, a usurper, disguises herself as a squire called Grisandole, enters the service of Julius Caesar, emperor of Rome, and becomes knight and seneschal of the realm. Merlin, knowing that the emperor is troubled by a dream in which a sow with a golden crown is serviced by twelve wolf whelps, bursts into city and court in the form of a great stag and tells emperor and populace that only the wild man of the woods can interpret the dream. He then vanishes by magic. The emperor promises his daughter to anyone who captures either wild man or stag. One day the stag appears to Grisandole, the only one not to abandon the quest, and tells her to come the following day with five companions, prepare food, and then hide. When the wild man falls asleep by the fire after a huge meal, Grisandole easily captures him. On the way to court, the wild man laughs three times. When Grisandole asks why, he insults her, alluding to her unnatural state. Brought before the emperor, he promises to reveal the reasons for his laughter before all the barons of the empire, and asks that the queen and her ladies be present. He reveals that the emperor's dream was a warning that the queen is deceiving him: all twelve ladies-in-waiting are really men. The emperor has them all burned. Then the wild man reveals that Grisandole is a woman, delivering a diatribe on the deceitful nature of women. After revealing the other reasons he laughed (and inserting a few prophecies), he advises the emperor to marry Grisandole/Avenable, restore her parents' estates, and marry his daughter to her brother. The wild man refuses to reveal the whereabouts of the stag or his own identity. He departs from the hall abruptly, leaving a Hebrew inscription in the doorpost. After a successful campaign against Frole, the marriages take place. Later, a Greek messenger interprets the inscription (whereupon the letters vanish): both stag and wild man were Merlin.



## NOTES TO THE OLD FRENCH TEXT

Words in square brackets in the text are Thorpe's emendations. MS = Manuscript, TH = Thorpe, LC = Lecoy, IG = Iker-Gittleman (in personal correspondence), GD = Godefroy, TL = Tobler-Lommatzsch.

2. *a talle*. The expression can mean "made to measure," but also refers to the composition of verse, *tailler la rime*. In poetic treatises of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, *taille* is regularly used to designate the form of couplets. Cf. TL, with reference to Paul Meyer, *Romania* 15 (1894), 461–462.
7. LC: *Que* = *qui*, as often in this text.
73. MS *n*.
77. With LC; MS *muire*.
116. With LC; MS *carcre*.
132. With TH; MS *garder et doner*.
146. MS *danor wege*.
192. *corus* MS (otherwise unattested); LC *corlius*.
269. MS *Et lor dist tels* (LC no suggestion).
281. MS *qui*; *qu'i* for *qu'il* as often in this text.
340. With MS (*fories i a*), vs TH.
350. *tolte* MS: I posit metathesis *\*tolet*; cf. glossary (LC: "me reste obscur").
373. MS *estrait*.
454. *Qui* MS; LC *Cil*.
463. LC; MS *estruit*.
561. LC; MS *anchois*.
567. LC; MS *il* (as also 567, 597, 2010).
635. LC; MS *lisiet*.
755. MS *amaint*.
805. LC; MS *estoit*.
833. MS *refust*.
835. *El* MS; LC *Ne*. (Depends on interpretation of *dangier*; cf. glossary.)
945. MS *malges*.
954. MS *prendes*.
1403. MS *veu*.

1418. MS *desos*.  
 1453. LC; MS *cestui*.  
 1575. LC; MS *tant*.  
 1638. *il*: LC probably for *el*. (Or is it simply that the narrator has launched into a general statement and forgotten the antecedent?)  
 1759. LC; MS *poons*.  
 1848. LC; MS *ki fais degrosse et de delie*.  
 1890. MS *sa*.  
 2039. MS *descuser*.  
 2125. MS *qunt*.  
 2176. *desirrer* MS; cf. glossary.  
 2225. LC; MS *m*.  
 2243. *soolte* MS; LC *sooste* (cf. GD *soiste*).  
 2308. LC; MS *se nus*.  
 2318. MS *repent*.  
 2391. LC; MS *palais*.  
 2499. MS *ki se*.  
 2579. MS *Queles ia naie io conte*.  
 2604. MS *sa*.  
 2664. MS *con*.  
 2872. MS *en el grage*. Cf. glossary. (TH *el en grage* = *grange*; LC "2871-72 me reste incomprehensibles.")  
 2937. LC; MS .  
 3027. MS *c'on n'ait*.  
 3100. MS *lenfant*.  
 3209. MS *colp*.  
 3232. *cha jue*: sic MS. TH *chaive* is impossible (LC).  
 3408. LC; MS *seil neuscent*.  
 3410. MS *molt*.  
 3629. MS *penset requelt*.  
 3720. IG; MS *mais maiast* (TH *mals m'aiast*). (Or perhaps *mais* = *mauvais*; *maiast* is then more easily understood as a scribal error: starting to write *mais* again.)  
 3765. MS *ma*.  
 3844. LC; MS *se*.  
 3845. LC; MS *vus*.  
 3866. MS *Que del enfant*. (TH *Que cil enfans*, which makes no sense.)  
 3890. LC; MS *moult convenroit esmaier*. 4044. *athace* = metathesis for *atache*.  
 4102. MS *mabre* (but scribe had written *marbre* for *arbre* in 4101).  
 4210. MS *tels est ille*.  
 4756. LC's punctuation (*qui* = *si on*).  
 5434. MS *Li*.  
 5479. *le* LC; MS *les*.

5833. *C'om* TH; MS *C'un om*.  
 5838. LC; MS *en*.  
 6079. With MS *dont lenemis Adan enbut* (TH *dont, je ne mis Adan en but*; LC *dont le venins Adam enbut*).  
 6582. LC; MS *conur*.  
 6606. LC; MS *par*.  
 6639. MS *amer te voelent*.  
 6675. LC; MS *ensomis*.



## NOTES TO THE TRANSLATION

- 145 As Thorpe points out (1972, 32), the state of war between England and Norway is found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, although there is no king Begon.
- 426 The prayer that follows (427–72) belongs to a type common in Old French literature, the so-called “biblical-creed-narrative” prayer (see Koch 1940). The theological points concerning angels (449 ff.) are solidly within the “*cur deus homo*” tradition from St. Anselm on, as Lecoy remarks (1978, 113). The gratuitous negative remark regarding the Jewish faith (472) is unfortunately formulaic in medieval romance. (Wolfram’s *Parzival* is an admirable exception.)
- 593 Women often appear as healers and physicians in medieval romance. The most famous are undoubtedly Morgan le Fay and Queen Iseut of Ireland. For many examples, see Hughes (1943).
- 645 The venom of snakes or dragons is frequently associated with the affliction of passionate love. Lancelot, incurably in love with Guinevere, must be healed by the maiden Amable when he drinks from a fountain poisoned by two serpents; Amable in turn is tormented by love for Lancelot. A very funny version is *Le Bel Inconnu*, where a maiden is cursed to appear as a huge snake until the hero will kiss her.
- 694 The *bos d’Ardane* of Cadur’s dream is the archetypal forest (originally the *Arduenna silva* of antiquity, later the Ardennes) frequented by outlawed or questing heroes of chansons de geste and courtly romances. Shakespeare’s Forest of Arden, though technically on the Avon rather than the Meuse, retains the mythical qualities of its medieval prototype.
- 837 In taking the initiative here, Eufemie is a typical romance heroine (Lasry 1985). Lavine in *Eneas* sends the hero a love-note attached to an arrow; princess Guilliadun in Marie de France’s *Eliduc* arranges a tryst and gives the hero ring and belt. Chrétien’s Blanchefleur simply climbs into Perceval’s bed.
- 882–915 The belabored punning is a parody of the famous *mer/amer/amor* of Thomas de Bretagne’s *Tristan*.
- 964 This is the Latin proverb, “Honores mutant mores.”

- 1226 *joi d'amors*: a collective feeling of refined, exalted joy. The lady represents the epitome of courtly values; she is the outward manifestation of the perfection of ennobling love.
- 1615 The passage is an expansion of the proverbial saying (Tobler No. 105), "Encontre mort nul ressort" (nothing can prevail against death).
- 1866 For the theme, see Malkiel (1977). Of the many possible sources of inspiration (aside from Alain, of course) Heldris seems to have had Chrétien's Enide particularly in mind:

The maid was charming, in sooth, for Nature had used all her skill in forming her. Nature herself had marvelled more than five hundred times how upon this one occasion she had succeeded in creating such a perfect thing. Never again could she strive so successfully to reproduce her pattern. Nature bears witness concerning her that never was so fair a creature seen in all the world. In truth I say that never did Iseut the Fair have such radiant golden tresses that she could be compared to this maiden. The complexion of her forehead and face was clearer and more delicate than the lily. But with wondrous art her face with all its delicate pallor was suffused with a fresh crimson which Nature had bestowed upon her. Her eyes were so bright that they seemed like two stars. God never formed better nose, mouth, and eyes. What shall I say of her beauty?

(trans. W. W. Comfort)

- 2354–55 This is a dig at Perceval, the holy fool raised in sylvan ignorance.
- 2479 *el a en tine que ferine* (there's something in the barrel besides flour); for this proverb, cf. Morawski No. 627, "El a en tine, dit le suriz, que farine."
- 2747 *par les serjans de la maison*, etc.; cf. Morawski No. 194, "Au seneschal de la maison/peust on connoistre le baron."
- 2761–65 The "Breton *lai*" played on the *viele* would be a lyric poem with a subject matter like that of Marie de France's short narrative *lais*. "Gueron" (or Guiron) is the "*lai pitus d'amur*" sung by Iseut in Thomas's *Tristan* (833–945), in which the heart of a lover is eaten by his unsuspecting beloved. Although Mabon, a demoted Celtic divinity, appears fairly frequently in Arthurian romance, chiefly as enchanter, a *lai* of Mabon does not seem to have survived. See Gelzer (1925).
- 2939 *ki temple puet ostel avoir*; cf. Morawski No. 2158, "Qui temple vient a son hostel/ mieulx lui en est a son souper."
- 3209 *por bien fait col frait rendre*: to return evil for good; cf. Morawski No. 463, "de bien fait col frait."

- 3257 *vergant*; cf. Morawski No. 1154, "Maint home cuillent la verge dont il sunt batu"; cf. also 6444.
- 3313 St. Anthony's Fire is a name for a terribly painful skin disease usually identified as erysipelas, although it frequently was gangrenous ergotism.
- 3326 *sans caperon li ferons cape*, "we'll short-change him," plays with the literal meaning of a proverbial expression (he won't need a hood because his head will be missing). Cf. Morawski No. 1170, Tobler No. 132 "mal fait la chape qui ne fait le chaperon," to do something half way, or TL *doner chape sans chaperon* "etwas Halbes schenken." Cf. also the variant (Tobler note to No. 132), *Se il sens perte s'en eschape/ Senz caperon set taillier cape*."
- 3527 The vicle of Silence's day was a six-stringed instrument very much like a lute, without the small rosined wheel it acquired in later times and still has today. (This later form of the vicle is also known as "hurdy-gurdy.")
- 3559 This old man is certainly Merlin in disguise, penetrating Silence's disguise and unmasking her, just as he appears later as white-haired old man (i.e., in human form, not stag, as in "Grisandole") to help her with his own capture. Thus, Heldris forges a link between the two parts of the narrative.
- 3570 The old man would say, with Morawski No. 1285, "Meus vaut science que richece" (wisdom is better than wealth)
- 3817 Here, and especially 3935–48, the accusation of homosexuality, a great favorite in courtly romances (made, e.g., against Eneas in very crude and graphic terms by Lavine and her mother) is directed against our female transvestite protagonist to far more profound narrative ends (see introduction and Bloch, 1986).
- 3818 *jovenes sains est vies diables*, proverbial expression, cf. Tobler No. 32, "Qui juenes saintist, vieuz enrage," and variant in note: "qui jeunes saintist, vius est diables."
- 4243–44 A laundered paraphrase of a proverb; cf. Tobler No. 240: "Quant plus remuet on la merde, et ele plus put" (the more you stir up shit, the more it stinks).
- 5281 The passage paraphrases a proverb, Morawski No. 883: "Il fait mal nourrir autrui enfant/ car il s'en va quant il est grant" (It's a bad idea to nurture other people's children because they leave when they grow up).
- 5557–9 These are the realistic-sounding names that Thorpe had no luck tracing. No one else has tried, so far as I know.
- 5784 The story of Vortigern's tower occurs in *L'Estoire Merlin*, Wace, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and elsewhere (two dragons fighting under the earth were causing the trouble), but as Thorpe notes (1972, 31),

- Heldris adds that he took to the woods at that point, prophesying that he could only be captured by a woman.
- 5892 Aymes de Dordonne was obliged to fight his own sons out of feudal obligation to Charlemagne (in the *chanson de geste Renaut de Montauban* or *Les quatre fils Aymon*).
- 6145 Here Heldris unexpectedly provides Silence with some Arthurian motivation. The episode of the siring of Arthur is from Geoffrey of Monmouth, 8:18–19.
- 6191 For details as to how many times Merlin laughed at what in which sources or analogues, see Paton (1907), Thorpe (1972) and Lecoy (1978).
- 6352 *al vespre loe on le biel jor* (one praises a beautiful day at sunset) = Morawski No. 197; Tobler No. 32 has “au vespre loe on le jour, au matin son oste” (one praises the day at sundown, and one’s host at daybreak). Similarly Tobler, notes to No. 12, “Qu’au vespre loe l’en lo jor/ Quant l’en voit que bele est la fin/ Si fet l’en son oste au matin.” My translation reverses the imagery, but I preferred it to “all’s well that ends well.”
- 6449 *li respis al vilain*: I haven’t been able to find this proverb.

## PROPER NAMES (PERSONS AND PLACES)

[N.B. For Cadon, Ebain, Merlin, and Silence I have listed first and last occurrences and noted where there are clusters or gaps in their frequency.]

Adan 1703; 6031, 6035, 6054, 6058, 6060, 6067, 6079 (Adam).

Ades 583 (one of King Evan's servants—name invented for rhyme).

Aimon 5892 (Aymes de Dordonne in *Les Quatre Fils Aymon* or *Renaus de Montauban*; cf. notes to trans.).

Alemagne 3458 (Germany).

Alixandre, roi 5518 (Alexander the Great).

Alvergne 3458 (Auvergne).

Amor 635, 649, 677, 679, 680, 684, 720, 726, 743, 748, 752, 754, 787, 838, 872, 902, 1058, 1362, 1555 (Love personified).

Ardane, bois d' 694 (archetypal forest; cf. notes to trans.).

Artus 109, 6154, 6156 (King Arthur).

Avarice 39, 88 (Avarice personified).

Beg(h)es/Begon 145, 164, 165, 173, 228 (King of Norway).

Berta(i)gne 2703, 2895, 2920, 2930 (Brittany).

Blois 4496 (Blois).

Blois, li cuens de 4534, 4604 (an adviser to the King of France).

Borgoigne, duc de 3216 (Duke of Burgundy).

Cadon 392, frequ. until 1657, then 4422 (King Evan's nephew, dragon-slayer, Eufemie's husband, Silence's father. He becomes Count of Cornwall at the death of Count Renald).

Cestre 293, 337, 537; 5288, 5317, 5321, 5481, 5669 (Chester).

Cestre, li cuens de 1309, 1390, 1399, 1463, 5407 (vassal of King Evan, wily politician, later rebel; cf. Conans).

Clermont 4498 (Clermont-Ferrand).

Clermont, li cuens de 4582, 4597, 4631, 4649, 4771 (sage adviser to the King of France).

Conans, li cuens 5619 (the Count of Chester).

Cornualle 1, 397, 1297, 1450, 1543, 2697 (Cornwall).

Cornualle, li valles de 5556, 5572 (what the French troops call Silence).

Durame 114 (Durham).

Ebain/Ebayn 107 frequ. until 372; 1545, 1690; 2444, 2831; 4081, 4100, 4178, 4320, 4336, 4388, 4427, 4436, 4500, 4506, 4545, 4850, 5104, 5195, 5272 (Evan, King of England).

Englet(i)er(r)e 107, 147, 237, 277, 315, 1735, 2449, 2695 3483, 4883, 5186, 5226, 5262, 52 63, 5273, 5287 (England).

Engletiere, li rois d' 4769 (the king of England).

Englois 111, 140, 3712, 6554 (Englishman).

Escot 6131, 6392, 6554 (Scot).

Espagne 3329, 3457, 5391 (Spain).

Eufeme 165, 229, 3703, 5242, 5680, 5804, 6180, 6348, 6371, 6460, 6531, 6587, 6651, 6663, 6695, 6697 (daughter of King Begon of Norway, wife of Evan, temptress and enemy of Silence. N.B. called Eufemie 5206 to rhyme with *mie*).

Eufemie 402, 549, 593, 606, 797, 830, 833, 879, 901, 937, 984, 985, 987, 1018, 1063, 1312, 1441, 1501, 1508, 1597, 1633, 1671, 1958, 2145, 3014; 6682 (daughter of Count Renald of Cornwall, skilled physician, wife of Cador, mother of Silence).

Eufemie 5206 (= Eufeme).

Eurincestre 338 (= Winchester).

Eve/Evain 1704, 6036 (Eve).

Faintise 1550 (Deceit personified).

Fort(i)gierne 5784, 5910 (King Vortigern of Britain).

Franc(h)e 100, 3455, 4253, 4381, 4966, 4977, 5105, 5209 (France).

France, li rois de 4253, 4289, 4303, 4654, 4677, 4895, 4905, 5253, 5338, 5357 (the King of France).

Francois/Franchois, li 4418, 5299, 5334, 5369, 5387, 5522, 5527, 5533, 5550, 5557, 5569, 5576, 5581, 5642, 5672 (the French).

Galtier 1740 (posthumous and short-lived child of a nobleman and Cador's cousin. After his death, his mother is midwife to Eufemie and nursemaid to Silence).

Gascoigne 3215 (Gascony).

Gorlain 6145 (Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, whose shape Uther assumes—through Merlin's enchantment—to sleep with the Duchess Ygernia and engender Arthur).

Gueron 2762 (the title of a *lai*; cf. notes to trans.).

Gui de Calmont 5557 (one of three French knights who rescue King Evan in battle).

Hantone 4885 (Southampton).

Heldris de Cornualle 1, 6684 (Master Heldris of Cornwall, author of *Silence*).

Herincestre 538 (= Winchester).  
 Honors 1557 (Honor personified).  
 Honte 1558, 1563, 1568, 1570, 1571, 1574 (Shame personified).  
 Hyebles de Castiel Landon 5559 (one of three French knights who rescue King  
 Evan in battle).

Irois 1302, 4222, 6392 (Irishman).  
 Izeuls/Izelt 3700, 3701 (Yseult [Isolde] beloved of Tristan).

Jhesus Cris 1702, 1972, 2070, 5688, 6706 (Jesus Christ).  
 Jordan 437 (the river Jordan).  
 Jozeph 3705 (the Biblical Joseph, who is tempted by Potiphar's wife).  
 Judeu, Juis 436, 443, 472 (Jew[s]).

Londres 4900 (London).  
 Longin 6167 (Longinus, who pierced Christ's side with his spear).  
 Losenge/Lozenge 71, 1552 (Flattery personified).

Mabon 2765 (title of a *lai*; cf. notes to trans.).  
 Malduit 3177, 3576 (pseudonym of Silence).  
 Malroi, bos de 559 (the wood where Cador killed the dragon).  
 Merlin 5792, 5794, 5808 with high density until 6573 (Merlin).  
 Monjoie 5555, 5643 (the battle-cry of the French).  
 Monmartre 4257, 4403, 4979 (Montmartre).  
 Mont Loon 5265 (Laon).  
 Mors, uns 5539 (a Saracen).

Nantes 2936, 2941 (Nantes).  
 Nature 1027, 1228, 1679, 1799, 1805, 1825, 1835, 1851, 1866, 1869, 1893,  
 1900, 1902, 1916, 1918, 1921, 1927, 1943, 1956, 2020, 2254, 2257, 2268,  
 2294, 2295, 2298, 2300, 2346, 2423, 2500, 2527, 2540, 2544, 2550, 2590,  
 2594, 2604, 2605, 2614, 2619, 2655; 5154; 5607; 6002, 6005, 6011, 6020,  
 6030, 6039, 6043, 6045, 6051, 6053, 6090; 6669, 6671 (Nature or Heredity  
 personified).  
 Navers 4497 (Nevers).  
 Nav(i)ers, li cuens de 4629, 4650 (adviser to the King of France).  
 Noretture 2267, 2275, 2293, 2299, 2348, 2374, 2424, 2547, 2587, 2607, 5153,  
 5996, 5997, 6009, 6012, 6016, 6066, 6088 (Nurture or Environment  
 personified).  
 Norois 231 (the Norwegian King [Begon]).  
 Noroise 209 (the Norwegian princess [Eufeme]).  
 Norwege/Norouege 146, 157, 227 (Norway).  
 Noviel Testament 1716 (New Testament).

Paris 5106, 5135 (Paris).

Pentecoste 5133 (Pentecost, Whitsuntide).

Pharaon 3706 (Pharaoh).

Raison 2609, 2625 (Reason, Common Sense personified).

Renalt 397, 1298, 1451, 1505, 1525, 1527, 1611, 1619, 1625, 2144 (Count Renald of Cornwall, Eufemie's father).

Ris 6198 (name of a king invented for rhyme).

Rogiers de Bialmont 5558 (one of three French knights who rescue King Evan in battle).

Rome 2814 (Rome).

Sains Amans 1330, 1368 (Love personified as a saint).

Saint Germain 5137 (Saint-Germain-des-Pres).

Saint Juliën 2718 (Saint Julian the Hospitaller).

Sainte Marie 503, 3494 (the Virgin Mary).

Sainte Paciense 2068 (Patience personified as a saint).

Saint Pere 313 (Saint Peter).

Sathanas 3699 (Satan).

Silence 2067, 2396, 2497, 2609 frequ. until 6698 (the heroine, Silence [var. Scilence, Silensce]).

Scilencia/Scilentia 2078, 6668 (Silence, the feminine form of her Latin name).

Scilenscius/Scilentius 2074, 2126, 2530, 2532, 2533, 2537, 2542, 6666 (Silence, the masculine form of her Latin name).

Tamise 4900 (the Thames).

Tintaguel 2892 (Tintagel).

Tintaguel, le vallet de 4378 (= Silence).

Tristran 3700, 3701 (Tristan).

Uter/Uterpandragon 6148, 6152 (Uther Pendragon, King of Britain).

Valors 1555 (Worth personified).

Verites 1553 (Truth personified).

Vilonie 1551 (Baseness personified).

Virgene, le 431 (the Virgin Mary).

Wincestre 114, 4981 (Winchester [var. Eurincestre, Herincestre]).

## GLOSSARY

GD = Godefroy, LC = Lecoy, TH = Thorpe, TL = Tobler-Lommatzsch;  
Fr = French, L = Latin; conj = conjunction, intrans = intransitive, reflex = reflexive, subj = subjunctive, trans = transitive.

*aase* 3031 (cf. *ase*).

*abonir*, *s'* 2425 to devote oneself to.

*acaigne* 1615 (*acaindre aceindre*) to encircle, hem in, try to win over (subj).

*acesmer* 1665, 3229 to arrange beautifully, dispose tastefully, prepare.

*acointier*: to inform (acquaint with the facts) 571; to meet (make the acquaintance of) 1536, 4950; encounter in battle 5461, 5581.

*aduit* 1802 *aduire*, to train, instruct: knowledgeable, informed.

*aente*: (cf. *ente*), 3352, 3376.

*afoler*: to destroy, mutilate 4437, 5625; cause to behave foolishly 4469; to become frenzied (the berserk-rage of the warrior in battle) 5448.

*aforee* 1551 *aforer* to value highly (to set the market- price of).

*argaise* [*argaise*] 5889 wasteland.

*agoisse* 412, 1128 (= *angoisse*).

*ahoce* 2116 *ahocier* to let dangle.

*aie* 5404, 5417, 5519 aid, help, support.

*aiue* 2163 aid, assistance.

*alie* 1847 trans., crab-apple; lit., sorb-apple, fruit of service-tree: something of very little value.

*amoier* 1334 to direct toward a goal (by moderation).

*amordre*: cause to become familiar with, habituate someone to, 1626, 2552;

*s'amordre a*, to become used to, make something a habit 331, 2612, 5618.

*amortie* 2973 *amortir* to be dead in color.

*anne* [*ane*] 3863 wild duck.

*ante* 1738 aunt.

*anter* [*hanter*] 792, 2597 to frequent, keep company with.

*aoues* (cf. *ues*).

*apetizier* [*apeticier*] 1645, 2064, 2094 to diminish (trans/intrans){petit}.

*ase/es* [*aise*], *a*: at ease with regard to 55, 1062; close to achieving; *mis a es* 1520 put at ease/placed adjacently (the author is playing on both meanings as

- well as the expression *aise du lit*, pleasures of love); *al plain puig a es i pesce* (Merlin is attacking the meat with voluptuous enjoyment {L *adjacens*}), 6114; cf. also *aase* 3031 opportunity, ease.
- asmes* 850 *asmer* [*esmer*] to decide.
- assener*: provide accommodation for (stable horses) 2755; act in such a manner as to 4200, 6264; give advice, guidance to {general sense: aim toward, act with a goal in mind}.
- atirer* 3339 to plot, arrange to injure someone.
- ator*: determination, force of character 1480; possessions 2723; materials 5788 {general sense: what one is endowed with}.
- atrais* [*atrait*] 5281 the way one is, one's nature, essence (trait of character).
- auferrans* 5361 warhorse {orig. "spirited," attribute of a destrier}.
- avoec* 6661 (and elsewhere) = *ues*: with regard to.
- awapie* 95 *awapir* [*agapir*] insipid {vapid}.
- baldor* 3320 presumption (high spirits) {bold}.
- balle* [*baille*] 2236 nurse.
- ballier* [*baillier*: to hand over, pass on to 325, 2235, 3538, 4350, 4367, 4943, 4946; to lay hands on 61, 3121.
- bargir* 6128 to swell up, be bursting.
- bastonage* 2871 (not in GD, TL) being in a position of servitude.
- belizor* 1847 more beautiful.
- berser* 2881 to hunt with bow and arrow.
- bestorner* 2259 to invert, turn from its proper direction.
- blos solement* 19 "one single solitary."
- bolt* [*bot*, *bout*], de, 4816 immediately, without hesitation, thoroughly.
- bon*: *dire* (*son*) *bon*, to speak from the heart, reveal one's innermost desires, thoughts 1066, 1076 [MS *bien*] 1190; *faire* (*son*) *bon*, do as one pleases 6397; *de lor bon* 1122 with all their hearts.
- bresiller* 1928 to tint red {brazil wood}.
- bruhier* [*bruier*] 94 buzzard.
- bruir* 360, 409 to burn.
- buer* [*boer*] 4969 in a lucky moment {L *bona hora*}.
- buletiel* [*buretel*] 1809 sieve (for flour).
- bulette* 1812
- buleter* [*bureter*] to sift.
- busce* [*busche*] 1818 bit of straw (in the flour).

- caiel* [*chael*] 3255 puppy.
- caieles*/*chaeles*/*kaieles*/*kieleles*, heavens! for pity's sake! 309, 2803, 3252, 5604.
- camp male* [*champ mesle*] 290 duel, armed combat as legal means of settling dispute.

*cantiel* [*chantel*] 5150 *porter l'escu en cantiel*: carry one's shield to one side, not covering one's chest.

*casti* [*chasti*] 5464 castigation (chastisement).

*chant* 5616 side (L *canthus*); *torna en chant* to be turned aside (TL 2:226). Cf. *cantiel* [*chantel*] 5150.

*c[h]astiment* 1266 proper guidance (chastisement).

*chierissement* 3884 raising the price of something, as at an auction.

*cifler* [*chifler*] 348 joke, chat.

*cleu* 6368 *n'i fist fier ne cleu*, "had nothing to do with," double-entendre with a proverbial expression.

*cois* [*chois*]/*quois*/*kiuls*/*kis* 799, 975, 981, 1009, 1073, 1240 choice.

*coisir* [*choisir*] 3045, 5671 to observe.

*coitier*/*qoitier*: to hurry 2938; to hurry someone on 6093.

*confes*/*confies* 3808, 3809: *se faire confes*, to confess; *faire confes*, to grant absolution.

*conisance* [*connaissance*] 5494 coat of arms (displayed as sign of recognition on helmets and shields, on pennants fluttering from lances, etc.).

*contoier* [*cointoier*] 5148 to display one's (knightly) prowess.

*corlius* [MS *corus*] 192 messengers.

*cosinain* 1767, 2112 cousin.

*covine*: true nature, character 3872, 4974; conduct, behavior 4048: *por quoi nos fais tu tel covine?* "why are you spoiling things for us by acting this way?"

*coze* 2501 *cozer* [*chozer*] to scold, nag.

*crois* 5444 crash/clash of weapons.

*crosler* [*croler*] 4921 to shake (one's head).

*cuerine*: grief, sorrow, uneasiness 3878; *avoir en cuerine*, to have a grudge against 3923.

*cuivre* 481 attack.

*dangier*: caprice 993, 3731, 3777; *faire dangier de*, to refuse, deny, treat scornfully 2760. I interpret *faire dangier a* (835) as "to grant someone his heart's desire," keeping the MS reading. LC, by emending *el* to *ne*, clearly understands it as synonymous with *faire dangier de*. The problem is that *dangier* means an arbitrary act— negatively, whim or caprice; neutrally, something based on or subject to individual judgment or discretion: *a grant dangier*, e.g., can mean "unwillingly" or "to one's heart's content"; cf. Tobler's comments (*Li proverbe au vilain*, p. 117).

*delie*/*delie delier* [*desliier*] 1832, 1833, 1837, 1848 that which is well separated (here, by sifting).

*delis delir* 5782 dejected, sad.

*deloie* 952 *deleer* [*delaiier*] to hold back (subj).

*denai* 5077 *doner*.

- deporter*: to leave unfulfilled, neglect 1257; spend free time with 2848; to spare, let someone off 4324, 5489; *s'en deporter*, to do without 422.
- deruant* 6249 *deruer* [*desreer/desroier*] to attack (disconcert).
- desirer* 2176 [otherwise unattested] I suggest 'to put on the wrong path' [*dis* + *iterare*]; cf. *desvoie/desvise* 2255/56? [TH 'to take care of' (without explanation)]; LC '*egarer le jugement*' referring to 2181–82.]
- desjuer/desjoer* 33, 3238, 3932, 5505 to spoil one's good mood.
- desmentir, se* 1912 to depart from.
- desnu/desneu* 6366, 6367 *desnoer* to solve {*denouement*}.
- desparellier* 63 to make uneven (here: spoil the nice round sum by spending some of it).
- despondre*: to mean, signify 3578, 4429, 5843 etc.; to explain the significance of 5809, 6220, 6226.
- desroi* 2874 advance, a pushing forward.
- desserrer* 489 to tear open.
- desseus* 3570 *dessavoir*: ignorant.
- destemperra* 6410 *destremper*, to prepare.
- destroite* 4275 savage, cruel.
- detrier (se)* 4080, 5644 to hold back, delay.
- detuert* 591, 2102 *detordre*, to wring one's hands; *se detordre* 4162, 4398 to writhe in agony.
- deviser*: to plan, devise 2175, 3211; to decide 2981; to have in mind 3560; to tell, say to someone 3595; *nus ne devisa qui jostast* 5440: cf. *joste devisee* (TL 2: 1880) a fight between evenly matched opponents.
- diviers/diverse*: perverse 16; deeply divided 2663, 2681; diverse, different 1899; *diversement* 2662 in conflicting ways.
- dosnoier [donoiier]* 44 to woo ladies in courtly fashion. *eente* cf. *ente*.
- enbarer [embarrer]* 5515 to smash in, split open (a helmet).
- enbonir*: to seem good to 852; to improve (oneself) 6024.
- enbronc* 5451 leaning forward in saddle, ready for the shock of contact in battle.
- encrees* 3642 *encaier* to treat with chalk. New fur was treated with powdered chalk to make it seem whiter; unscrupulous merchants, to pass off old cloth as new, would rechalk it (LC with ref. to *Romania* 59: 491–92).
- encrieme* 4087 rascally.
- encuser*: *accuse* 4072; betray 6605.
- enerre* 2321 *enerrer* to pay a deposit on {Fr *verser des arrhes*}.
- engagne* 264, 3144, 4248 anger, chagrin.
- engier* 1460, 1472, 1759, 3974, 5308 to endow, provide. *engragne* 967 *engragner [engraignier, engrangier]* to increase.
- enmiodrement* 3269 improvement.
- enprieme* 2308 *enpriembre* to impress, put its stamp on.

*entamee* 1550 tin-plated, gilded, silvered (of a mirror), a variant of *estamee*.

Cf. TL 3,1:557 *entamerie* for *estamerie*, with ref. to Bloch, *Romania* 47 (1913) 580–581, where the verb *entesmer* is also found attested.

*ente*: *a ente/aente/eente* 2730, 3027, 3352, 3376, 4077, 4116, 4184, 5629: *estre a ente a*, to be a cause of anxiety, pain to; as adv, painfully.

*enterver* 2160, 2246, 3322, 3497, 3574, 5649, to understand, find out, to wonder, to ask; 6206 to act malicious toward (cf. noun *enterve*, used [GD] of demons).

*entoillier* 1856 to trick, trap, deceive.

*entrueil* [*entroeil*] 1922 space between the eyes.

*enviz* [*enviz*] with difficulty 2332, 3022; reluctantly 4432 {counter to one's will}.

*escalles* [*eschaille*] 1818 chaff.

*escars* [*eschars*] 6481 ridicule, shame.

*es*, *a* 1120, 1520, 6114: cf. *ase*.

*esce* [*esche*] 5946 tinder (cf. note at *fural*).

\**esciller*, *s'* 4210 *est ille*] to dishonor oneself [*essillier*].

*esgrocier* [cf. *grocier*] 306 to pick a fight with someone.

*eskiwer* [*eschiver*] to refrain from (refl) 3024; to go astray 4888.

*esmier* 699, 1829, 1831 to break or hack to pieces.

*esnie* 1830 for *esnie esneier*, to purify.

*espagnent*, *s'* 225 *s'espandre* [*espeindre*] to put to sea, sail out to sea.

*espanir* 3507, 3668 to carry off as plunder, kidnap.

*essillier* 4622 to kill, have killed [exile].

*estalcier* (*s'*) [*estaucier*] 2055, 2559 to tonsure, be tonsured; have one's hair cut short.

*estolt* 1500, 1501, 1618 rash, imprudent.

*estossir*, *s'* 1405, 6471 to cough.

*estreloi* 4840 outrage, injustice.

*estruit* 5987 preparation.

*estuier* 1877 to hold in reserve.

*fais*, *a un* 3079 all together, all at the same time.

*fait*, *a* 748 vigorously, forcefully.

*faiture* 1955 character, disposition (makeup).

*falose* [*faloise*] 123 trickery.

*faltre* [*feltre*, *fautre*] rest for lance (padded with felt).

*fausnoier* 1439 mislead, deceive.

*fierne* 5783 *ferner*, to blame (subj).

*forcor* 608, 5952, *fortre* 408 stronger: synthetic comparative [L *fortior*].

*fordine* 790, 4793 lit., sloe (a small sour wild plum); something of no value.

*forlignier*: to cause to be degenerate 2298; behave in a degenerate manner 4156; throw off the influence of (deviate from) 6458.

*forssalent forssalir* 757 to slip away somewhere: cf. TL *forsailie*, 'Entweichen'.

*fortre* cf. *forcor*.

*françois, savoir son*: to know one's man 2227; know what one is about, what (whom) one is dealing with 3324.

*fretel* [*frestel*] 1359 agitation.

*frois, a un* 5443 at the same time (at one blow).

*fuer* 2520 true nature (i.e. real value); *a(l) fuer de* 1302, 2361, 2459, 2503, etc., just like, in the manner of; *a nul fuer* 4150, 4710, 4993 etc., at no price {general sense: price, market value, equivalent value}.

*fural* [*fusil, foisil*] 5946 flint: cf. GD 4:45c "prend le fusil, si a de l'esche prise." This form not in GD, TL.

\**gage* 2872 [MS *grage*; cf. notes to text] *avoir en gage*, to have as security.

*gagnon* [*gaignon*] 5258 like a vicious dog, eager for prey, pillage.

*gargherie* [*jargerie*] 91 noxious weeds.

*gas* [*gab/gap*] 4345, 4752 joke, pleasantry.

*gentiors* [*gencior*] 5511 most valiantly.

*giens* 2900 in no way.

*gient* 686 *geindre* [*giembre*] to groan, moan (cf. *jaindre* 719).

*gloze* 789 gloss.

*glozer* 990 to gloss.

*golis* [*golif*] 6100, 6109 greedy.

*goloser/golozar* 248, 1340, 2345, 3330 to lust after, want badly.

*gordine* 2649 curtains draped about the bed (translated as 'bedcovers').

*gorgie* 83: *dire sa gorgie*, to pour out one's innermost thoughts.

*gragne* 968 *graignier*, to grind one's teeth, be angry.

*grant, en* 2204, 3925, 4009 desirous of.

*haitie* 177, 1674, 2404 well, in high spirits.

*halsage* [*haussage*] 565, 4806 haughty behavior.

*harponciel* [*harpon*] 3792 brooch.

*houes* cf. *ues*.

*huissiere* 4112 porter, doorkeeper (translated as "locksmith").

*iolt* 621 *oloir*, to smell of.

*ivuelle* 1271 *ivueller* [*iveler*] to make equal.

*jaindre* 719 = *geindre*, cf. *gient*.

*jehi* [*jehui*] 6695 today.

*kieles*, cf. *caieles*.

*kiuls, kius*, cf. *cois*.

*lachier* [*lacier*] 6659 to snare, entrap.

*lairis* [*larris/larriz*] 6429, 6188 fallow land, brush.

*lambre* 614, 825, 2109, 4104, 6408: floor or ceiling beautified by some decorative covering; by extension, marble or other decorative material, as in 2109 *vassiel de lambre*.

*larder* 6240 to burn alive (by extension, from larding before roasting).

*lassor* [*loisir*] 2491, 5692 opportunity, occasion, leisure.

*leust* 5083 *loisir*, to be possible, permitted (subj).

*loche* 2115 *lochier* [*logier*] to wobble, dangle.

*loir* 128 = *lor*: to rhyme with *valoir* (Picard forms).

*lues* 593, 723, 4392 on the spot, immediately; 4673 (conj) from the instant that.

*malhaitie* 3713 unwell, indisposed.

*malle* [*mal*] 5161 feeble.

*mallet* 2210 diminutive *masle*: little male.

*manaidier* 6639 to treat mercifully.

*maniere* [*manier*] 2843 (adj) skillful at. But the poet is playing with *maniere*, good manners, conformity to social norms.

*manieres, de* 250, 618 of many different sorts.

*margerie* 92 daisy.

*mence* 1676 *mentir*, to be lacking (subj).

*menchable* [cf. *menchonchable, mencongeable* GD 5:231] 6382, lying.

*meriane* 693 siesta.

*merir* 5620 to pay for.

*mervalt* 738 *merveillier* to be surprising (subj).

*mest* 2147, 2687, 2707 *manoir*, to stay, remain.

*mois* 274, 562 simpleton.

*moitiier* 3396 equal sharer.

*mon* 5891 absolutely, indeed.

*morjoie* [*murjoe, musgode*] 84 strongbox, safe (originally, cellar for provisions).

*ne mais*: except 625, 2198, 3241, 4500; no longer 2561; no more 4576; however 4837; *ne mais c' [que]* 4784 except in so far as, only to the extent that.

*oire* [*erre*] 218 journey; *en oire* 217, 977, 1704 etc. in haste, immediately.

*oirre* 3737, 4738 *errer*, to act, proceed.

*oni/honi* 2643, 3804, 6032, 6481, 6512 equal, uniform.

*onor* 2623 fief.

*ordie* 3170 *ordier/ourdier*, GD 5: 'observer, *epier*', to keep a close watch on.

*ordist* 269 *ordir*, to set up a web/loom for weaving.

*oriere* 5876 edge of a wood, forest.

*ostoir* 93, 233, 3863 goshawk.

*oues* cf. *ues*.

*paint* 3229 *pener*, to make every effort to (subj).  
*parconier(e)* 811, 5234 sharer.  
*parmenterie* 2324 finery (*parement* is a long rich ceremonial surcoat): *soiller la parmenterie*, to disgrace one's lineage.  
*pepie* 2414 pip (disease of birds—it produces mucus that chokes them).  
*peule* 2172 = *pueple* (Picard form).  
*pie* 2413: *ne valoir une pie* (magpie), to be worthless.  
*piure* 4359 = *puire puirier* to hand over, offer (by metathesis).  
*pire* [*piere*] 3332 way, road.  
*plait*: 4243, 5482 situation, conflict.  
*plaseis* [*plaisseis*] 2224 palissade.  
*plasscie* [*plaissee*] 5982 open space enclosed by hedges.  
*polcier* [*polz*] 1923 thumb.  
*posan*, *a* 976 next year {L *proximo anno*}.  
*pot* 6186: *decouvrir le pot aus roses*, to reveal the truth.  
*prover* 4242: *pris prove*, caught in the act, in flagrante delicto.  
*pue* 354 = *puee* (subj) *pouvoir*.  
*puis piece* 4428 a little later.  
*pule* 4830 = *pueple*.

*raes*, *rese* 1497, 1553 *rere*, to shave, tonsure.  
*redos* 211 support (as in 'to put new backing into').  
*riviere* 2912 low area, hunting ground: *de povre riviere*, badly off, from a poor background.  
*roioigne* 1419 *rooignier* [GD 'couper en rond']: to tonsure (the truth).  
*rote* 349 troop, company of armed men {Fr *routier*}.  
*rue*, *a* 353 in a circle {L *rota*}.  
*ruée*, *une* 2711, 2725 for a stone's throw around (cf. *ruer*, to hurl, throw).

*saine* 5964 thirst.  
*sans* 465 except (relatively rare but well attested use of *sans* [LC]).  
*sensablement* 2366 sensibly (rare form).  
*simple* 3972 downcast.  
*sivable* 4682 *sivre* [*siuvre*]: what follows from.  
*soivre* 527 *sevrer*, to cut off.  
*solroit/solle* 1384, 1415 *soldre*, to recompense.  
*son* [*som*] 529 tip of spear (in general, highest point) {L *in summo*}.  
*son* [*sonc*] 127 according to.  
*soneis* 5424 sounding of horns.  
*sontre* [*soentre*, *soventre*] 687 next in the sense of following.  
*soolte* 2243 [otherwise unattested] company, friendship. [LC: *sooste*].  
*sopple* 4785 submissive: *fait l'un de nos vers l'autre sopple*: 'causes each of us to bend to the other's will.'  
*sordens* 3253 extra tooth (GD 10:729c). I have translated somewhat freely.

*sosbaidier*: wish, desire 1067, 1448, 5372; to cause someone to be present by wishing 5250, 5251.

*suevre* [*soivre*] 6410 spicy sauce.

*tagne* 4247 *taindre* (subj): *ne taindre a rien*, to have nothing to do with anything.

*talle* [*taille*] 2 measure; cf. notes to text.

*terchuel/tercuel* [*tercoeu*l] 1814, 1822 bran.

*tezir* [*tesir*] 6128 to swell up.

*tolte* 350 seizures, grabs. I posit *\*tolet*, pres. indic. 3 *toler*, an attested variant of *tolir/toldre* (cf TL 10:366), with metathesis for rhyme.

*trait*, *a* 894, 1310, 6435 distinctly, with deliberation, protractedly.

[*ues*, *a*] *aoues/houes/oues/wes* 1873, 3586, 3745, 4035, 4317, 6320 for, towards, of use to.

*verror* 1156, 1984 etc. truth.

*viaire*: face 4011, 4456; opinion (way of seeing things) 4012, 4643, 5000.

*vials* [*vels*] 49, 817, 829, 2849 etc. at least.

*vias* [*viaz*] 2099 at once.

*voisos/eus/ies* 1399, 1646, 2117 wise, prudent, clever.

*wes* 3586, 6320 cf. *ues*.



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