

[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 seulement 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, 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./ 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, 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. 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, Sans noise faire, et sans tenchier.	85
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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 mariage
 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 aliānce,
 Qe la pais soië a fiānce." 170

Rois Beghes fait Ebain savoir
 S'il violt qu'il puet sa fille avoir
 Por acordance de la guerre,
 Et qu'il ait mis en pais la terre. 175
 Quant il l'entent, si est haitiés.

Respont as mēs com afaitiés:
 "Or ai ge moult bien guerriié
 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'aiés 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 atargiés.
 Ses briés a ses cor/ius* cargiés.
 Envoie por .ii. archevesques,
 Por son clergié, 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 nés,
 Ses mas, ses sigles et ses trés; 200
 Et mettre i fait et amasser

Quanqu'est mestiers por mer passer,
 Que quant cil venront que il mande
 Es nés truissent preste viāde.
 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:
it was well worth the hard work 180

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 prenent 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 prenent 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
 O~~d~~ més et daintiés de manieres, 250
 Ne sai que conte la despense,
 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 cler 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 .ii. 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 vengeance
 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 merveilleuse 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 longes 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'aoërroïent 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
 for whose love he had suffered so 545
 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 to 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 emprendre 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 affaire,
 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."
 Cadore se plaint qu'Amors le grieve.
 Amors que fait? .i. dart soslieve 680
 Qui plus est treñçans 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 cief, 705
 Et en dormant vient derecief
 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, 790
 Mais moi ne valt une fordine
 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 falloit.
 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 Cadore.
 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 Cadore 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,
 but he can, if he wants, take all of me. 810
 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
 to cure him so fast? 815
 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" nomé. 895
 Or cuide avoir tolt asomé.
 Cist doi mot "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 sofierre
 Mais que li parole est covierre,
 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 doloir.
 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 Cadore 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?”	
“Naï 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 voloïr,	
Et moi covenra, las! doloïr	
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 joïr,	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 parole 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 escrite.
 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 pueñt 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.

Cadour 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 Cadour 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 esmaiés:
 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 Cador 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 descovrir 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 vellent faire,
 U, se non, nen puis a cief 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 cief 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 monstrier 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'oï 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 fiânce 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.
 Cadore 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'ainte honte,
 Qu'il ert en amor asociés,
 Si ot esté moult asociés. 1410
 Set bien qu'en amor a vergoigne.
 Cadon 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 tenses 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 seüsiciens, 1465
 Que nos avoir le peüsiciens,
 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?"
 "Cadon, 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 affíee,
 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 biele.
 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 oïr viegne;
 Se sans oïr 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 seïor 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 país 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 alsí 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
 Huimais 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
 Por le conte miols acesmer: 1665
 Mais se jel puis a droit esmer
 N'i metrai rien qui m'uvre enpire
 Ne del voir nen iert mos a dire

Car la verté ne doi taisir.
 Avint si par le Deu plaisir 1670
 Que Eufemie ot conceü.
 Quant li cuens l'a aperceü,
 Si prie Deu moult, par sa grasce,
 Que de cel fruit haitié le face,

Si com par lui vint a semence,
 Par pechié qu'aient fait ne mence: 1675
 Mais soit l'enfantemens salvables,
 Et l'enfes ait membres raisnables,
 Que rien n'i ait mespris Nature
 Quant molla cel fruit en figure;

Et quant la dame en iert delivre
 Qu'ele ait santé, l'enfes puist vivre. 1680
 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
 Cadore 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 Cadore 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 compagnee
 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 demostrer 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 ensamble
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'ouverture
 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 espaulle 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 huimaiz 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 resalencee,
 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 esjoie 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 veror.
 O l'error se melle esperance, 1985
 Et o l'espoir 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 tehir,
 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 bieie 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, bieie, desguiser,
 Si com m'oïstes deviser. 2040
 Faire en voel malle de femiele.
 Or en pensés, amie bieie,
 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 he 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 Noreture
 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 Noreture
 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 noreture 2315
 Mal gré u non sa vil nature:
 Et puis apriés si s'en repent,
 De son bienfaire se repret*
 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 noreture,
 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 meïsmes aprent
 Moult plus qu'a son eë n'apent. 2390
 Enfans ot donc ens el p^{ai}s*
 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 alsï 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 rivières
 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;
 they all urged him to be good. 2465
 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 amoncelee.
 .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 noiture.
 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 iretage, 2545
 Ne doit mener us si salvage.

Atant i sorvint Noretur
 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 creature
 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 icest anter
 Bien vos porés al loig vanter
 Se jo ne fac par noreture
 .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 Noreture 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 noreture
 Por faire cho que violt Nature./
 "Croï 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 2660
 Com poés oïr de Silence.
 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'estrangle 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 mervellose 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 altres 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 Juliien,
 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,
 Parvient 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 ovierte
 Et cil l'oquison descovierite.
 Dient: "Nos somes jogleör.
 A chaiens 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.
 Repozet 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 service.
 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, kiales, por quoi il fait,
 Car nos savons tolt entressait,
 Se ne fussces fils a prancier 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 seüscs 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 bieie.
 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 2875
 .ii. liues anchois qu'il ajorne.
 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 iroint. 2935
 Cil dient qu'a Nantes giroint
 Se *iz* le pueent exploitier.
 "Pensés," fait l'enfes, "de qoitier:
 Ki tempre 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 apprendre, 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 *verme*lle 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 perdu 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 relievient, 3020
 Et li baron qui les sostienent
 De pasmer moult envis s'astienent.
 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 three 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,
 Plover 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 mervellose 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 enmiödrement
 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 fiānce 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 esploitié.
 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, 3345
 who in no way deserved it.
 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 guarri, 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 encontres 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 perç 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 vielle 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 priveement 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 espaula li ensegne
 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
 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 puissce 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
 "Cuïte! 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 fronciature,
 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. 3805
 Meffait nen a el mont gregnor

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 jovenes sains est viés diäbles.
 Lassciés, bons hom, tolt cho ester. 3820
 Ichi fait mellor arester

Q'en bos por son cors afoler."
 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?*"
 Forget all that—be a man!
 It's much better to romp in here 3820
 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 vienent.

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, 3865
 Qu'e/ l'enfant;* poisons a l'ain
 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 lanier
 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 compagnie 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 mencee.
 Grant joie i ot le soir mencee
 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 confaïtement: 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.
 Oies 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:
 Ouevre 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 venjance li detrie
 Par plorer le violt engignier 4155
 Qu'ele ne violt pas forlignier:
 Car feme plore par voidie
 Quant aēnplir 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:
 Adonc perdroye ma droiture,
 L'onor mon pere et m'ireté.
 Et si sai bien, par verité,
 La roïne estroit malballie
 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.
 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
 Le vallet, u a forces pendre./
 Mais el roi a bon home et sage
 Et atepret de son corage;
 Et set bien de .ii. mals eslire
 Quels est li mioldres et quel pire.
 Voit se vengeance nen est prise,
 Foible est, malvaïse sa justice.
 Pis est de honir cel enfant,
 Car il seroit honis par tant,
 Se honte esparsse et esmeüe
 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
 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
 Veïr liquels li puist mains nuire.
 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*
 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 enemî 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'envoierai 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 exploite
 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 douce 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 fiñce.
 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!"
 Ploïé 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 saïele 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 carge,
 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 créature!
 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,
 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
 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 —
 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.
 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,
 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.
 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
 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."
 "Sire," he said, "as God is my witness,
 Count Cadore 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
 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 fiānce
 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 traire.” 4455
 Li rois a bassé son viaire.
 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 claime.
 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 cief 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 cief.
 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 ruman 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'ouevre 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 feëlté.

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 diâbles 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 puissce 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 connoissons 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 porïés vos pas voloir, 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'oïrre 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 loïé, 4750
 Nel porïés vos deffaïre pas.
 Saciés que cho n'est mie a gas,
 Ne on ne doit pas deffaïre 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'envoiaist 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.
 Priveement 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 escrïte 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 viïele,
 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 acroïre
 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 alsì 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 anguisse!
 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 diroit 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 acroïse 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 altres 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 lanierie
 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 bieie.
 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 longes 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 asavoïr
 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’altre 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,”
 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,
 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.
 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.
 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
 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
 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!
 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.
 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.
 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 soshaidier, 5250
 Jo l’i* soshaideroie, 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 Ebayns 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.
 Tolte la cors en est dolente;/
 Plorent Silence a desmesure:
 “Ahi!” font il, “quel noreture 5280
 Et quels atrais est d’estrangle 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 Engleterre
 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
 Alsi 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 coärdize. /
 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 vient 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 biele 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 afofer,
Escus estroër 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 espïols
 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 semples 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 bieie.	5530
Moult vont les rens aclaroiant.	
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.
 Enviers 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 batalle:
 "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 reconmencié 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 Franchois:
 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 atriüer, 5640
 Cui colpe jambe, u piet, u puig.
 Li Franchois vient 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 plait 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 esprits, 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 ovrer 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. 5755
 From the time, Sire, that you saw
 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. 5760
 You certainly think very little of me
 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; 5765
 he doesn't give me a minute's peace."

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 conmanc 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 puissciés 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 puisse 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 devint
 Tres puis que Fortg[i]e[r]ne le tint
 5910
 Por la soie 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 joie
 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 esmaïés 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 cuisïés, 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 cuíst 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 Noreture le desvoie.
 "Ahi!" fait Noreture. "Ahi!
 Com cil sont malement trahi
 Ki norisent 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 Noreture. "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 als 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 si 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. 6100
He was greedy for the meat.
He came to the roast and seized the whole thing.
"O!" 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 Cornuälle. 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 boivre 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 .iiii. 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 entrai, 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’îreté,
 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.” 6365
 “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, 6370
 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'aït 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 dît 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'altres 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 sospesson. 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.
 Enaises 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?
 Femmes 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 puïst 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 atorment 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
 Oïroit Jhesus cho qu'il desirent.

Explicit.

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.	

