

[M]aistres Heldris de Cornuâlle
Escrist ces viers trestolt a talle.*
A çals quis unt commandé et riveve,
El commencier 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 soient par gent
Qui proisent mains honor d'argent, 10
N'a gent qui tolz voellent oïr
Que si n'ont soing c'om puist joïr
De gueredon qu'il voellent rendre.
Uns clerz poroit lonc tans apredre
Por rime trover et por viers, 15
Tant par est cis siecles diviers
Qu'ançois poroit rime trover
Qui peüst en cest mont trover
Blos solement un sol prinquier
U il peüst sol tant prinquier 20
Dont il eüst salve sa paine,
Ne le traval 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 trespass.
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
rather than share them with the kind of people
who don't know a good story
when they hear one. 5

He does not wish to have his verses circulated
among those who prize money more than honor,
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. 10

A learned man might study long
to fashion rhyme and verse,
but things are so bad in these times
that it's a lot easier to write poetry
than to find in this world 15

one single solitary prince
from whom he might pinch
even so little that he might have saved himself the trouble—
not a week's wages. 20

Do you want to see how stingy people are?
Serve them well, as if they were your father:
then you will be most welcome,
judged a fine minstrel, well-received. 25

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
while you pile up riches, you fools. 35

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 encrasce vials la terre,	
Mais li avoirs 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 avoirs 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 maâlle	
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 desirer,	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.	85
Avere gent! ahi! ahi! Par Avarisse estes traï! Lassciés ester et dites fi, U, se cho non, jo vos desfi./	90
Formens valt miols de gargherie, Et rosse miols de margerie, Et l'ostoirs de falcon muier, Et li falcons miols del bruhier,	
Et bons vins miols d'aigue awapie, Et li butors miols de la pie: Autant valt povertés honeste Miols de .m. mars sans joie et feste,	95
Et volentés gentils et france Qu'avers a iestre et rois de France.	
Ausi valt miols honors de honte. Dé or reventrai a mon conte De mon prologhe faire point, Car moult grans volentés me point	100
De muevre rime et commencier, Sans noise faire, et sans tenchier.	
Ebans fu ja rois d'Engletiere, Si maintint bien en pais la terre. Fors solement le roi Artu N'i ot ainc rien de sa vertu	110
Ens el roiaume des Englois. Li siens conmans n'ert pas jenglois, Car n'avoit home ens el roiaume, De Wincestre trosqu'a Durame,	
S'il osast son conmant enfraindre Nel fesist en sa cartre enpaindre, Par tel covant n'a droit n'a tort N'en issist point trosqu'a la mort.	115
Il ot justice en sa ballie; La soie gens n'ert pas fallie. Il maintenoit chevalerie, Si sostenoit bachelerie	
Nient par falose mais par dons. Par lor service et en pardons	120

- 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
 have disgraced themselves I can't keep count. 85
 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,
 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. 95
 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
 without a lot of fuss and bother. 100
 Once upon a time Evan was king of England.
 He maintained peace in his land;
 with the sole exception of King Arthur,
 there never was his equal
 in the land of the English. 110
 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
 if he dared to break his law,
 on such terms that, right or wrong,
 he wouldn't get out till he was dead. 115
 He upheld justice in his realm;
 his people were no criminals.
 He maintained chivalry
 and sustained young warriors
 by gifts, not empty promises.
 For their service and gratuitously 120

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 liément	130
Et moult apparelliément;	
Car cho doit cascuns prodome faire:	
<i>Doner et garder*</i> cui tetraire.	
Si violt doner moult liément,	
Car ki done derriänment	
Il n'i a gré, ains piert son don	135
Et plus avoec, son los, son non:	
Si venroint 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 longes 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 cautive esparsé	
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 mariâge	
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 biele gemme.	
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 aliânce,
 Que la pais soië a fiânce."

170

Rois Beghes fait Ebain savoir
 S'il violt qu'il puet sa fille avoir
 Por accordance de la guerre,
 Et qu'il ait mis en pais la terre.
 Quant il l'entent, si est haitiés.
 Responce as més com afaitiés:
 "Or ai ge moult bien guerrié
 Et bien mon traval emploie
 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 poinst."
 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."

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Li rois ne s'est pas atargiés.
 Ses briés a ses cor*lius** cargiés.
 Envoie por .ii. archevesques,
 Por son clergié, por ses evesques;
 Mande barons, contes palais,
 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;
 Et mettre i fait et amasser
 Quanqu'est mestiers por mer passer,
 Que quant cil venront que il mande
 Es nés truissent preste viânde.
 Atant s'i viennent li mandé,
 Car li rois l'avoit comandé.
 Et quant il furent tolz emsanble,
 Li rois lor dist cho que lui samble
 Qu'a mollier prendra la Noroise.

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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,
in exchange for accord and alliance,
so that peace may be guaranteed."

170

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

175

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
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."

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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."

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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,
for he would never be at rest

195

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

He had his ships made ready,
masts and sails and spars,
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.

200

Then those whom the king had summoned came,
for he had so commanded.

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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 cudent 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.
 "Vos en avrés moult grant porfit. 215
 Apparelliés vos donc en oire,
 Car bien matin tenrés vostre oire.
 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? 225
 Li maronier en mer s'espagnent,
 Et de l'exploitier ne se fangnent.
 Tant font qu'il viennent e[n] Norwege.
 Contre aus al port fu li rois Bege
 Et sa fille Enferme lor carge,
 C'onques plus longe n'i atarge. 230
 Cil preendent la fille al Norois
 Et maint cheval avoec morois,
 Et ors et ostoirs et lyons.
 Ne sai que plus vos en dions./
 Cange li vens, si s'en retornent, 235
 C'onques plus longes n'i sojorment.
 En Engleterre preendent port.
 Li rois Ebains n'a nient de tort
 De cho qu'il vint contre sa drue.
 Quant il le vit, gent le salut; 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
Od 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; Mais li aver, cui Dex renoie, Ont enpirie la costume.	255
Grans maltalens m'art et alumé Qu'il l'ont cangie et remuee. Cat fust la pute gens tuee Par cui honors est abascie,	260
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, Et por quant com plus ont plus welent. Certes, j'en ai moult grant engagne.	265
Ausi est d'auls com de l'aragne: El ordist tel,* painne et labore;	
Et si se point ne voit on l'ore Enmi sa toile qu'a ordi, Si font li pusnais esdordi	270
Et cleric et lai et conte et duc S'enprendre, mois ne autre buc. Cui caut? Car trop i a a dire:	
Repairier voel a ma matyre. Grans fu la fieste en Engletiere.	275
Atant vint uns cuens en la tierie Ki avoit .ii. filles jumieles.	
.jj. conte esposent les puchieles. Cho dist cascuns qu'il* a lainsnee;	280
Pot quant li uns a la mainsnee./ Mellee i ot por son avoir,	
Car cascuns [violt] la terre avoir. Li uns le violt par mi partit;	285
Li autres dist qu'il iert martyr Et vis recreäns en bataille	
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'egart 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, Cat cascuns i est bel venus.	295

- 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 bataille si blecié
 Qu'il en sunt mort par lor verté.
 Ne cil ne cil ne l'ot 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. "Chaleies!
 Quel duel por .ii. orphenes pucieles!
 Que mes barons en ai perdus 310
 J'en sui certes moult esperdus:
 Mais, par le foi que doi Saint Pere,
 Ja feme n'iert mais iretere
 Ens el roiaume s'Engletiere,
 Por tant com j'aie a tenir tierie. 315
 Et c'en iert ore la vengeance
 De ceste nostre megestance."
 L'asise fait a tols jurer
 Por bien le sairement durer. 320
 Alquant le font ireément
 Et li plusor moult liément,
 Qui n'en donroiënt 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.
 Escrite 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 Eurinestre.
 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,
and more than that if he gets hooked— 330
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,
and everyone left for home. 335
- 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 merveillose 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 chevals bruist les eschines.	360
Apriés le fu geite fumiere	
Ki lor enconbre le lumiere,	
Si qu'il ne pueënt veït 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 autre 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 throught 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.
 It spewed forth venom from its mouth 350
 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 roiaume par loisir. Ki miols li plaira, celi prengne, Mais solement soit sans calenge."	385
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.	395
Cil amoit moult une meschine Ki venue ert a la roïne. Fille ert Renalt de Cornuâlle. N'a feme el regne qui li valle.	400
Li cuens n'avoit enfant que li: Tols ses païs en abeli, Qu'el mont n'avoit plus bele mie, Et si l'apielent Eufemie.	405
Des .vii. ars ert moult bien aprise, D'amer Cador forment esprise. Cil l'aime et dite ne li oze, Ainz a s'amor si fort encloze	410
Que nuz ne l'aperçoit en lui. Tant suefret Cador forte anui. Li fus sans flame bruïst plus Que se flame en issçoit u fus:	415
Si fait amors, que li covierte Agoisse plus que li aperte. Amors tolt Cador l'esmaier: Il se volta ja assaier.	420
Del roi se part moult bielement: El bos se pert isnielement. Un escuier qu'a plus sené A son ceval od lui mené:	425
Ne violt qu'altres fors Deu le sace. Descent el bos en une place. Il fait ses armes aporter, Qu'il ne s'en puet preu deporter.	
Arme soi tost et kiolt aïr, Car le serpent volt envaïr. Ne violt la longes demorer; 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,
except, of course, if she's already pledged." 385
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
who had come to serve the queen. 395
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,
the most beautiful girl in the world, 400
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,
and had his arms brought to him there, 420
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 site Dex, ki formas home, Ki peça por mangier la pome; Et del tien saint avenement Fesis par angele anoncement;	430
Et en le Virgène te mesis, Humanité en li presis; Por nos, bials Sire, te bassas. Com ains fu, virgène le lassas;	
Et circoncis fus tu apriés, Que Judeu font encor adiés; Et el flum Jordan baptiziés, Li cresmes i fu envoiés	435
Del ciel, tés fu ta volentés. Puis fus el temple présentés,	
Et geūnas por nos pechiés, Car enemis nos ot bleciés; Des Juïs fus vilment penés, Et en le crois a mort penés,	440
Car nostre lois est tels escrise Que tu en as la mort eslite	
Por faire satifatiōn Contre nostre dampnatiōn.	445
Angeles nel puet faire a delivre Car prendre, morir et puis vivre,	
Et s'angeles eüst, bials dols sire, Por nos sofiert en crois martyre, (Mais jo sai bien cho ne puet estre)	450
Qui seroit donques nostre miestre,* Et volroit avoir signorie	
Sor nos et grant avoërie. Et tu avoies dit que hom	455
Seroit d'altresi grant renom Come li plus haus de tes angeles	
Et qu'il seroit pers as archa[n]geles,	460
Et home et angele en un leu T'aoëroiēt come Deu.	
Por cho t'estiut nos rachater, Morir et puis resusciter:	465
Cho ne puet nus faire sans toi. Ta vertus soit hui dedens moi!	
Tolt cho fesis tu sans dotance. Si com c'est, Sire, me créance,	
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 creânce 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 coiément que il ne l'oie,	480
Car ne li violt pas faire cuivre	
Ainz qu'il le voïs[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 Cador veü	
L'a Cadors de son dart feru	
Que l'une joë li desserre.	
Li serpens vint Cador requere.	490
Fiert le ceval u il sist sus	
Qu'il l'esboiele. Cil chiet jus	
Sor le serpent, por poi nel crieve.	
Et Cador d'autre part se lieve,	
Recuevre en meësme l'eure.	495
Trait a le branc, 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 journee!	
Se Cador perc ensorquetolt,	
Dont sui jo bien honis del tolt!"	
L'escuiers Cador dist: "Bials sire,	
Se jo le vos osoie dire,	510
Au serpent est alés, par foi,	
Cador 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,
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,
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
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.
- 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.
- 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:
- "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!"
- 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,
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 Cador 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	515
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;	520
Et Cadors, qui le cors a gent, De son serpent soivre la tieste. Cil criement moult le morte bieste. La tiest met en son sa lance.	525
Al roi a dit: "Me covenance, Car li serpens est mors par moi!" "Et vos l'arés, bials niés, par foi."	530
Del serpent moult grant joie funt. La tieste o auls porté en ont. Li rois a puis tant esploitié	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.	
Cador 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 riveve donc al roi Puis qu'il puet feme prendre a chois, 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 Ne venra ja a mariâge;	560
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./ Acointier le violt sans trestor Que por s'amor sofrît estor; Dont se porpense n'osera Si tost, mais un poi soffera.	565
Li rois se colce quist lassés Quant a mangié et but assés; Et li pros Cador s'est colciés. Grans mals li est al cuer tocíés. .j. petitet devant le jor Il taint et plaint, mue color, Par le venim, par le fumiere, Que li gieta la bieste fiere. Uns camberlens, qui a non Ades,	570
A dit al roi qu'il est malades. Il n'oï noviele en l'an nule 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	575
D'ansdeus ses bras l'acole et çaint. Fiert soi el pis, ses mains detuert, Si a tel dol por poi ne muert. Envie lués por Eufemie: El païs n'a si sage mie.	580
Et ele i vint moult tost en haste. 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,	585
Amie, et moult gent gueredon.”	590
	595
	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,
 now that he has his choice of wife, 560
 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
 would never persuade her to marry him. 565
 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 Cadot 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 Cadot 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 Cadot 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.
 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 vergiés 610
 U li mie et li clergiés
 Ont fait planter erbes moult chieres
 Qui viertus orent de manieres./
 Bials est li viergiés les les estres.
 Entre l'odors par les fenestres
 Ki plus söef iolt de pument.
 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; 620
 Et ele le parfait si biem,
 Que dedens .viii. jors par verté
 L'a si gari de s'inferté
 Par le grasse nostre Segnor.
 Mais ele l'a mis en gregnor, 625
 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'asiet* plus que ne siolt:
 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,
 Si grans mals et tels amertume?
 Or est malvaise sa costume,
 De primes bien et puis mal faire.
 Trestolt cho fait il por atraire. 630
 635
 640

- 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.
 Cador 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?
Such dreadful pain and such bitterness? 640
 Then Love's ways are truly wicked—
first to do good and then to do evil.
 All this he does to manipulate lovers.

Li mals que li serpens me fist N'ert pas si gregnor comme cist. Il n'ert pas honteus a veîr. Cestui n'os jo nului jehit. Amors m'a moulte acoärdi Viers une feme, fait hardi 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 traval et sa medecine, 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, 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 autre ami Ainz qu'ele mesist painne a mi./	645
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- 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 650
before a woman, when it had given me
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 Cador le preu Moult tost en vint a son neveu. 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.	690
Ne vol nule arme o moi porter, Ne vol ne lance ne escu: Si vi mon serpent revescu Que jo par pieces esmiäy. Il me chaça et jo criäy.	695
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, Cat vos avés moult wit le cief,	700
Et en dormant vient derecief Devant tolz cho que vos fesistes Ainz que ceste enferté presistes."	705
Li rois son neveu moult enorte Qu'il se rehait et reconforte; Mais ne set u li mals li tient Ne de l'enferté qui li vient Dont nen avra la medecine	710
Se Dex nel fait et la mescine/ Quil gari de l'autre enferté. Volés vos oïr la verté?	715
Quant il parvint a l'anuitier Adonc estut Cador luitier, Vellier la nuit, jaindre, pener, Qu'Amors le prend a demener, Fai le fremir, suer, tranbler.	720
Pis que fievre li puet sambler: Cat fievre est lués de tel nature C'om le piert sovent par froidure U par bien durement suer;	725
Mais Amor <i>ne</i> violt remuer Ne por grant froit, ne por calor; Ne n'espargne home por valor, Ne por fieré, ne por promesse.	730
Ne li est plus d'une contesse Que d'une soie camberiere. A Cador 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
as any of her chambermaids. 730
 Love seemed very fierce to Cador.

- De la meschine vus voel dire.
Esté li ot en lieu de mire.
Sovent rala, sovent revint
Por veir com li mals li tint. 735
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
Vienent assés tos a esprendre
Que n'i estuet ja painne rendre. 740
Altretels est d'Amor l'orine.
Puis qu'ele aferme une rachine
Que puist amans nes tant doter
Que lor soit boin d'oït conter
L'uns d'als a l'autre cho que fait? 745
Tres donques croist l'Amors a fait
Par bien la parolle asseïr,
Et par sovent entreveïrt.
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 ensanble 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 consirrir.
Cat cho fait Eufemie iret, 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
Que die a lui qu'ele est s'amie. 765
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?
S'ele a delit en son amer 770
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
Et de l'amor dont li sovient 775

- 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 a strange 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: "Captive!
 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'enferté.
 Trestolt l'ai par cest damoisiel.
 Jel vi erset si gent, si biel,
 Sovint moi de son vasselage, 785
 Si senti plus grief mon malage.

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

Car j'euc vials ains bone quoison
 D'aler sovent en la maison. 815

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 Cadot.

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,

790

but all my fancy accomplishments

aren't helping me one bit.

Damn this whole relationship!

damn that dragon (whoever raised him!),

damn the cursed venom

that made Cadot so sick!

795

The curse has come upon me.

Oh my! alas!" said Eufemie.

"I think he has another love.

If he didn't have his choice of a wife,

I might have some slight hope.

800

If he couldn't have the wife of his choice—

damn that, too—

the king wouldn't fail to do me justice.

I don't know what good asking would do.

That wouldn't be fair,

805

for he has first throw of the dice.

If he wants me, he can have me,

and if not, he doesn't have to.

God, what an awful situation!

If it's his wish, I'll have no part of him,

810

but he can, if he wants, take all of me.

Alas! I saw the way he looked yesterday.

He was lovelier than a rose.

Wasn't that a crazy thing to do,

wasn't I completely out of my mind

815

to cure him so fast?

I had ample opportunity

to visit him frequently.

Que il langui! Mais moi que calle, Mais qu'il guarisse et qu'il valle, Por tolte ma male aventure Qu'il sofrist longes tel ardure?"*	820
C'ert un petit devant le jor. De paine traire n'a sejor. Nue s'estent desos le lambre; Et Cadors ert en l'autre cambre.	825
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,	835
El li feroit jo cuit dangier. Mais ne* set pas qu'aïns 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. Viers son ami s'en violt aler, Mais as degrés al devaler	840
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,	850
Cuers, car me viols [tu] que tu asmes! Veuls me tu avoir pathonie?	
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

S I L E N C E

- 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 transfixated 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 vaut hals cuers en bas parage	
Que ne fait home estre balli	
D'un grant roiaume 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 Cador et si nome.	
En tols ses mos est cil la some.	870
Cador 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 mecene.	
U cascuns d'als son per garra,	
U la mecene 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 voloир,	
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,
 comes into her lover's room 880
 and says to him, "Ami, speak, ah me!"*
 She should have said, "Speak to me,"
 but Love has tricked her:
 she should have said, "Speak to me," 885
 but she says, "Speak, ah me."
 "Speak to me," she should have said,
 but "ah me!" is in her heart.
 As soon as she said, "ami,"
 Love put "ah me!" into the sentence. 890
 She should have said "to me" and she said "ah me,"
 because of the terrible sorrow within her.
 She gives him a great deal of hope
 when she clearly says "ah me!" —
 for thus she calls him "ami." 895
- Now he thinks he has figured the whole thing out.
 These two utterances, "ah me" and "ami,"
 have brought him great comfort.
 The word "ami" is evidence of love,
 the words "ah me" say it loud and clear. 900
 Now Cador has joy to his liking,
 after Love has given him pain and grief.
 The word ami gives Cador cause to hope

Cador qu'or pora averer Cho qu'il plus convoite et desirre.	905
“Aimmi!” demostre le martyre,/	
Le paine d'amor qu'a sofierte	
Mais que li parole est covierte,	
Car ja soit cho qu'ami le claimme	
N'est pas provance qu'ele l'ainme,	910
Car tels hom est “amis” clamés	
Ki de fin cuer n'est pas amés.	
Por cho est Cador en dotance,	
Por quant sin a grant esperance	
Quant l'apiele “ami” u li “amie.”	915
Or savés qu'il nel laira mie	
Ne parolt ensi qu'ele l'oie,—	
Car tres bien l'a mis en la voie,—	
Et dist: “Dolce, li vostre plainte	
M'a grant dolor el cuer enpainte.	920
La vostre grans bontés m'ensengne	
Se vos plagniés que jo me plagne.	
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 <i>vostre</i> aversité,	
Rire en <i>vostre</i> 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.	
Et jo m'en sui si enivree,	940
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 Cador 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'nferté,	950
Acreantés me par verté,	
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 enseigniet, et moulte 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 oire:	
"Ma damoisiele, c'est la voire;	
Et li rois m'en a fait fiance	
Et bien me tenra covena[n]ce	980
D'une conté, de feme a quois.	
Mais el roiaume 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'ozier	
Qu'ele sor li l'oze glozer.	990
Doute qu'il ait dit altrement	

- It didn't take me long to catch it.
 But whatever illness I contracted,
 swear to me by all that's true,
 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. 950
- 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, 955
 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; 960
 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
 with regard to the dragon you killed
 (a most courageous deed) 970
- that the king gave you a fine reward;
 that he granted you a county
 and whomever you wish for a wife,
 in a year, next year, or next month.” 975
- And Cador replied at once,
 “Mademoiselle, that is so.
- The king swore an oath to me,
 and he will certainly keep his pledge
 of the land and a wife of my choice. 980
- 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”
 who is the choice of Cador's heart. 985
- Eufemie is the gloss of “one.”
- But she doesn't dare take it as a reference to herself;
 there's not enough daring in her
 to gloss it as referring to herself. 990
- She thinks he has said something else,

Et respondi isnielement:	
“Sire, estes vos de tel dangier?”	
“Nai jo, mais cuers ne puet cangier.	
Franche puciele debonaire,	995
Vos me jabés, sel poés faire,	
Qu'a mon vivant vos doi servisce.	
Jo parlerai par amendise.	
Vos parlés de mon mariäge:	
Ne vos en poist, amie sage,	1000
Que jel vos di tolt a larron.	
Altressi tost prendrés baron,/	
Con jo, amie, feme a per.	
Mais ne me puet pas escaper	
Qu'a vos noces 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 guarí.	1010
Or avrés vus vostre voloir,	
Et moi covenra, las! doloir	
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 puissce mon mengier joërt,	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,
 for if I am alive, I will be there. 1005
 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.
 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. 1010
 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
 can do inside one body? 1025
 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 norit.
 Quant jo somel dont m'esperis
 Si griément por poi ne peris."
 "Bials dols amis," dist la meschine,
 "Nos convenoit une mechine,
 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
 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./
- 1040
- 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,
 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
 Se mes dols amis ne me baise,
 Se jo par tant puis estre a ase."
- 1045
- "Quele, Eufemie! A Deu pleüst
 Cascuns de nos çaiens eüst
 Cho qu'il plus covoite et desirre,
 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.
- 1050
- Mais or me dites, bials amis,
 N'est voirs que li rois nos a mis
 A nostre kius de mariäge,
 Moi por garit vostre malage,
 Et vos por le serpent ocirre?
- 1055
- Or poriens nos nostre bzen dire
 Tolt colement, chi a larron,
 Quel feme amés, jo quel baron.
 Cat en faisons chi l'afiânce
- 1060
- 1065
- 1070
- 1075

- 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,
 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,
 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.
- 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—
- 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
 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,
 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.
- 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?”
- 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," Cador le dist,	
"Or l'affions, 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 compere,	
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 aficer,	
Tolt sans mentir et sans trecier,	
Qu'anchois que de baisier cessassent,	
Ne qu'il onques un mot sonasscent,—	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 doblee lor dolors.	

- to hide it well, and make a pact
 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. 1080
 You're the man, so you go first;
 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." 1085
 Each takes the other by the hand—
 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,
 for kissing teaches them both a good lesson,
 both her who causes him pain and torment,
 and him whom she loves and desires. 1095
 For this is not a comradely kiss
 of mother to son, of son to father;
 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,
 or whether it was one kiss or one hundred. 1105
 But I will venture to confirm this much,
 without any lying or cheating:
 before they stopped kissing
 and before a single word was spoken,
 you could have traveled a mile. 1110
 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,
 they wouldn't have stayed at table so long. 1115
 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
 what they have most desired,
 and yet are deprived of what they want,
 their pain is also doubled. 1120

- 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 voloit
 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 parrorent.
 Il l'aparole, 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 verror,
 Qu'il est amis et ele amie.
 N'i a cel d'als qui ja laist mie
 Ne voist son don al roi rover,
 Car or le volront esprover 1160
 Com lor ami al grant besoing.
 Tols ont les cols cargiés de soing
 Qu'il ne truisent le roi estable,
 Ne sa parolle véritable.
 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:
 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,
 their torment and their pain. 1125
- 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;
 it gives them greater hope. 1135
- 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,
 they cannot feel the pain. 1140
- 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,
 and any misunderstandings vanished on the spot. 1145
- "Beloved, I am your lover.
 Your own sweet self has vanquished me
 after a long and mighty battle."
 "Beloved, I want you to know
 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." 1150
- There is no longer any misunderstanding between them;
 from now on they know the truth,
 that they are friends and lovers. 1155
- Now they are both more eager than ever
 to demand their reward of the king.
 Now they want to test him
 as their friend in time of great need. 1160
- 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
 and cannot keep things straight. 1165

- Ne cho qu'il set ne puet savoir.
 Bone provance en puis avoir:
 Escrizies moi ens en le cire
 Letres que om bien puisse lire. 1170
 Faites le cire dont remette.
 Enne perist donques la lettre?
 Oil, 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 escripte.
 Qu'angoisse d'amor n'est petite,
 Car cho qu'est voirs cho fait mescroire,
 Et tenir fause coze a voire;
 Et met por poi en esperance. 1180
 Amans est por nient en dotance.
 Or sacies que cil sunt en painne
 Et que griés tormens les demainne,
 Qu'il ont le baisier trovet tel
 Qu'il n'i a trop ne peu de sel. 1185
 Si en sunt moult en grant batalle
 Que al sorplus ne facent falle./
 Dont devisent que il ironnt
 Al roi, et lor bon li diront.
 Donques rebaisent autre fois: 1190
 Tant sunt il en gregnor destrois.
 Ne pueënt de baizier retraire
 Quant esperance lor fait faire,
 Qui lor promet sans demorer
 Plus que baisiers puist savorer. 1195
 Et par itant li baisiers fine,
 Congié ont pris, l'uns l'autre encline.
- Cador remaint, cele s'en torne,
 Et il et ele bien s'atorne. 1200
 Que valt alongier trop se rime?
 Andoi vienent 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.
 Cador 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;
 then melt the wax. 1170
- 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—
 neither too much nor too little salt. 1185
- They are in agony for fear
 of missing the next course.
- Therefore, they agree to go to the king
 and tell him of their desire. 1190
- And so they kiss once more.
- This only worsens their distress:
 they can't stop kissing
 because it gives them such hopes
 and promises 1195
 of soon savoring more than kisses,
 and that is why the kissing ceases.
- They bowed to each other, and took their leave.
- Cador remained, she returned to her room,
 and both took pains with their attire. 1200
- Why prolong the suspense?
- They both came at a very early hour
 to ask the king to fulfill his promise.
- He had not yet heard mass.
- They did not speak privately; 1205
 on the contrary, they were heard by a hundred barons
 who were waiting to attend the king at mass.
- All his vassals were gathered there.
- Valiant Cador spoke first

- Et dist al roi: "Le don demant 1210
 Qu'a celui promesistes, sire,
 Qui le serpent iroit ocire.
 Jo l'ocis: chi n'a cel nel sache
 De quanque en a en ceste plache."
 "Et vos avrés," li rois li dist, 1215
 Vostre demant, car cho i gist.
 Jo vos donrai une conté
 Et feme de moult grant bonté.
 Il n'i a nule sans calenge,
 Se vos volés, qui ne vus prenge. 1220
 C'est par raison, si com moi samble."
 "C'est moult," cho dient tuit ensamble.
 "Et bien ait sire qui cho done
 Et ki les siens si abandone." 1225
 Atant si parla la puchiele,
 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 guarri
 Dont jo vos vi moult esmari./ 1235
 Or ai ma painne despendue
 Et la vie li ai rendue."
 Li rois li dist: "Ma bele amie,
 Por vos ne mentirai jo mie.
 Mentrir 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, site, 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
that you promised, Sire. 1210
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,
have your reward, as is right. 1215
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.
This is reasonable, it seems to me." 1220
"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,
in whom *joi d'amors* is revealed.* 1225
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
and saved his life." 1235
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,
leaving Cador and the girl,
who were the reason for the council. 1250
Both remained there.

- Nus d'als ne set preu que il face:
 Criement cil consals ne lor nuise,
 Et li rois okison ne truise
 De lor proiere deporter.
 Mais ne lor esteüst doter:
 S'il seüssent la covenance,
 Il fuscent tuit lors fors d'errance. 1255
 Li rois parole. Oiés qu'a dit.
 "Segnor, entendés me .i. petit.
 Jo ne vus quiier un point celer:
 De le feme et del bacelet
 Cador voel faire aliëment.
 Si estevroit castiëment
 Al conseil descovrir tel home
 Ki lor seüst mostrer la some,
 Die lor qu'il sunt d'un eäge,
 D'une bialté, de halt parage,
 Et quant eäges les ivuelle,
 Et bialtés, n'estroit pas merveille
 S'andoi quesisen l'aparel
 Qu'il en amor fuscent parel.
- Segnor, jo voel que Cador ait 1275
 Icesto mescine entresait.
 Jes voel ensamble marier
 Tolt sans respit, sans detrier,
 Por cho qu'andoi le vollent faire,
 U, se non, nen puis a cief traire,
 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.
 Ferai lor bien que faire doi.
 Mais il puet a tel feme tendre,
 Et ele a tel baron entendre,
 Qu'il m'en covenga moult pener
 Ains que les puisse a cief mener: 1285
 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,
 Cat j'en seroie donc delivres: 1295

- Neither was sure what would happen:
 they were afraid that this council might harm their cause
 and that the king might find some way
 to deny their request. 1255
- 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,
 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. 1270
- Lords, I want Cador
 to have this girl immediately. 1275
- I want to marry them
 without any delay or hesitation—
 that is, if they are willing.
- If they are not, I cannot accomplish this,
 unless I want to prove myself a liar—
 I would rather God struck me dead. 1280
- 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,
 and yet I would have to do my duty. 1290
- 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,
 I would grant them this myself. 1295

- Et la tiere de Cornuâlle
 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 bacelet.
 Jovente et folie les tensem.
 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 monstrer 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 sacé 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
 Tols jors, et il m'en volsist croire, 1335
 Ne fineroit de proier donques;
 Car il ne cuident veîr onques
 Eure ne tans c'on les espouse.

S I L E N C E

- 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
 than they could accomplish in a lifetime. 1315
 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
 would cause the greatest love ever heard of
 to spring up between the two. 1330
 But he really didn't have to pray;
 they will easily be persuaded.
 If I could convince him that all his prayers
 would always be so efficacious,
 he would spend all his time praying. 1335
 For they didn't think they would ever see
 the day when they'd be married.

- Et l'uns et l'autres le golouse,
Et preendent moult a mervellier
Que li rois a a consellier.
Dient que vile et mainte joie
Va par consel a male voie.
Cador a dit: "Que c'est tol nient!"
Se on droiture ne nos tient,
Amie, j'en ferai mervelle,
Car mes corages me conseille
Que en essil o vos m'en voise,
Tolt a laron, sans faire noise." 1345
Ele respont: "Tel n'oï onques!
Bials amis, mervelliés vus donques
S'essil sofrés por vostre amie,
Or voi qu'es homes nen a mie
Si grans cuers com g'i ai creü.
Amis, or ai jo bien veü
Et sai de fi et sui certaine
Que del mal dont ne sui pas sainne
Que vos estes en grant fretel.
Mais jo certes ne m'esmervel
S'en bos vois o vus u en lande,
Car Amors le rieve et commande
Que cascuns doie assés savoir*
Cho qu'aime s'il le puet avoir
Certes qu'a cho cil qui bien ainme,
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,
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,
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?
O vos, amie, vos m'avés,
Tolt de fiânce le savés
Et qui vostre amor me tolroit 1355
1360
1365
1370
1375
1380

- But both of them were longing for it,
and they began to wonder a lot 1340
about what was happening at the king's council.
They said that charters and many a cause for joy
come to a bad end at councils.
- Cador said, "It doesn't matter
if they don't deal fairly with us, love, 1345
I'll give them a surprise,
for my innermost being counsels me
to seek exile with you,
in all secrecy, without making a noise."
- 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
to wander with you in forest or field, 1360
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
and seeks and demands more than this,
he is surely not a noble lover. 1365
- 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,
what I don't love doesn't matter much to me. 1375
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?"
Beloved, you have me with you, 1380
you know it, completely and utterly,
and whoever deprived me of your love

- De tolt le mont ne me solroit,
 Car autre riens ne me delite:
 Com le clameroie dont cuite?
 Vie n'est el que deliter.
 Ki vie tolt puet se acuiter?
 Acuiter? nenil, par ma destre!" 1385
 Atant si vint li cuens de Cestre.
 Voit les parler et consellier
 Priveément et orellier;
 Et lor parole si despendre
 Que li uns l'autre puet entendre
 Encor oissent il bien dur. 1390
 Car il ont trovet ja moult sur
 De celer lor penser adés:
 Por cho parolent prés a près.
- 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,
 Car cortois est, si violt qu'il l'orient:
 Ne violt d'als faire pas lonc conte
 Si sutilment qu'en n'aiente honte,
 Qu'il ert en amor asociés,
 Si ot esté moult asociés. 1410
 Set bien qu'en amor a vergoigne.
 Cador 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 blance
 Plus que n'est nois desor la brance:
 Et quel verté que on roiongue,*
 Por cho qu'il ont si grant vergogne, 1420
 Si vient del blanc colors vernelle.
 Et jo si ai moult grant merveille
 S'ainc fu en tierre 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,
for they have taken every care 1395
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 tonsures 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
or paint a beam so speedily 1425

- 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 sachies 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 biele 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'eüscies soshaidié,
 S'estroit il bien, se Dex me valle!
 Car vostre iert tolte Cornuëlle 1450
 Apriés le mort Renalt le conte.
 Or est il bien que jo vos conte:
 Cesti* devroit 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 .ii. jumieles
 Perdirent femes et puchieles
 Lor droit de tiere calengier.
 Or violt li rois cesti engier, 1460
 Et vos avoec, de la conté.
 Ene vos fait il grant bonté?"
- Il oënt que li cuens de Cestre
 Voit et entent trestolt lor estre.
 Dient: "Se nos le seüsciens, 1465
 Que nos avoir le peüsciens,
 Et la conté et l'ireté,
 Dont diriens nos par verité

with so many colors in so short a time
as shame has done with the two of them,
first red, then blue, then white,
and then more red than blood.

1430

You should know that without great suffering
they wouldn't have changed color so fast.

The count approached them. He said, "God greet you.
You certainly don't need my advice."

Then he spoke like the politician he was.

1435

"I have gone to a lot of trouble for you."

"You have, sir? With respect to whom?" "The king."

"The king, good sir? And what about?"

"Cador, don't play games with me.

I'll say it right to your face:

1440

you love belle Eufemie,

and she obviously doesn't hate you.

I've seen it quite clearly all along,

but I have kept it quiet until now.

I remembered that I have been in love,

1445

and I was grateful to him who helped.

Now I have helped you a great deal;

if you had asked me to help you,

it wouldn't have turned out better, so help me God!

for all Cornwall will be yours

1450

at the death of Count Renald.

Now it would be a good idea to explain:

the land should have been this lady's,

but she no longer has a right to it.

For, as you know, because of the two counts

1455

who killed each other so disgracefully

on account of the twin maidens,

women and girls have lost the right

to lay claim to land.

Now the king wants to bestow the land

1460

on this lady and you.

Isn't he doing you a tremendous favor?"

They could hear that the count of Chester
saw and understood their situation very well.

They said, "If we knew

1465

that we could have

both county and inheritance,

then we would indeed say

- Que vos avriés 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 offte 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
 “Oil, par Deu, trop en avons.”
 Li cuens sorrist 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,
 Cat 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 raës 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 merchant moult le roi.
 Ançois que tierce fust sonee
 Fu bele Eufemie donee.
 Cador li preus l'a affiee,
 Puis l'en ont al mostier menee. 1510
 Ses sposa uns arcevesques.

- that you have done much for us."
- "By God, I did even more for you:
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." 1470
- "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!
You're moving much too fast!" 1485
- 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,
and if either of them loses anything by this,
may I be tonsured and made monk!" 1495
- There were many people present that day.
The king said in the presence of everyone,
"Cador, you are no fool,
and neither are you, belle Eufemie,
for fulfilling my request. 1500
- 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."
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,
where an archbishop married them. 1510

Assés i ot abés et vesques, Et dus et barons et princiens. Li rois kis ama et tint ciers Fait noces faire merveillooses, Poi mains des soies preciose.	1515
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 oïés que la lettre conte: "Al bon Renalt de Cornuâlle Mande li rois qu'il vivie et valle. Vostre fille ai Cador donee	
Et grant riçoise abandonee.	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 Car ainc n'acointa tel meschine."	1535
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 Cornuâlle.	
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,
only slightly less splendid than his own. 1515
- 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;
she has never known such a charming girl." 1535
- 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,
and Baseness has a high market value; 1550
- 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,
 Pot rover ne por tarier,
 Mais retenir veir en voel.*
 Qu'en puis jo donc, se jo m'en duel?
 Hontes a trop esté a cort:
 A cascun més trote et acort.
 En li a mais vielle puciele,
 Il n'a en tiere damoisiele/
 Se tant se fust a cort tenue
 Com Hontes est, ne fust kenne,
 Vils a veir et a savoir.
- 1560
- Et Honte voelent tolz avoir:
 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.
 Or voel repairier a mon conte.
- 1570
- 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
 A cascun ki del sien li riveve.
 Ki bien i quiert francise i trueve.
 Cador l'oneure moult et ainme.
 De lui desos Deu se reclame,
 Devient ses fils, et cil ses pere.
 "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,
 Poruec que sa fille a oir viegne;
 Se sans oir muert, icil le tiegne
 Ki doit tenir. Les .m. livrees
 Ait Cador, com li a livrees.
 Cil l'en mercie de l'estrainne.
- 1580
- 1585
- 1590
- 1595
- Ci l'en mercie de l'estrainne.
 Li cuens prent congé, sis enmainne
 Cador et sa fille Eufemie.
 De sejot 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 tierie arriere.	
Tant vont par sente et par carriere	1600
Qu'al sieme jor sans falle [i] sunt.	
Cil del païs grant fieste i funt,	
Ainc mais ne vit nus hom gregnor.	
De Cador fait li cuens segnor	
Del tolt, sauve sa feëlté.	1605
Entr'als nen ot ainc cruelté,	
Ne male amor, ne felonie.	
Nus hom n'i vit ainc vilonie.	
Cador le tient cier com son pere,	
La contesse ainme com sa mere.	1610
Mais la vie Renalt fu poie.	
Apriés la fieste et cele joie	
Ne vesqui c'un an et un jor.	
Car de nos gens n'i a c'um tor:	
Que que nus engigne u açaigne,	1615
U il voelle, u il n'adagne,	
Morir l'estuet, et nos tretolt,	
Foibles et fors, humeles, estolt.	
Tolt alsif 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 morit 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	

S I L E N C E

- they returned home to their lands.
They traveled so fast by street and way
that they arrived on the seventh day. 1600
- 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 voisies,
Que anchois que li cuens morust,
Que folors n'i entrecorust,
En tols les castials mist ses gardes,
Tels gens ki ne sunt pas coärdes. 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 plait, des mors soviegne.
 Huimais orrés conte aviver, 1655
 Sans noise faire et estriver.
 De Cador, de s'engendreüre
 Comence chi tels aventure
 Cainques n'oïstes tele en livre.
 Si com l'estorie le nos livre, 1660
 Qu'en latin escrive lizons,
 En romans si le vos disons. /
 Jo ne di pas que n'i ajoigne
 Avoic le voir sovent menoigne
 Por le conte miols acesmer:
 Mais se jel puis a droit esmer 1665
 N'i metrai rien qui m'uevre empire
 Ne del voir nen iert mos a dire
 Car la verté ne doi taisir.
 Avint si par le Deu plaisir
 Que Eufemie ot conceü. 1670
 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 1680
 Qu'ele ait santé, l'enfes puist vivre.
 A une part la dame enmainne.
 Parole moult de cele estrainne
 Dont Dex lor a fait demostrance: 1685

- and in the ground and covered with earth
and sealed in the tomb,
then it's time for sorrow to diminish." 1645
 Cador acted like a prudent man:
as soon as the count died,
to prevent any rash behavior,
he stationed his guards in all the castles,
the kind of men who are not cowards. 1650
- Let's stop talking of death now;
it's not such a good idea to dwell on it.
The live are better off among the living;
let it please God to be mindful of the dead.
 From now on you shall hear a lively tale, 1655
without any further fuss or ado.
 Of Cador and his offspring
begins such a tale of adventure
as you never heard of in any book.
- Just as it was written 1660
in the Latin version we read,
we will tell it to you in French.
 I'm not saying that there isn't
a good deal of fiction mingled with truth,
in order to improve the tale, 1665
but if I am any judge of things,
I'm not putting in anything that will spoil the work,
nor will there be any less truth in it,
for truth should not be silenced.
- It so happened that it pleased God 1670
to have Eufemie conceive a child.
 When the count was told of this,
he prayed fervently that God in his mercy
might make this fruit healthy
and let it ripen as if it were His,
 and not let it be defective from parents' sin, 1675
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;
 and when the lady is delivered of it, 1680
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
 Que femes aient iretage
 A son vivant, por le damage
 Des .ii. contes par les jumieles,
 Sin ont moult perdu les femieles." 1690
- "Bials sire ciers," cho dist la dame,
 "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." 1695
- "Ma dolce amie," dist li cuens,
 "Jhesus li pius, li vrais, li buens,
 Il fist Adam, cho est la voire,
 Et Evain de sa coste en oire.
 Es vos l'entensiön reposte
 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./" 1700
- 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
 De nostre Noviel Testament
 Met on entr'als tele aliänce,
 Cho sachies vos tolta fiance,
 Cuns sans et une cars devienent:
 Sor als est puis s'il ne se tienent. 1710
- 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,
 Ja rien que vostres cuers desire
 N'orés par moi estre escondeie."
 "Entendés moi, suer, dolce amie," 1715
- 1720
- 1725

- "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
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." 1690
- "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."
- "My sweet love," said the count, 1700
"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
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.
- There is great unity between man and woman,
because the two are of one substance. 1710
And it is the same
when they are married,
for, with the most holy sacrament
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,
nothing that your heart desires
will I refuse you." 1725
"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.
 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 coverture 1755
 Que on n'en sace l'aventure.
 Faisons le com un fil norir,
 De priés garder et bien covrit,/br/>
 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.

S I L E N C E

- 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
 who died a while ago in a war,
 leaving the lady pregnant. 1735
 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
 when it is time for the baby to be delivered. 1745
 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
Et de son mal le conte poise.
L'enfes l'angoissee, et point, et broce.
Li jors del agezir aproce.
Vos savés qu'a moi nient ne monte
C'on meccé en rime ne en conte 1775
Come la dame fu penee
A l'enfanter et demenee.
Mais tant dirai, ele enfanta,
Et ot enfant, tant en pena.
Moult fu la contesse adolee
Car l'enfertés li est coleee
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 traval gregnor, 1780
Car seule fu sans compagnesse
Al delivrer de la contesse.
Et on vos a sovent retrait
Que mal a ki malade trait.
- Or voel a l'enfant repairier
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 1795
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
Vint a l'enfant, si s'esforça./ 1800
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,
Et quant la farine i a mise 1805
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;
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
- 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.
- The spasms coursed through her heart
- and bones and nerves and veins.
- Her contractions were prolonged and very painful.
- The lady who was the lord's cousin
- never had a more difficult task,
- 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
- 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
- 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,
- 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,
- 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 Entre le fleur blance 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, 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, Quante faire violt un vallant home Que voelle ovrer par majestyre. Premierement prent sa matyre. Avant tolte ouvre si l'esmie, Et moult l'espurge, et esniie;	1815
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.	1820
Mais se il avient que Nature 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.	1825
Et se ne me volés or croire Vos le poés par vos prover. Ne poés vos sovent trover Vil cuer et povre, et riche cors Kist sarpelliere par defors?	1830
Li cors n'est mais fors sarpelliere, 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	1835
Se melle avoec la grosse et serre 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./	1840
Si com maint noble sont sollié, De lor vils cuers entoëllié, Si sunt li bas de grant affaire A cel poor qu'il pueent faire;	1845
	1850
	1855

S I L E N C E

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 mentiōn.
Nature i mist s'ententiōn.
Li matere est et biele et pure.
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 merveillose:
“Ainc mais nen endurai a prendre
Ceste matere, ne despender:
Or la prendrai houes ma mescine.
Tant com la materre est plus fine
Covient il plus l'uevre afiner,
Bien commencier 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.
En li sole, car bel me sanble,
Metrai plus de bialté ensanble
Que n'aient ore .m. de celes
Qui en cest monde sont plus beles.
Alcune fois doit paroir m'uevre.”
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
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,
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.

1865

1870

1875

1880

1885

1890

1895

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.
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
that no one would ever be able to tell
who was who or what their name was.

1890

But Nature takes such care
that there is nothing to fault in her work.

She has forms both big and little,
ugly, misshapen, and perfect,
for thus all people are fashioned,
big and little, handsome and fine,
she has so many different forms.

1895

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 U doit ovrer, comence en son: Biel cief fait, bloie kievelure Ki luisent cler par nuit obscure. La kavelure recercelle;	1905
De la greve dusque a l'orelle Com une ligne droit descent Sique ses poins ne se desment. La kavelure al cief li serre: Ja <i>n'estevra</i> la greve querre, Ne al pinier ne al treciet, Car Nature iert al redrecier.	1910
Les oreilles li fait petites Nature, ki les a escrites, Les sorcils bruns et bien seoir, Nul hom ne puet si bials veoir.	1915
	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, Et la color si bien refaite.	1925
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, Voltice espaule par selonc, Et les bras li fait si tres drois, Les mains petites, lons les dois,	1935
Le pis bien fait, graisles les flans, Miols faite ne vit sers ne frans.	
Et les hances si fait voltices, Les cuisses moles et faitices. Les janbes droites fist Nature,	1940

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
and begins right at the top. 1905

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
it falls evenly, 1910

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,
for Nature will set it perfectly straight. 1915

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.
And she makes the hips rounded,
the thighs soft and shapely. 1940
Nature makes the legs straight,

- Et piés, et ortals a mesure.
 Que vos feroie huimais 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/
 Fors solement qu'ele est trop biele, 1950
 Que tant en a en la puciele
 Qu'a .m. peüst assés savoir,
 Se tant en peüscent avoir
 Et de bialté et de faiture.
 Ainc n'ovra mais si bien Nature
 A rien ki morir doive vivre.
 Bele Eufemie en est delivre.
 De l'angoisse est resalenee,
 Que sa fille est si biele nee. 1960
 La grans angoisce l'atenrist,
 Mais cele bialtés amenrist
 Sa grant angoisse et s'enfertés.
 Si con ç'avint dirai vertés.
 Cele qui fu o la contesse
 Cui li cuens ot fait la promesse, 1965
 Et fu sa cozine germaine,
 Al conte vait noncier l'estraine.
 Vient en la sale tolt riant,
 Oiant tols les barons criant:
 "Faites vos liet, bials sire cuens!
 Jhesus li pius, li vrais, li buens,
 Un moult bel fil vos a tramis.
 Or avés vos moult plus d'amis."
- Tolte la cors est esjoïe
 Por la noviele c'ont oïe. 1975
 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 verror.
 O l'error se melle esperance,
 Et o l'espoir se melle errance.

- and feet and toes in proportion.
Why should I go on like this?
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—
except that she's too beautiful. 1945
- For there is so much beauty in her
that it would be plenty for a thousand,
if they could share
such beauty and workmanship. 1950
- 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. 1955
- 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—
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,
“Rejoice, good Sir Count! 1960
- Jesus the pious, the true, the good
has granted you a most beautiful son—
a fine addition to the family.” 1970
- The entire court rejoiced
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. 1975
- But he would glady, 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,
and with hope, uncertainty. 1980
- 1985

- 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,
 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:
 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
 Por l'estre savoir et enquere.
 L'uis de la cambre apriés lui serre.
 Li voloirs qu'a del voir savoir
 Tolt qu'il ne puet vergoigne avoir
 Qu'al lit ne voist de l'acolie.
- 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, biele amie?"
- Cele respont qu'el n'avra mie
 Angoisse que ne puist porter
 Tolt por son segnor conforter.
 "Biele, de vostre engendreüre
 Voldroie savoir l'aventure,
 Lequel cho est, malle u femiele,
 Oïr en voel certe noviele."
- "Se vos, bials sire, nel savés,
 Jo vos di c'une fille avés.
 S'est la plus biele créature
 C'ainc en cest mont fesist Nature."
- 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,
 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
- 1990
- 1995
- 2000
- 2005
- 2010
- 2015
- 2020
- 2025

S I L E N C E

- 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
and make you grow and flourish, 2025
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, Car ainc ne vit si biele cose. Color i voit de lis, de rose. Se Deux en done l'aventure Qu'il en puist faire coverture, Donques a il quanque il desire.	2030
A la contesse prent a dire: "Consel nos convenra aquierre Que nos oirs ne perge sa tierre. Je le voel, biele, desguiser, Si com m'oïstes deviser.	2035
Faire en voel malle de femiele. Or en pensés, amie biele, Car nos ne poö[n]s pas savoir Se jamais poriens malle avoir.	2040
Nos n'en somes pas aseür, Et se nos l'avons par eür/ Cesti ferons desvaleter.	2045
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 besoing.	
Sel faisons ore baptizier Et nostre dolte apetizier,	2065
Car se de baptesme a l'eür Nos en seromes plus seür.	
Sel faisons apieler Scilense El non de Sainte Paciense,	
Por cho que silensce tolz ance.	
Que Jhesus Cris par sa poissance Le nos doinst celer et taisir,	2070
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 power2070
- 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
 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, 2075
 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.”
 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. 2080
 Si dira on al capelain,
 Ançois qu'il i mecce sa main,
 Que il en haste le baptize,
 Car la vie li apetize,/ 2085
 Et que l'enfant poroit tuer
 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'amainne 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.
 Mais aprestés l'aigue et le sel.” 2105
 Et il dist a son cleric: “Diva!
 Va ent poruec!” Et cil i va,
 Prent aigue en un vassiel de lanbre
 Et sel a pris en une canbre
 Ki voisine ert a la capiele. 2110
 Li cuens sa cozinain apiele
 Et ele vient atoilt l'enfant
 Oltre ses bras son cief pendant.
 Com s'il deüst morir li loche,
 Cat la dame de gret l'ahoce,

- I can't think of a better plan.
 He will be called Silentius.
 And if by any chance
 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,
 for this -us is contrary to nature,
 but the other would be natural." 2075
- The countess and the lady both said,
 "Everything you say is true,
 if the child were to be christened thus." 2080
- 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. 2085
- 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 2090
- 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
 and said to him, "My son is dying." 2100
- 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.
 Prepare the water and salt instead." 2105
- 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
 next to the chapel. 2110
- 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,
 for the lady was letting it wobble on purpose, 2115

- 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,
 Cat 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 manderai,
 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 tote ne tiegne,
 Un enfant i ait qui le sievre,

- which was very clever of her indeed.
 She was quick to learn deception.
 She said to them, "The child is barely alive.
 Hurry up, all of you, before it dies." 2120
 The chaplain, who was in a tremendous hurry,
 baptized the child in the piece of cloth
 which was wrapped about its hips,
 for he was afraid it would die in his arms.
 However nature and custom may have felt about it, 2125
 the child was named Silentius.
- The news spread rapidly everywhere
 that the child was dying. No one was pleased,
 for the had heard it said
 that our Lord had made the child very beautiful. 2130
 That only increased their lamentation.
 Many people were pale with sorrow;
 they said that he was graceful and beautiful,
 and that if he had been ugly, hunchbacked or leprous
 he wouldn't be dying so young. 2135
 And what they say is certainly true:
 the good and the beautiful die young in this world;
 the wicked and ugly remain alive.
 But here you have people upset for nothing,
 for the child who wasn't sick was cured. 2140
 Actually, he wasn't cured because he wasn't sick.
 There was a seneschal in the land
 who had been raised with the countess
 and was a close relation of Renald, who lay moldering.
 He loved belle Eufemie 2145
 even more than his own daughter.
 He lived in a forest near the sea.
 The count had taken a great liking to him,
 for he had heard many good things about him,
 and the man was very loyal. 2150
 He said, "Lady. I will send for him
 and entrust the child to him.
 I will have him build a house
 in the woods, isolated and solitary.
 This lady shall be there with the child. 2155
 This way, she will have no problems:
 there'll be no coming and going,
 there'll be no household staff,
 only a child to serve her,

O petit sens, ki rien n'entierve,	2160
Ne ne face conoistre l'uevre;	
Et nequedent tols jors se cuevre.	
L'aiue avra forment petite	
Por le covrit, 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 coverture	
En cele soie noreture	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.	
Receuës 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
or betray the secret, 2160
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
than if one took pains for a year. 2165
The seneschal will see that the lady
has whatever she wishes and commands
whenever he hears of any need.
And if foolish people ask
why she stays so isolated with the child, 2170
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
was in agreement with the plan, 2175
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,
that everyone would be deceived; 2180
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,
so that he would be well acquainted with the plan, 2185
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
 De norit lor fille por fil. 2205
 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.
 Congiet ont pris moult bonement,
 Si s'entrebaisent dolcement.
 Li seneschals met se el retor
 Car tels fais n'a point de sejor.
 La dame otolt l'enfant emmainne. 2210
 Or monte l'engiens et la painne
 Al senescal de celer l'uevre.
 Vient en maison et si se cuevrie
 Viers privés, viers estrange gent.
 Un ostel a fait bel et gent
 En la forest joste la cort. 2220
 Cuidiés que moult biel ne s'atort?
 Oïl! et l'ostels est de bos,
 De mur, de plaseis enclos.
 Li senescals, ki que l'en ferme 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.
 Met i .ii. bones fermeüres,
 .ii. vierals, et fors serreüres.
 Clés i a mises trosqu'a quatre,
 Que nus vilains n'i puist enbatte./ 2230
 Les .ii. retient et les .ii. balle
 Celi qui de l'enfant est balle,
 Que il ait d'entrer pooir,
 Et ele en issce a son voloir.
 La dame et l'enfant i a mis.
 De tols biens lor i a tramis
 A grant fuisson et a plenté;
 Et un enfant a volenté
 Ke soolté* li tiegne itant.
 [Il] ne lor faſt ne tant ne quant.
 N'i met pas home qui le serve
 Qui l'estre de l'enfant enterve, 2245

- They gave many gifts and promises
to the lady to secure her good will,
so that she would not disdain
to raise their girl as a boy. 2205
- 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 senschal 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
in the forest near his estate. 2220
- 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,
the seneschal had a strong gate built, 2225
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
to the lady in charge of the child, 2235
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,
plentifully and abundantly, 2240
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,
because he might discover the child's true nature, 2245

- 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
 Com jo vos ai chi devisié. 2255
- Quant Nature s'est aperçute
 Qu'il l'ont enganee et déçute,
 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 sachies 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 maltalement de ma façōn
 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,/br/>
 Jo fis l'un l'autre variier,
 Por tolt le monde tariier.
 Del blanc i mis a grant merveille
 Qu'ele ne fust pas trop veruelle. 2285
 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
how much she owed to this good man. 2250
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,
as I have just finished telling you. 2255

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!
“They have insulted me,” said Nature, 2265
“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
created by Nature 2270
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—
when I painted her face, 2280
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,
so that she wouldn’t be too red,
and put in a large quantity of red,
so that she wouldn’t be too pale. 2285
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 puissee," 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 altrement.	
Et ki fait bien par estavoir	
Ne por crieme de pis avoir,	
Cho n'est pas naturals faintize,	2305
Ainz est paors qui le justize.	
Et quant il est fors de la crieme,	
Cuidiés <i>que sis*</i> 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 pat noreture	2315
Mal gré u non sa vil nature:	
Et puis apriés si s'en repent,	
De son bienfaire se reprend*	
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 malvaistie et l'amertume,/	2330
Se il s'enprent a enivrer,	
Envise 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 marks2310
 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 nature2325
 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
 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 2335
 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,
 Que Nature plaint et dolose. 2340
 De maltalement fremist et groce,
 Viers Noreture se coroce.
 Mais ne li valt pas une tille:
 Silence n'iert a an mais fille.
 Dire vos puis seurement 2345
 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.
 Por cho que tels est li matyre, 2355
 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 lettres aprendre
 Si tost com il i pot entendre.
 Car por icho le violt destraindre
 Et faire entor ostel remaindre,
 Qu'en tel liu le portaist enfance 2370
 U li enfes par ignorance
 Descovrist as gens sa nature,
 Se fust falsee Noreture.
 Al doctriner n'a que la dame:
 Si bien le fait que n'i a blasme, 2375

- 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.
 She did it well, beyond reproach. 2375

Cainc ne veistes 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 ensegne.	
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 meïsmé aprent	
Moult plus qu'a son eé n'apent.	2390
Enfans ot donc ens el pâis*	
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 grascé.	
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'orgueillent	
Et grant folie en auls acuellent,	
Que il ne valent une pie.	
L'orgiols lor valt une pepie;	
Targent les cols, cho sachies 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
 that he taught himself. 2385
- 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
 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. 2410
- "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 Ne se puet malvais hom retraire De cho que cuers li loe a faire; Et por cho di jo que Nature Signorist desor Noreture.	2420
Ki en ses vils fais s'abonist Et voit et set qu'il se honist,/br/>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 puissce pas retraire, Dont est il sers et ses cuers sire, Espi! quant tels cuers le maistyre.	2425
Li cuens a son enfant veü, De grant sens a aparceü Qu'il est de tel discrecioñ. Deu prie et fait affliction Que lui de son enfant sovigne, Qu'en cele longes le maintigne.	2430
Quant l'enfes est de tel doctrine Qu'il entent bien qu'il est mescine, Ses pere l'a mis a raison, Se li demostre l'oquoison Por que on le coile si et cuevre. "Se li rois Ebayys seüst l'uevre Que nos de vos, bials fils, menons,	2440
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	2445
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. Tolte l'oquoison, fils savés.	2450
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,	2455
Car, se Deu plait, bien le ferai, Viers tolte gent me coverrai."	2460

- Neither praise nor blame
can restrain an evil man
from what his heart counseld him to do.
And thus I say that Nature
is superior to Nurture. 2420
- If a man persists in doing wrong,
and sees and knows that he is dishonoring himslef,
if he thus dishonors himself on purpose,
I hold him to be a madman. 2425
- But if his vile heart forces him to do it,
so that he cannot stop doing it,
he is the servant and his heart the lord. 2430
- 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,
his father sat down to reason with him
and explain the circumstances
which had led them to conceal his identity this way. 2440
- "If, dear son, King Evan knew
what we are doing with you,
your share of our earthly possessions
would be very small indeed. 2445
- For the king, dear son, disinherited
all the women of England
on account of the death of two counts
in a battle they fought
over twin heiresses they had married. 2450
- 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 alsi 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 apprendre 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
 Et cel de feme refusé 2475
 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'enaspirst,
 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
took him through woods and streams,
which were plentiful in the countryside. 2470
- 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
and had so rejected women's ways 2475
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
 Cat 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'elles i voient, 2515
 Car puet scel estre elles 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 fuet,
 Qu'el s'en tenroit a malballie
 Que s'esperance estroit fallie.
 Tu me fais, certes, grant laidure
 Quant tu maintiens tel noreture.
 Ne dois pas en bos converser, 2525
 Lancier, ne traire, ne berset.
 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!"
 Et cil respont: "Tel n'oï onques! 2530
 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,
 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: 2535
 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, 2540
 Ne doit mener us si salvage.
- Atant i sorvint Noreture
 Et voit que parole a Nature.

- when I created you with my own hands,
 when I heaped all the beauty I had stored up
 upon you alone!
- There are a thousand people who think I'm stingy
 because of the beauty I stuffed you with,
 for I extracted the beauty of a thousand
 to create your lovely appearance! 2510
- And there are a thousand women in this world
 who are madly in love with you
 because of the beauty they see in you—
 you don't suppose they think something's there
 that was never part of your equipment at all? 2515
- There are those who love you now
 who would hate you with all their hearts
 if they knew what you really are!
 They would consider themselves misused,
 having their hopes so cruelly dashed. 2520
- 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,
 jousting, hunting, shooting off arrows. 2525
- 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,
 that I cannot be anybody else! 2535
- 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:
 that because the -us was contrary to usage,
 her name was not Silentius. 2540
- She wanted to go and learn to sew,
 just as Nature demanded of her;
 she should not cultivate such savage ways
 for fief or inheritance. 2545

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 governer et paistre:	
Quelcs! ja n'ai jo oï conté*	
Qu'il est plains de si grant bonté	2580
Et done a tolte créature	
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 esjoi?	
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,
 and she's right, in fact,
 to get me accustomed
 to appropriate habits,
 for this behavior is unnatural.
 Truly, no woman of my lineage
 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
 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
 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.
 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
 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
 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?
 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.
 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 tolta ton conte.	
Nature, envoies o <i>ta</i> honte.”	
Quant Nature s'en fu aleee	2605
Et o le roce a devalee	
U Noreture ot si tencié,	
Es vos l'estor recommencé	
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. /	
“Croi mon conseil, amis Silence,	2615
Et aies en toi abstinence.	
Fai de ton cuer une ferté.	
S'a lui te prent, de la verté,	
Nature, qui t'angoisce adés,	
Ja n'ieres mais vallés apriés.	2620
Tolt perdrés cheval et carete.	
Ne cuiдиés 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 oï 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
 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,
 and forbear! 2615
 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.
 You will lose your horse and chariot. 2620
 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
 to take up female habits. 2630
 Then he began to consider
 the pastimes of a woman's chamber—
 which he had often heard about—

Et poise dont en son corage 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. 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. Trop dure boche ai por baisier, Et trop rois bras por acoler. On me poroit tost afoler Al giu c'on fait desos gordine, Car vallés sui et nient mescine. 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 Ja n'en ferai descoverture."	2635 2640 2645 2650 2655
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Si est li voirs, cho dist l'estorie Ki de Silence fait memorie, C'onques ne fu tels abstinence Com poës oïr de Silence. Jo ne di pas qu'il ne pe[n]sast Diversemement, et ne tensast/ Diverse cogitatiön Com enfant de tel natiön, Meësmement enfant si tendre. Ki doit a tel usage entendre. Et cuers s'est une créature Merveilles d'estrange nature: Qu'il pense voir moult largement, Torne et retourne trop sovent Les larges pensers que requelt Dont motes foie[e]s se due[lt]. Et por cho di jo de Scilence Qu'i ert de moult grant abstinence, Que ses pensers le tormentoit Et il le sentoit et sofroit.	2660 2665 2670 2675
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- 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
 over and over again, far too often, 2670
 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,
 and he felt this and suffered from it. 2675

Et tols jors ert pres a contraire A cho que ses cuers voloit faire.	
Et qui ouevre contre voloir Soventes fois l'estuet doloir.	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, Larges, cortois, amés de tols.	2685
.ii. jors u .iii. mest o le pere, Quant il voloit, et o la mere.	
Oiés merveلوose 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.	
Avironnee ont Engletiere, Grant avoir aquis en la tiere.	2695
En Cornuaille 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. Enviers la mer sunt puis alé	
Car passer voelent en Bergogne. Nuis les sosprent en une plagne	
Dejoste une moult grant foriest U li més fu et encor est	2705
U mest li senescals, li sire De cui vos m'avés oï dire	
Ki fil al conte norissoit. Li maistre tors apparisoit,/	
Sor tolt le bos une rhee, Mais tant lor fait une nuee	2710
Qu'il ne le pueent veir preu, Qu'il ert ja entre cien et leu.	
Cil voient le bos espessir, Ne sevent u entrer n'isscir.	
De cel païs ne sevent rien. Dont dient: "Deu, Saint Juliien,	2715
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,
 generous, courteous, beloved by everyone. 2685
 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
 and had been very successful there. 2695
 They came to Cornwall
 and were well received by the count.
 They spent a week at his court
 and were well rewarded for it
 when it came time for them to leave. 2700
 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
 just a stone's throw away, 2710
 but the fog was so thick
 they could hardly see it,
 for it was already twilight.
 They could see the forest growing denser,
 and they didn't know how to get in or out of it; 2715
 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 rhee,	2725
Al descovrit d'une nuee.	
En la forest estoit a destre,	
Dont la voie estoit a senestre.	
Si [se] metent en une sente,	
Parvienent a la tor eente.	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 descouverte.	
Dient: "Nos somes jogleör.	
A chaiens nul herbergeör	2740
Ki nos herbergast ceste nuit?"	
"Oil! amis, si con jo cuit,	
N'eüstes hostel mais si buen."	
"Sals soit li sire, et tolz 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 prodom u non est li sire;	
Que nos l'avons oï bien dire	2750
Que bons sire fait bons serjans	
Trestolt sans batre de vergans.	
Bon serjant refont bon segnor."	
L'uissiers adestre le gregnor.	
Quant lor chevals a assenés	2755
Les maistres 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 autres harpe Gueron.	
Puis font une autre 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 up2725
above the trees a stone's throw away,
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 path2730
and came to the tower: it looked threatening,
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 inside2740
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 said2750
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.
- One fiddled a Breton lai;*2760
the other harped "Guerton."
Then they chose a different rhythm

- Et font des estrumens mesture.
 Si font ensanble 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!”
 Mais ainz qu'il voient mais .ii. vespres,
 Orront voir canter autres vespres
 Dont plus dolans sera li sire
 Que s'il veïst son fil ochire.
- Li senescals mar les vit onques. 2775
 Quant il ont assés joé, donques
 S'en vait li senescals gesir.
 Anuit perdra tolt son desir.
 Li menestrel plus n'i demeurent.
 Repozer vont, mestier en eurent,
 Car tolt sunt las de chevalcier. 2780
 Silences fu al descalcier:
 N'i ot autre que lui la nuit.
 Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui qu'anuit,
 Ne violt qu'altres sa main i mete
 Ne c'on sor lui ne s'entremete. 2785
 Colcié se sunt et cil les cuevre.
 Moult fist benignement cele ouevre.
 A cascun livre un orellier.
 Cil prendent moult a mervellier
 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 servisce.
 Demandant 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 prendent dont a dire:
 “.ii. moult bials enfans a tes sire,
 Et si te fait gregnor honor
 Que al plus grant, ne al menor.
 Di nos, kieles, por quoi il fait,
 Car nos savons tolt entressait,
 Se ne fuscce fils a princier 2800
 Ja ne te tenist a si chier.” / 2805

- and played their instruments together.
Together they played the "Lai Mabon"—
this is still a popular piece. 2765
- 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
if you were a prince's son." 2805

"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, Ne folement sor lui atraire, Faire vilains, ne orgellols. Et jo si resui se fillols."	2815
"Amis," font il, "quels que tu soies N'iés pas vilains, ne ne foloies. Dex, ki te fist, porgart ta vie!" "Segnor, et Dex vos beneïe!"	2820
Silences vait en son lit donques, Mais il n'i dormi la nuit onques. Moult li remort sa consiène. Ses cuers li dist: "Diva! Silence,	2825
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. Alques t'esteveroit aprendre Dont te seüscs contenir, Car tolt cho puet bien avenir.	2835
Et se coze est par aventure Que si fais us longhes te dure, Bien sai, tu ieres chevaliers Puet sc'estre coärs, u laniers,	2840
Car ainc ne vi feme maniere D'armes porter en tel maniere. Tolt cho repuet avenir bien. Se ne ses donc alcune rien	
Por tes compagnons conforter, Ne te volront pas deporter. Car t'en vas vials en altre tierre	2845

- "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,
or spoil them with too much attention,
and have them turn out bad-tempered or haughty.
As for me, I am his godchild." 2815
"Friend," they said, "whoever you are,
you are no villain and no fool.
May God who made you keep you safe." 2820
"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 apprendre et quere.	2850
Entrues puet naistre tels noviele Ki te sera puet sc'estre biele. Que dira donc li cuens tes pere? Que devenra donques ta mere?/ Que diront il quant le savront?	2855
Que puet caloir? Bien te ravront, Par si que Dex l'ait destiné Et que l'ait si determiné. Avoec ces jogleörs iras.	2860
Por cho que biel les serviras, Et que tu painne i voelles rendre, Poras des estrumens apprendre. Se lens iés en chevalerie Si te valra la joglerie.	2865
Et s'il avient que li rois muire, Es cambres t'en poras deduire. Ta harpe et ta vièle avras En lieu de cho que ne savras Orfrois ne fresials manoier.	2870
Si te porra mains anoier Se tu iés en un bastonage Ke tu aies vials <i>el en gage</i> .”*	
Silences est en grant effroi Qu'il cuide faire tel desroi .ii. liues anchois qu'il ajorne. Sa sele met et bel s'atorne. Moult par est bials ses caceörs.	2875
Puis vait al lit des jogleörs Et dist lor: “Segnor, dormés vos?” “Amis,” fuit il, “par Deu, ne nos.”	2880
“Segnor, g’irai el bois berser, Mais s'il vus plait a converser Huimais ichi, tant vos dirai, Por vostre amor pas n'i irai.”	
Et cil respondent comme sage: “Icho vus vient de bon corage. Vostre offre amons nos durement, Mais nos vus disons purement Que por un grant avoir conquerre	2885
Ne remanriens en ceste terre .ii. jors entiers a nostre voel. Tart meüsmes de Tintaguel,	2890

- 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 vicle
 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,
 even if we were offered a fortune. 2890
 We left Tintagel late yesterday

Ersoir, por venir a la mer: Car nos poriens forment amer Que nos fusciemes en Bertagne." "Segnor, et Dex vos doinst gaägne Et vos escremisse de mort. Li vens vus vient deviers le nort. Se tost vus metés a la voie Ains nuit i porrés estre a joie, Car li mers est ichi estroite. Ki buen vent a et bien exploite,/	2895
De primes trosqu'a miëdi I puet tres bien estre de chi. Trosque al port n'a solement Fors .x. liues escarsement."	2900
Silences a itant s'en torne. Ne cuidìes pas que mains sejorne: D'une herbe qu'ens el bos a prise Desconoist sa face et deguise.	2905
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.	2910
Lieve se nef et puis i entre. Li jogleör viennent soëntre, Font pris de passer, si entrerent. Li maronier se desanckerent,	2915
Lievent lor sigle, si s'en vont, En Bertaigne venu en sunt.	2920
[A]nchois qu'il fuscent arrivé Ont de l'enfant moult estrivé. Li uns a dit: "Dex, est cho il?" Li autres dist: "Par foi! nenil! Mal sanble la color celui A la color quist en cestui."	2925
L'enfes ot tele ententiön Qu'onques ne lor fist mentiön Qui il fust ne que la fesist, Ne que en Bertagne fesist, Qu'il ne desiscent a la gent.	2930
Des nés isscent moult bielement. Scilenses o çals s'accompagne, 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,
for the sea is very narrow at this point. 2900
- He who has good wind and makes good time
can easily be there
in half a day.
It is barely ten leagues
from here to the port." 2905
- 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,
compared to the other." 2925
- 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,
so they wouldn't tell anyone.
They disembarked without any complications.
Silence accompanied them,
and when they were in the countryside, 2930

- Demande lor u il iront. 2935
 Cil dient qu'a Nantes giront
 Se *il* le pueent esplotier.
 "Pensés," fait l'enfes, "de quotier:
 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,/br/>
 Et cil preendent a merveillier
 Et l'uns a l'autre a conseillier.
 "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 ersoit si bien?
 Se jo i ai mespris de rien,
 Une autre fois le ferai miols.
 Jo ne sui mie moult très viols.
 Se vos *me* degniés rien apendre, 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 traítice,
 Et cis la color amortie.
 Si pert la roze sor l'ortie,
 Si pert la colors de nature: 2975
 Blance et vermelle 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 eanother:
 "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
 of someone who served you so well last night? 2960
 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 orient. 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,
 Que on nel viegne illuques querre. 2985
- 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!
 L'ont de son damoisiel traj. 2995
 Ki donc veïst larmies espandre,
 Et ces cevials tirer et tandre,
 Tordre ces puins, batre poitrines,
 Plorer ces dames, ces mescines,
 Ronpent ces anials de ces mains 3000
 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 pasmine,
 .c. en sunt tramis par la tierre
 Por celui cerkier et requierre.
- Noviele atrote et si acort
 Et vient moult tost corant a cort
 Que perdis est li damoisials 3010
 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,
 C'on nel vos puet conter ne dire, 3015
 Non, certes, la centisme part:
 Enaizes que lor cuers ne part.
 Moult poi en fait que il ne crieurent:

- 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 it2990
 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
 of the disappearance of the youth
 who was so charming, handsome and brave.3010
 And when his father, the count, heard the news,
 and Eufemie, his mother,
 their hearts were filled with such anguish
 that no one could possibly describe it;3015
 no, not even one one-hundredth of it.
 Their hearts were nearly breaking;
 they were very close to death.

Sovent pasment, sovent reliefent, 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 Et refragnent lor volenté. Por cho c'on ait* al cuer eënte, Quant on descuevre sa tormenté, Selonc cho c'on l'a de maniere, U par demostrement de ciere, Quant on nen a de parler aase U qu'eure soit que on le taise, U par dire priveement A compagnon, u durement. Quant il est lius de mener joie 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, Com li afaires 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, Et por le conte ki se painne: Car par noisier un bien petit Poroient rendre l'esperit.	3020 3025 3030 3035 3040 3045
Longe est et griés lor pasmisons— Plus que nos, certes, ne disons— Et quant un poi sunt revenu, Oié com se sunt contenu. En halt crient: "Bials fils Scilence, Com nos kerkiés grief penitence! Li diols qui por vos nos enivre Nos fait languir en lieu de vivre. Com plus verrons joie mener, Tant nos convenra plus pener. Mais com poriens nos pis avoir? Certes, jo ne le pui savoir. Trestolt duel nos viennent ensenble Quant nostre fils de nos s'en emble,	3050 3055 3060

- They kept on fainting and being revived,
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,
they only increased their own suffering, to be sure. 3020
- When one has an aching heart,
if one reveals one's anguish
by one's bearing
or facial expression,
when one is not free to speak 3025
- 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
openly, with loud rejoicing, 3030
- 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
as the matter requires 3040
- and in a manner appropriate to the occasion.
But these people did not dare mourn openly
for fear of killing thre 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
that we are more dead than alive. 3055
- 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!)
We are afflicted with all sorrows at once,
having our son run away from us. 3060

Ki mireöirs estoit del mont, Et de la mer trosqu'ens el font Devriemes querre nostre preu. 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, Se convoitons vivre sans joie Car nos noions quant il se noie. Nostre [joie] est viers mer aleé: S'al fons ne fust adevalee Qu'ele ne fust noïe tolte, Ja nen avriemes si grant dolte. Mais por que iriemes nos dotant? Nos mals ne vient pas degotant, Mais a un fais sor nos châi. Por que seriemes esbahi?	3065
Car certes finement savons Jamais n'avrons pis c'or avons. De pis avoir n'avons dotance, De miols avoir nule esperance. Et nostre crième et nostre espoir Avons nos perdu tres erset."	3070
Trestols li païs plaint Scilence. Cil ki est de povre abstinence Ki ne se puet tenir de plor, Icil ne fait la nul demor. / Loing en sus d'als s'en vait mucier, Ploer son dol, plaindre et hucier. Moult demainnent grant dol, por voir, De cho qu'il ont perdu lor oir.	3085
Segnor, oï avés la plainte. De teles funt cascun jor mainte. Et si n'est fors joer et tire A cho que l'on vos poroit dire; Mais ki demainne trop le voire As gens, l'en fait* sovent mescroire: 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.	3090
	3095
	3100
	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,3075
if he weren't really drowned,
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 lost3085
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,
Et cil nen oze mot celer. 3110
Si ne fait fors renoveler
Et enaigrir lor dol, lor rage,
Quant cers les fait de lor damage.
Li cuens set que li jogleör
Ont pris del mont le mireör.
Volés savoir que il lor fait?
I[ll] fait banir par cel forfait
Les jogleörs tols de sa tiere,
Que rien n'i viennent 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
Com on feroit del menestrel. 3125

- 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:
Qu'il jurast, nel peüscent croire,
Car il les siert si humlement. 3135
Et se l'estorie ne me ment,/br/>
Il a des estrumens apris,
Car moult grant traval i a mis,
Qu'ains que li tiers ans fust passés
A il ses maistres tols passés,
Et moult grant avoir lor gaägne. 3140
Por quant si ont moult grant engagne
Que nus d'als ne set que il face:
Et por cho qu'il a gregnor grasse
Que il nen aient mais en cort, 3145

- 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.
Any who were seized or captured 3120
would be burned or hanged.
Anyone who could have captured one,
but let him escape on purpose,
would suffer the same fate
as the minstrel would have. 3125

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 Qu'il seus set plus qu'il doi ne facent. Cuidiés que granment ne l'en hacent? Oil, qu'il criement le damage. Cuidiés qu'es cuers n'aient grant rage, Que ne lor tort a moult grant honte Quant il sunt devant roi u conte, Qu'il harpe et viiele a plaisir Et c'on les fait por lui taisir? Oil! dont ont si grant anguissce. Nus ne se[t] que il faire puissce.	3150
Silences estoit ja si bials N'ert pas garçons, mais damoisials. Et estoit ja el quart esté 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:	3165
"J'ai veü vostre fil illuec: Cho sachies vos." Et neporuec L'a fait li cuens bien sovent quere, Tramis ses més de tierre en tierre. Car cil a fait de son non cange, Si l'a mué por plus estrange. A cort se fait nomer Malduit, Car il se tient moult por mal duit,	3170
Moult mal apris lonc sa nature. Et sil refait par coverture. Il est forment de grant servisce, Et si se paine en tolte guise De çals servir a volenté. Avoir porcace a grant plenté.	3175
Por cho qu'ert bials, et si vallans, En son mestier si tres vallans,/	3180
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	3185
	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
because he alone could outdo the two of them. 3150
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 viele 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 voloit 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.
Cat li cuers cui francise adrece
N'iert ja vencus fors par destrece.
Li bontés a l'enfant acroist,
Li vilonie a çals aöist. 3200
- Silences croist moult en francise,
Li jogleör en culvertise,
Tant com li buens tent a l'onor
Et malvais a le deshonor.
Oïés merveillose descorde! 3205
Se Dex, par cui li mons s'acorde,
N'aïe 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 autres mal disant,
Par l'enemi qui les tangone,
Ki les aömbre et avirone.
- Un jor repairent de Gascoigne,
Et viennent al duc de Borgoigne.
Moult biel et bien sunt retenu:
Puis sont as estrumens venu.
Silences i est plus eslis 3215
Que il ne soient, et joïs,
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 autre n'aient esté.
Et en cho gist moult de le grasse,
C'on loe tols jors, quoi qu'il fasce:
Paint d'acesmer sa volenté,
De faire honor, et a plenté 3220
Ait vials bials dis sor tolte rien,
Ki plus ne fait {cha ju} bien.* 3230

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
 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.

3195

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.
 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.

3205
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
 for the court of the Duke of Burgundy,
 where they were very well received.

3215
3220

They proceeded to play their instruments.
 Silence was more sought after
 than they were, and enjoyed greater success,
 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
 than the others ever did.

3225

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
 plenty of beautiful stories on any subject,
 no one could outdo him {?}.

3230

Ainz que li menestrel s'en isscent, Congié ne qu'avoir le peüsscent,/	
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 meïsmes le vergant	
Dont on le bat. Nostre serjant	
Avons desor nos fait segnor.	
Nus hom n'ot mais honte gregnor	3260
Que nos avons ichi eü.	
Nos somes plus que decheü.	
U mainz savons que ja d'assés,	
U cis vassals a tols passés	
Les jogleörs de jogler bien.	3265
Car nus n'en sot ja viers nos rien.	
Duree n'i puet nus avoir:	
Cis a emblé nostre savoir.	
Por voir, en son enmiodrement	
Voi croistre nostre empirement.	3270
Nos savoors 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
that their craft was so disdained 3245
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 dobrera, Car nostre avoir emportera, Et plus avoec: c'iert nostre grasse Que en cort mais, u mestier fasce,	3280
N'iermes oï. Tant l'ont amé, Trop iermes par lui adamé."/	
"Mais se jo vo fiânce avoie,"	
Cho dist li uns, "et jo savoie	
Que vos men consel 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 ensanble?"	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 exploité.	
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,
and not tell anyone, 3285
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,
or become so proficient. 3315
- 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 derive.
 Or sagement, qu'il ne l'enterve!
 Or l'aparlons plus bel qu'anchois:
 Il sara moult bien son franchois
 Se nos nel prendrons a la trape. 3325
 Sans caperon li ferons cape,
 Car le cief perdra al trebuc.
 Senpres prendrons congé al duc.
 Por quoi iriens nos en Espagne,
 Compaig, por golozer gaâgne?/ 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 congé 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 congé.
 Silences a le nuit songé 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
 in the densest part of it. 3335
 And when we find a likely spot, we'll play a nasty trick on
 him."
- Thus they plotted the whole thing. 3340
 Both of them were so inspired
 by the Devil, who kept urging them
 to do this wicked deed,
 that pity seemed hard to them
 and mercy bitter and sour:
 they wanted to murder the youth,
 who in no way deserved it. 3345
 The more they hated the youth,
 the more they pretended to be nice.
 They wanted to conceal their purpose
 by means of deception and falsehood.
 That day seemed like a month to them,
 it was so hard for them to get through it. 3350
 They took leave of the duke that evening,
 for they could wait no longer.
 The duke gave one mark of silver
 to each of them, and two to Silence. 3355
 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
 that wild dogs wanted to tear him apart.
 And because he feared the pain, 3360

- Si est esperis de son somme
 Ensi griément, cho est la some,
 C'ainc puis ne dormi cele nuit. 3365
 Volés oîr con s'a deduit?
 Tolte nuit escolte et oreille,
 Car de son songe a grant merveille.
- As jogleörs de l'autre part
 Angoisse 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,
 Cat ses fel[s] pensers le tormente
 Ains qu'il puist faire autre aënte.
 Il est de ces tolt ensemant
 Qui sunt en maint porpensement/
 Que cascuns d'als achiever puissce
 Le mal dont il sunt en anguissce. 3380
 Et cudiés 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 menoinge.
 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 ferrai premiers,
 Si croistra ma pars de deniers."
 L'autres respont isnielement:
 "Conpaing, parlés plus bielement,
 Qu'il n'est pas lius de plaidoyer. 3395
 Nos iermes andoi moiüer
 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
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. 3375
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;
may God prevent it from coming true! 3385
He remained motionless and listened,
and the others suspected nothing:
they thought he was asleep as usual,
like any youth who wants his rest.
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. 3390
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.
Let's get under way while it's still dark,
for such deeds are better done unseen." 3400

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

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

- that these two desperados
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. 3405
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
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, 3415
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,
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. 3420
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
before I could escape." 3435
- "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.
If the criminals are on the right, 3440
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 guart 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 sachies vos tolz a fiânce;
 U s'o vos aloie en Espagne,
 En Alvergne, u en Alemagne.
 Si me vient chi miols remanoir,
 Qu'aler allors por pis avoir.
 Jo remanrai, cho est la some, 3460
 Et vos end irés com prodome
 Et bone gent, bien le savés.
 Si com vos viers moi fait avés,
 Vos rendie Dex le gueredon;
 Por tel deserte altretel don. 3465
 Moult m'avés fait, plus eüscies
 Se moi faire le peüsscies.
 En vos servir ai jo perdu."
 Li jogleör sont esperdu.
 Aportent le gaäig avant, 3470
 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.,
 Et cil s'en vont hastivement. 3475
- Silence remaint a sejor
 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 congé de sa voie,
 Et passe la mer d'Engletierre.
 Plus tost que pot vint en sa tierre.
 Vient la u on plus le desire,
 Mais li alquant en avront ire 3485
 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
had better be on his guard, if he wants to defend himself;
and if he doesn't do this, he is a fool.

3450

Gentlemen, why should I not speak openly?

You know very well indeed

that I would encounter my enemies
whether I went with you to France
or whether I went with you to Spain
or Auvergne or Germany.

3455

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;
may you receive your just desserts.

3465

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,
and they took off in a hurry.

3475

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

3485

The youth went immediately

S'est traïs li enfes maintenant.	
Et li ostes li vient devant	3490
Et molt dolcement le reçuit;	
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 poës oïr l'oquoison.	
Chi vindrent l'autre an joggleör.	
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 joggleör 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.	
Mentes 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 biele./	
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,	
Vieile 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 sejor,	

- to the best inn he could find.
 The innkeeper came out
 and greeted him most cordially,
 but then saw at once what he had with him—
 his instruments. 3490
- “Holy Mary!” he said,
 “what trouble and sorrow
 I get from a guest like you, my friend.”
 Silence asked him
 whether he was sane or crazy. 3495
- “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.
 Butt don’t get upset about that now—
 you have a reprieve until tomorrow.” 3515
- “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.”
 Then he took his harp and viele
 and sang beautifully as he played. 3520
- Everyone from all around
 came running to the inn.
 There was a large crowd of townspeople,
 for they hadn’t heard a harp or lute
 or viele* or song or even a note
 since the child had been kidnapped. 3525
- And they all exclaimed,
 “There never was such a man!
 What a pity he’ll be here for such a short time— 3530

- Car il pendra demain sor jor."
N'i a celui ne s'esmervelle.
Silences lor fait sorde oreille:
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 vioit ballier.
- Qu'alongeroie plus mon conte?
L'endemain l'enmena al conte 3540
Tolt vielant amont le rue.
L'enfes le voit, si lealue.
Li cuens ne li volt mot respondre
Cat il le pense bien confondre.
Silense dist: "Sire, metchi,
Car se jo ma vie perc chi 3545
Nule rien n'i conqueresterés
Ne ja plus riches n'en serés!"
Li cuens l'entent, parfont sospire.
Or [ot] tel dol ne pot mot dire.
Grant dol demainent li baron 3550
Et a privé et a laron,
Et forment plore la contesse.
Li cuens lor fait une promesse
Que il nen iert huimais pendus,
Et il l'en ont grans grés rendus. 3555
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,
Bien est mais tans que tu radotes." 3565
Et cil li a dit un respit:
"Cho est grans diols que povres vit.
Miols me venist estre teüs.
Plus est oïs uns desseüs/
En toltes cors, s'il a avoir, 3570
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,
playing the viele as he went up the street. 3540
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!
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,
and they expressed their profound gratitude. 3555
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.
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* 3565
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 esoltés 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 verror
 Et si vos metra fors d'error."
 "Fera, por Deu?" li cuens* respont.
 "Oil, par Deu, ki fist cest mont." 3610

Li cuens violt bien cel plait celer.
 Le jogleör fait apieler
 Et moult priveément l'enmainne
 Od lui en sa cambre demainne./
 L'uis de la canbre apriés lui serre. 3615

- But the old man went up to Silence and asked him his name.
 "Sir," said the boy, "I won't try to hide it.
 I call myself Malduit." 3575
- 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
 nor your family wins any praise or prizes
 for such a counterfeit upbringing. 3580
- But what does it matter? You will be all the wiser now
 for having endured greater hardships,
 for one cannot learn everything
 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,
 and if you lived a thousand years,
 you would be all the more admirable." 3590
- 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—
 if you and he are willing. 3605
- 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 enquiert 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'autre 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 apartiegné a malle."
 Sor diestre espaule li enseigne
 Une crois qu'il ot a enseigne.
 Ormais le puet li cuens bien croire:
 Donc a baiisé son fil en oire. 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,
 Tolt cil de la terre et la mere. 3655
 Ki donc veïst gens esjoir
 L'enfant vont vecoir 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:
 the more he looks at it, the dearer it is to him. 3625
- 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
 that belong to a man." 3645
- 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,
 as did his mother and all the inhabitants of the land. 3655
 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 soldoïés.	
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 autre 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 sejorne,	
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 Tristran	

- Silence sat at his father's feet.
 He said, "Sir, I am your harper,
 and as such I'd like to serve you tonight. 3660
 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
 such anguished yearning for Isolde 3700

- N'ot tele angoisse ne ahan
 Com eult Eufeme la roïne
 Por le vallet ki ert meschine;
 N'onques Jozeph, ki fu prisons
 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./ 3705
- 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
 Por cui le cuer el ventre a noir. 3715
- De la harpe le doit deduire,
 Mais cho li porra anchois nuire
 Que sa nature li canjast.
 Anchois espoir que mals n'alast*
 Seroit la roïne sanee 3720
- Kist par sanblant moult enganee.
 En la cambre fait apieler
 Silence, et, por l'uevre celer,
 Li fait sa harpe o soi porter,
 Quanses por li reconforter. 3725
- En la cambre painte et celee
 Li violt s'amor dite a celee;
 Et donc la fait a tols voidier
 Qu'il ne la puisse sorcuidier. 3730
- Si a le jor fait un dangier
 Faintic que ne poroit mangier,
 Et qu'el ne puet sofrir le noise
 Ne ne violt pas c'on i estoise,
 Ne mais que cil qui harpera. 3735
- Cho dist qu'il l'asoägera.
 Ele n'oирre 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
 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.

3705

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,
 as if in order to comfort her.

3725

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
 when she goes after the rest
 and doesn't get it.

3740

Sa harpe a cil bien atenpree Si a grant dolor destenpree A oués la dame de roïne Ki sor lui s'apoie et acline: Et plus et plus de cel s'esprent Que cil harpe si dolcement./	3745
Et pense donc: "Jo li dirai L'amor et tolt li gehirai." Et redist donc: "Viols li tu dire? Vios te tu donques si despire? O je, nel larai por despit, Por reprover, ne por respit,	3750
Ne li face orendroit savoir Que il porra m'amor avoir."	3755
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?" "Oil!" dist li vallés mescine. "Donc, me baisiés," dist la roïne.	3765
Joste la face, sos sa guinple Li dona cil .i. baisier simple, Car il n'entent pas, al voir dire, Con fait baisier ele desire.	3770
Et la dame, qui nen a cure D'estre baisie en tel mesure, Li done .v. baisiers traitis, Bien amorols et bien faitis	3775
Et ot les .ii. baisiers promis Li a des autres tant tramis Que il en est tols anuiés. Dist la dame: "Por Deu, fuiés?	3780
Comment?" fait ele, "est cho dangiers? Ene vos plaist si fais cangiers?" "Oil, roïne, il me delite, Mais bien vus en lairoie cuite."	3785
"Cuite! Por quoi?" fait ele donques. "Eut hom de vostre parage onques, Tant fust de pris, ensi grant don? Mon cors vos doinsc tolt a bandon!"	3788
Et li vallés qui est mescine Est moult en dure discipline,	3789

- 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
 that he can have my love." 3755
- 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,
 Silence gave her one chaste kiss—
 for you can be very sure he had no intention
 of kissing her the way she wanted. 3765
- But the lady, who did not care
 to be kissed in this manner,
 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. 3770
- 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
 is in a really terrible situation— 3785

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 harponiel d'or qu'ele ot rice.
 Blance est sa cars com nois negie:
 N'est pas de fronces asegie,
 Car ses aés n'a encor cure
 Que ele ait nule fronciſſure,
 Ains ert roönde et tendre et mole.
 Al vallet dist la dame fole:
 "Veés quels bras et quels costés!"
 "Dame," fait il, "por Deu, ostés!"

3795

Jo vos requier por Deu merci.
 Se jo ma loialté perc chi
 Donques sui jo enfin honis
 Et as piors del mont onis.
 Meffait nen a el mont gregnor
 Car jo sui hom vostre segnor,/

3805

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 devenirés
 Et que religiön tenré!
 En vos avra moult bon abé!"
 "Roïne, or m'avés vus jabé."
 "Non ai, se vos estes estables,
 Mais jovenes sains est viés diâbles.
 Lassciés, bons hom, tolt cho ester.

3815

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!"
 "Estes vus donc pris ne loiés?"
 Dist la roïne. "Qui vos cache?
 Ki vus laidist? ki vus man[ace]?

3820

3825

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 out 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
to have to worry about creases,

3795

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!
for God’s sake, have mercy on me!

3800

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,
for I am your lord’s vassal,

3805

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.
Vos serés miens, jo serai vostre.
Bials dols amis," cho dist la dame,
"Sor moi tornés trestolt le blasme.
Mais qui nos blasmeroit, caièles,
U qui en savroit ja novieles?
Nus hom, voir, se vus volliés.
Joés mains que vos ne solliés,
Amis, a moi, par coverture;
Mais si* vus fagniés par mesure
Que l'on n'ataigne en vo* faintise,
Bials dols amis, vostre cointise.
Se del tolt vos absténissiés
Que vos a moi ne venissiés
Et parler et joërt et rire,
Dont poroit on cuidier et dire:
Icesto gens de gré s'astienent
Qu'il ensamble ne vont ne viennent.
Se nos reveniens trop ensamble,
Folie seroit, cho me samble:/
Qu'en tolte rien valt moult mesure.
Moienetés soit coverture,
Bials dols amis, de no faisance.
Bien le ferons, n'aiés dotance."

3835

3840

3845

3850

3855

3860

3865

La dame por noient se painne
Et li vallés fort se demainne.
Pense s'or li issoit des mains
N'i enterrooit des mois al mains.
Mais li ostoirs qui joint a l'anne
Ne se painne plus ne ahane
De restraindre, quant il a fain,
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 voloirts 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 chierisscement?	
Quant vus si chier vus savés rendre,	3885
Bien devriés acheter et vendre!	
Ciertes, bien savés contrefaire	
Felon vilain de put afaire.	
Nel fis fors vos a assaier.	
Moult [me]* convenrooit esmaier,	3890
S'il me tenoit ensi a certes.	
Vostre cors doinst Dex males pertes,	
Car fait eüsciefs altretel	
Se bien le volsisse et niënt el."	
Atant le lassce et cil s'en vait.	3895
Desor volra bastir mal plait,	
Male aventure o sa jovente,	
La dame cui Dex mal consente.	
Ains l'ama plus que créature,	
Et or le het a desmesure:	3900
Car feme n'est mie laniere	
D'amor cangier en tel maniere./	
Celui que plus amera fort,	
U soit a droit u soit a tort,	
Repuet de moult legier haïr.	3905
Feme oze tres bien envaïr	
L'amor d'un home fierement.	
Ja nel laira por cri de gent.	
Mais s'amor nen est mie ferme,	
Ains est moult fole et moult enferme.	3910
De moult legier et ainme et het.	
Celui el mont qui miols li set,	

- she couldn't stop loving him. 3870
 Nor did the youth who is a girl
 wish to reveal her secret,
 the truth about her nature,
 because he would lose his inheritance.
- The youth's inertia 3875
 was causing the lady considerable distress.
 The licentious desires of the queen
 were upsetting the youth a great deal.
 It was really getting to be too much for him.
 He twisted free of her grasp and staggered to his feet,
 but the queen hung on to him.
- On the verge of fainting, 3880
 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,
 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 3885
 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.
- A woman never wearies 3900
 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.
 Woman does not hesitate to claim 3905
 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.
 She loves and hates with equal ease. 3910
 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:
 De trop amer se gardent bien. 3920
 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 tolz 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 fernes 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 menee.
 Grant joie i ot le soir menee
 Fors de la dame la roïne
 Et del vallet ki est mescine.

- with the one she is closest to,
 she starts to hate him as passionately
 as if he had killed her entire family. 3915
 The least criticism makes her forget
 all the good things he may have done for her.
 When a woman is dominated by anger,
 she is completely out of control.
- There's not one of them who loves too much —
 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. 3920
- This lady was thinking very hard
 about ways to harm this youth. 3925
 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
 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,
 since a woman doesn't arouse him at all. 3935
 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?
 He claims to be the king's man,
 but he belongs just as much to me! 3940
 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
 and really enjoys their company. 3945
 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,
 the king returned from the hunt. 3950
 That evening, the whole court made merry,
 except for the queen
 and the youth who was a girl.

La roïne est en grant angoisse Par quel engien honir le poissce. Silences ra moult grant contrarie, Car il ne set par quel affaire Il puist sa bone amor avoir. Mais ele puet tres bien savoir 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.	3955
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 Trosques a l'uis et dont retorne.	3960
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. Li cuers li art, ele entre en flame.	3965
3970	
La dame est plainne de grant rage. Or oïés qu'ele a en corage. Le vallet violt bel sanblant faire, Sel poroit en sa cambre atraire, 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 Qu'il en la cambre n'est venus. Ele nel torne mie a geu. Un jor quant ele voit son leu Si l'ararole faintement. Or esoltés confaitement:	3975
"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 Ens en ma cambre, et vos priai Que vos m'amissciés par amors,	3980
3985	
Or esoltés confaitement: "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 Ens en ma cambre, et vos priai Que vos m'amissciés par amors,	3990
3995	

- The queen was desperately searching
for a means to destroy Silence. 3955
- 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
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,
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
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.
- Her heart was on fire; she was aflame.
- 3960
- 3965
- 3970
- 3975
- 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.
- 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
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:
- "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
in my bedroom, and begged you
to make love to me,
- 3980
- 3985
- 3990
- 3995

Et vos fesistes vos clamors?/ Donc seuc jo bien sans devinalle Que vos loials estes sans falle. 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 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 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, Mais or sai jo bien la verror. 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, 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!” Respong encontre la roïne. Cil l'en merchie, si encline.	4000
	4005
	4010
	4015
	4020
	4025
[O]r a la roïne oquoison De celui honir sans raison, Car li vallés le servira, Venra entor li et ira Ens en la cambre com ains siolt. Un jor est si que li rois violt Aler en bois, com fait sovent. Oiés con dolorols covent Ués le vallet apparellier, Cui Damerdex puist consellier.	4030
	4035
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,
 and, judging from your harmless appearance, 4010
 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,
 but now I know for certain I was right. 4015
 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
 has some great adventure in store for him. 4020
 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
 bedroom the way he used to. 4030
 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,
 may God help him! 4035
- 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 enviers l'uis se trait et <i>sache</i> .*	
Ele le saisist par l'atache.	
Dist li: "U viols tu aler ore?"	4045
"Dame, la fors." "Cho n'est encore!"	
Respong 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 meisme 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?	
"Oil, 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 diables 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 detriér	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;
 in fact, you even argued with me. 4055
 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!
 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 laniere/
 Se ne te fac vif escorcier
 Ki si me volsis efforciert.
 As me tu por cho losengie?
 J'en serai, se Deu plaist, vengie.
 Mais que li rois meïsmes viegne
 Et que il droit de toi me tiegne."
- 4085
- 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.
 Dessendus est desos un arbre
 Sor un perron qui est de marbre;
 Vient trosques a l'uis de la canbre
 Ki estoit pavee de lanbre.
 "Ovrés!" fait [il]. "A i nullui?"
 "Oil, 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
 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
 Et ensegnie 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.
 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,
 Mais orains quant il vit son liu
- 4090
- 4095
- 4100
- 4105
- 4110
- 4115
- 4120
- 4125

- 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
 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?"
 "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 4105
 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
 and dreadfully bloodied all over; 4115
 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.
 The one who did this to me 4120
 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,
 but just now, he saw his chance, 4125

- 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 vengement
 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 roöille.
 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 for lignier:
 Car feme plore par voidie
 Quant aenplir 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 desissee 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
 without rolling his eyeballs. 4150
 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
 into thinking she was innocent, 4155
 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 perdroie 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.	4170
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 tolz set me puet garir: Cui violt aidier ne puet marir."	4175
La roïne fort se demente. Sachiés 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 atenprent de son corage; Et set bien de .ii. mals eslire Quels est li mioldres et quel pire.	4180
Voit se venjance nen est prise, Foible est, malvaise sa justice. Pis est de honir cel enfant, Car il seroit honis par tant, Se honte esparsé et esmeüe Ki pas nen est encor seüe.	4185
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:	4190
Et se il voit que lui estuet De .ii. mals tols jors l'un passer, Son sens doit en soi amasser Veîr liquels li puist mains nuire.	4195
Ne se doit pas li hom destruire Por une soie mesestance. Quels hom li fera honerance Tres puis qu'il meïsmes s'aville?	4200
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	4205
	4210

- there's no way he would believe me
unless he knew my real nature. 4170
 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.
 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 4180
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.
 He saw that if he didn't take vengeance, 4190
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
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.
 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 4205
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 encombrier de son cors. 4215
- Doit il pot cho crier alhors
Cascune fois que lui mesciet
U que se cose li messiet?
Si enemi ki l'orront dire
N'en feront fors joë 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?"
"Oil! n'avra pas tel martyre."
"Que li volés donc faire, sire? 4230
- Ardoir, u a chevals 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 dolce, 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 cief,
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 Qu'oster le violt fors de ses mains; Qu'il n'estoit pas fols ne vilains Quil destruisist par sa fole ire, Por quanqu'ele li sace dire.	4260
Mais ne volt son dit blastengier, 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	4265
Dont s'esforce de noise faire.	4270
Sil violt li rois miols aquoisiere Ensi qu'il le fesist noisier. Mais ne li valt pas une tille, Car la roïne est bien gopille En son corage et moult destroite.	4275
Pense que se li briés esploite Que li rois violt en cire metre Qu'ele mesme fera tel letre Dont cil avra grant destorbance, S'el puet quil portera en France.	4280

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

- 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." 4260
 The king told her a tremendous lie,
 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,
 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." 4290
 Then he went to the youth and reassured him,
 and told him the truth about
 where he would be going and what he would do 4295

Et con le brief enportera. Al cancelier vait donc li sire Et maintenant li prent a dire: “Amis, escris me tost un brief, .d. salus el premier cief, A mon segnor le roi de France En cui jo ai moult grant fiânce. Met i que jo li pri et mant, Com hom sor cui il a commandant, Silences li soit bien venus, De sa maisnie retenus. Armes li doinst quant il volra Quant ore et tans l'en requerra. Et trosqu'atant od lui le tiengne Que jo le manc et dont se viegne.” Cho dist li rois et dont s'en torné, Et cil d'escrire tost s'atorne.	4300 4305 4310
La roïne en la canbre enclose A sor le brief escrit tel cose Ki ouës Silence est moult gagnarde, Se Dameldex ne l'en porgarde. Cruauté n'oïstes gregnor. De par roi Ebayn, son segnor, Escrist al roi de France un brief Qu'il tolle al message le cief Qui les lettres a lui enporte; Que il por rien ne l'en deporte, Car il a fait al roi tel honte 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. / 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 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	4315 4320 4325 4330 4335 4340

S I L E N C E

- 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,
 as his vassal, 4305
 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,
 and keep the youth with him 4310
 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,
 the queen had written the kind of letter
 that would do Silence a lot of harm,
 if God didn't save him. 4315
 You never heard of anything more cruel.
 In the name of her lord, King Evan,
 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 4320
 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. 4325
 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,
 who had King Evan's letter ready. 4330
 "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 apprendre et cortesie.”
 La dame respont par boidie:
 “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
 “Vees,” 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.
 Mout [tost] esgarde sor la lettre.
 El n’i violt mie longes metre, 4355
 Ains a le brief moult tost ploie,
 Voiant celui, et ferm loie.
 Retient celui, le fals li piure,
 Et cil le saiele a droiture; 4360
 Si l’a la dame decheü
 Qu’il ne s’en a apercheü
 Que li briés qu’il en cire mist
 Ne soit cil meïsmes qu’il fist.
 Li canceliers puis ne s’atarge. 4365
 Il vient al roi, le brief li cargo,
 Et il le balle al vallet donques,—
 Se Dex nel fait, quil mar vit onques! —
 Et dont l’a fait bien atorner.
 Cil n’i ose plus sejorner. 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 escrive 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
 Et si s’en vient tolt droit en France. 4380
 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 vicle
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 Et tolt le mont a en sa main Vos salt de par le roi Ebain.”	4385
“Amis, et Dex li doinst grant joie.” Silences son sail desploie; Livre le al roi qui fraint le cire Et rive lués les letres lire. Li canceliers ki tient le brief L'a tost veü de cief en cief: Et quant il voit qu'il senefie 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 biele engendréure!	4390
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, Qu'il iert deffais et depechiés. Pitiés me rive al roi mentir; Paörs nel violt pas consentir. Pitié ai grant se il i muert;	4395
Paör s'il par moi en estuert. 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	4400
Que por lui sofrir tel martyre.”	4405
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.”	4410
“Sire,” fait il, “se Dex me valle, Li cuens Cador de Cornuâlle.”	4415
Li rois l'acole dont et baize Si fort que il oblie enaize Le brief, tant por lui conjoir, Tant por novieles a oïr/ Del roi Ebain, dont il demande.	4420
	4425

- "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 4385
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." 4390
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. 4395
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." 4415
- 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 Cador 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. 4420
4425

- Puis piece al cancelier commande
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 patens, 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 fiânce
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 deffaire
Por cho qu'il est de halt affaire.
Del dire ai fait grant crûlté
Mais jo vos doi tel feëlté
Que ne vos doi mençoinne 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 anguissce.
Ne sai sos ciel que faire puissce, 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,
for the man requesting my help in this message 4460
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 envoies 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.
 Et se jo cestui li desfac 4480
 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.
 Ki me porra jamais puis croire? 4485
 Nus hom voir ne me kerra mais.
 Li baiziers senefie pais.
 Nel puis deffaire ne lasscier,
 Certes, sans moi trop abasscier.
 Ne sai so ciel que faire puissce 4490
 En cest estrif, en ceste anguisse.”
 Li rois .iii. contes en apiele:
 Dire lor violt ceste noviele.
 Des trois contes m'a un conté:
 L'uns tenoit de Blois la conté, 4495
 L'autres cuens ert de Navers sire,
 Li tiers de Clermont, ch'oi dire.
- Li rois ne lor dist plus ne mains
 Ne mais: “Segnor, li rois Ebayns,
 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, 4500
 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.
 Ja savés vos, n'i a celui, 4505
 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
 Que a cestui le cief en tolle; 4515
 Et vos si ravés bien veü
 Coment j'ai cestui recheü./
 Ne doit trahir li hom qui baize.
 Segnor, jo sui a grant mesaize.
 Ne me donai garde de cho!
 Segnor, por Deu que fera jo?
 Selonc l'amor qu'ai viers le roi
 Et qu'ai bazié cestui en foi,
 Esgardés que m'est miols a faire 4520
 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.
 Jo ne fac chi nul jugement: 4540
 Ains parol par amendement
 De cest esgart u nos a mis
 Li rois; nos sire est. Ses amis,
 Segnor, rois Ebayns d'Engletiere
 Est venus nostre roi requiere 4545
 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.
 Jo croi moult bien qu'encor n'eüst 4550
 Se il enmoldrer le peüst,
 Et il n'eüst or moult grant soig.
 Son ami voit on al besoig.
 Il s'est por mon segnor penés
 Plus que hom qui soit de mere nés. 4555

- now he wishes to put my good will to the test:
in return for his services, 4515
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,
and I firmly believe that he wouldn't be now, 4550
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
than any other man alive. 4555

- Et por cho fait on c'on reface
 Bien sovent plus que por man[*a*]ce.
 Et uns bezoins autre 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
 Qu'il a fait al roi tel anui/ 4565
 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.
 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 4570
 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.
 Cho est al miols que jo sai dire."
 Li cuens de Clermont s'en aïre.
 En sa main tint un baston brief:
 Si vait rumant de cief en cief.
 A paines qu'il puet dire mot 4580
 De maltalement de cho qu'il ot;
 Mais qu'il refrainst son maltalement
 Com sages hom, si parla gent.
 Ne le violt mie desmentir
 Al premier mot, ne consentir:
 Cat cil met le fu en l'estoppe
 Ki al premier le bouce estoppe
 De celui que voel contredire.
 Hom qui cho fait, son plait empire,
 Ainz doit premiers tolz otroier, 4585
 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. 4595
 4600

S I L E N C E

- You can catch more flies with honey
than with vinegar.
One good turn deserves another.
You know what it comes down to:
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
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. 4560
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
on account of the kiss, no more than that. 4570
Our king should wait that long.
If he should then have him hanged
or burned at the stake,
he should not be blamed.
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
that he could scarcely utter a word. 4575
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
by squelching his opponent
only adds fuel to the fire. 4580
A man who does that harms his own cause.
Instead, he should agree to everything at first,
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. 4595
4600

- Et si set tres bien nequedent
 Qu'il a parlé malvaiselement.
 "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 traït.
 Mais que li rois ne sot qu'il fist
 Quant il cha oltre le tramist:
- Il l'a delivré par itant
 Que il envoié l'a avant.
 Or l'a baiisé li rois, messire.
 Ne li puet faire dont soit pire,/ 4610
 Par nule raison que j'en voie,
 Tant com il est en ceste voie.
 Et nos somes si loial conte,
 Ne li devons loërt 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
- Viers ses homes com estre doit. 4625
 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:
- Mais ne doit avoir mal ne painne 4640
 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 lontains amis. 4645
 Li rois Ebayns qui l'a trams
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?
 Mais se li rois Ebayns se diolt 4655
 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,
 Anchois tols jors por .i. marc deus
 Qu'il devigne por lui honteuls,/ 4660
 C'est miols que il s'abandonast,
 Et por avoir s'anor donast.
 Tels piert le sien qui puis recuevre,
 Mais ne puis veir par quelle ouevre
 On puist s'onor puis recover
 Quant on le pert par mal ovrer.
 Tant com li argens valt mains d'or,
 Si valt honors miols de tresor. 4670
 Ja ne l'eüst baiisé 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
 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 mettre a salveté, 4680
 Car baiisé 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,
and at the rate of two marks for every one. 4660
 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,
but I can see no way 4665
 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 site, 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 commande,	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 connissons tolt troi tres bien	
Que se vos aviés une rien	
Que rois Ebayys 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,
 but we hope the king doesn't go against you." 4690
- "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,
 since he asked me in good faith! 4705
- 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,
 as far as I can determine it. 4710
- 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,
 you ought to give it to him without hesitation. 4725
- 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 Ne poriés 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.	4730
Por cho ne doit nus refuser Honor por tantelet d'avoir. Cil n'oirre mie par savoir Ki por richoise honor refuse, Por tantelet que il en use.	4735
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	4740
En cest message damagier. Et si a plus: bien le savés, Por cho que vos baiisé l'avés, Encor l'eüst il envoié Comme larron pris et loié,	4745
Nel poriés vos deffaire pas. Saciés que cho n'est mie a gas, Ne on ne doit pas deffaire home Se on ne set de fait la some: Car del fait prent on l'oquoison	4750
Del jugement, qui fait raison. Entendés, sire, un poi a mi. Amer devés bien vostre ami/ Mais haïr devés sa folie:	4755
Car certes jo ne vos lo mie De faire ja ceste merveille Se vostre cuers le vos conselle. Icho ne manda hom mais onques."	4760
Cho dist li rois: "Que feraï donques Bien? Car vos estes mi feël Et donet m'avés bon conseil. N'ai soing de faire felenie.	4765
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.
 Therefore, no man should give up honor 4735
 for some piddling amount of money.
 He never acts wisely
 who gives up honor for wealth,
 for he will have little use for it.
 Wealth without honor has no more luster 4740
 than a candle without a flame.
 However we may analyze the situation,
 you cannot, considering the circumstances,
 Sire, harm this messenger
 while he is fulfilling his mission. 4745
 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,
 you could not have killed him. 4750
 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
 on the facts of the case. 4755
 Be so kind as to listen to me, Sire.
 You should love your friend,
 but hate his folly.
 I certainly don't deny
 your right to fulfill this strange request, 4760
 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
 and have given me excellent advice. 4765
 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
 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. 4775
- [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 sopple, 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.
 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 autre home.
 Or vos ai jo dite la some. 4800
- Nel doi amer ne bien haïr
 S'il ne me prent a envaïr,/br/>
 Mais s'il me laidist et sorquiert,
 Ferir le doi, se il me fiert.
 Hom cui ne devrai point d'omage,
 Et il me quera par halsage 4805
 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
 Une grant cose par amor, 4810
 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 tolte. 4815

- You fear you will wrong
the king in this matter.
But a careful assessment of the situation
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. 4775
- 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
and ties of friendship. 4785
- 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.
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,
his kindnesses are the same as hostile acts to me. 4795
- 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,
and who asks me out of arrogance
to do a shameful deed for him
is surely doing me an injury. 4805
- But if he is my liege lord,
I cannot refuse him such an
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	
Guerpir li puis bien son omage.	
Guerpir li puis, guerpir li doi,	4825
Se jo aim tant honor et foi,	
Se j'ai plus cier Deu que mon fief,	
Guerpir 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 estrelo!	4840
Jo ne cuic mie, par mon cief,	
Qu'il onques envoiast tel brief."	
"Qui l'envoiast donc, sire cuens?"	
"Puet s'estre, sire, alcuns hom suens	
Canja son saiel par envie	4845
Por tolir a l'enfant la vie,	
Ki het u lui u son parage.	
Mais or envoié 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 menbre ne vie.	
Le brief que cis aporta, sire,	4855
Faites enseëler en cire.	
Se li mandés par vostre brief	
Que il escrist el sien mescief	

- 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.
 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
 that he scarcely knew what he was doing 4850
 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 Ne vostre pris ne vostre los Por metre honor ariere dos. Trop vos a costé ja ariere Honors por perdre en tel maniere.	4860
Ki honor porcace et desert 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;	4865
Mais qu'il sos ciel n'en sace rien Coment il est de cest affaire. Trosque li messages repaire, Tant li sera cis plais celés." Li canceliers est apielés.	4870
El parcemmin le lettre a mise Tolt si com li cuens li devise. Tost a ensaëlé cel brief Et le fals alsi de recief.	4875

A un vallet de sa maison Ki miols sace entendre raison 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. Cil vint a lui, le brief li done. Priveément l'a salué.	4880
Li brief ne sunt pas eskivé. Li rois meïsmes prent le cire Et voit bien tost que voloit dire. Il a ansdeus les lettres 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, De cho que il li fu tramis.	4885
En l'altre cartre plus petite La est la mors Silence escripte/ Que il devoit avoir tramise.	4890

by writing such a thing to a man whom he should hold in the
highest esteem.

You have never slighted
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

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

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
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
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.

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.

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
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 vernelle
 De maltalement, 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 escris peüst venir
 Qu'il voit illuec al roi tenir.
 Tols esmaris al roi a dit: 4935
 "Bials sire ciers, se Dex m'aît,
 Jo nel li ainc mais que jo sace
 Cest brief, se ja Dex bien me face."
 "Comment?" fait il, "fals cler prové!"
 Donc ne t'euc jo l'altrier rové 4940
 A faire un brief, et tu fesis,

- If all of Londontown-on-Thames
had been destroyed 4900
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
could think him enough of an imbecile 4905
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.
- 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
for the misdeeds and sins of others,
while those responsible for the mischief 4915
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
 Que tu me ballas et jo lui,/ 4945
 Donques escresis tu cest brief!
 Car nus nel canja, par mon cief,
 Puis que al vallet l'euc cargié!
 Mar acointas, voir, cest marcié!"
 Et cil n'en set sos ciel que dire.
 Li rois ki puet avoir grant ire
 Le fait en sa cartre jeter.
 De traïson le violt reter,
 Qu'en lui, cho dist, ne remaint mie 4955
 Silences n'ait perdu la vie.
 N'i a celui en la maison
 Le roi ki sace l'oquoison
 Por qu'il fu jetés en la cartre.
 Mar fu escrite cele cartre
 Par cui est mis en tel martyre. 4960
 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
 Qu'il est en France a tote pais, 4965
 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:
 De se harpe, de se viiele, 4970
 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.
 Ançois li fait li rois acroire 4975
 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
 A Wincestre a moult grant torment 4980
 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!"
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—
he was suffering terribly for it. 4960
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;
with his harp, with his vicle, 4970
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
at Winchester, suffering terrible torments, 4980
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 ploi Tolt als qu'ele n'eüst cure Que jo veïssce l'escriture! Mais se jo seüisce a nul fuet Qu'ele l'enfant eüst sor cuer/ Bien le poroie cuidier donques, Qu'altres qu'ele ne le tint onques.	4990
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.	4995
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.	5000
Sens d'ome sage poi ataint Por feme ataindre qui se faint. Jo ne cuit nul bien entresait El biel samblant qu'ele li fait;	5005
Si ne sai de Silence mie Se la roïne quist folie Dont ele eüst le cuer irié De lui avoir si empirié.	5010
Car feme nen est pas laniere D'engiens trover en tel maniere. Engignose est por home nuire Plus que por un grant bien estruire.	5015
Las! com jo sui en grant anguissce! Ne sai cui jo mescroire en puissce. 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.	5025
Mal de l'eure qu'ele i vint ore! 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
that no one else had got hold of the letter.
Alas! What have I done to deserve this?

4905

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.
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.

5000

A wise man's reason can achieve little
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,

5005

and whether something happened that made her angry
enough
to seek revenge on him like that.

5010

A woman is always quick
to think of something clever in such circumstances.
She is much quicker at finding ways to harm a man
than at thinking up something beneficial.

5015

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
so close to me and had her hands on my letter.
She is the one I suspect, so help me!

5020

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 Çals qui T'apielent de bon cuer, Ne suefres Tu ja a nul fuer Mon cors a tort estre blescié Si vilment por altrui pechié. Mais li viés pechiet ki m'enconbrent –	5030
Si m'aît Dex, jo cuit m'enconbrent. Li viés pechié, on le tiesmoigne, Renovielent sovent vergoigne. La moie vergoigne est parans,	5035
Mais Dameldex me soit garans Viers cui riens ne se puet mucier."	5040
Le cartrier 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'aparole 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?" Resront li rois. "Ne fu cho el?"	
"Sire, se Dex me gart de mel, Et por icho dire et por plus Desirai jo venir cha sus. Ensi puissce jo Deu avoir	5060
Com jo sos ciel ne puis savoir Dont cis fals briés [vos] peut venir;	
Mais il me prist a sovenir D'une rien, mais jo vos criem si."	5065
Li rois resront: "Di tost! di! di!"	
"[S]ire, ma dame vint a moi. Ne sai sos ciel por quoi, n'a quoi, Mais forment m'ala costiant,	5070

- If it is true, God, that you see all,
and are eternal, and help
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. 5030
- True, I am burdened with the weight of former sins—
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. 5035
- But may the lord God from whom no creature can hide
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. 5040
- 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. 5045
- 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, 5050
“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,
I wanted to come here 5055
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;
however, I did start to remember something,
but I’m so afraid of you.”
- The king replied, “Speak up! Out with it!” 5060
- “Sire, my lady came to see me.
I don’t have the faintest idea why or for what purpose,
but she came and stood very close to me 5070

- Mes lettres, sire, manoiant;
 Et quant ele ot mon brief ploié
 Sil me rendi bien ferm loié
 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 autre 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 proise gaires sa venjance
 Qui li acroisce sa viltance.
 Il rivee al cancelier qu'il cuevre,
 Si com a chiers ses membres, [l]ouevre.
 Car il set bien que la roïne 5095
- Escrift le faus brief par haïne;
 Et se blastange en a la dame
 Bien set que il i avra blasme.
 Al cancelier coile 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 congïé 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 letres 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
 had written the false letter out of hatred,
 and if suspicion should fall upon the lady,
 he knew he would bear the blame. 5095
- He concealed his shame from the chancellor,
 and said the letter came from a count
 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. 5100
- He took leave of King Evan,
 came to France as quickly as he could,
 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
 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. 5110

Quant li rois entent la noviele Moult par li est amee et biele. 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, Qu'il est moult frans et honorables, Cortois et pros et amiabes. Et si vos puet on dire bien Si per ne valent a lui rien. Ses los torne le lor a blasme, 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 joiols s'en funt, Sont moult dolant si enemi.	5115
A .xvii. ans et a demi Tolt droit a une Pentecoste, Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui il coste,/	5120
L'adoba li rois a Paris, Et por s'amor bien jusque a dis. Es près dejoste Saint Germain Vit on liquel erent certain D'armes porter et de bien poindre	5125
Et de lor josteörs bien joindre, Car moult i ot bons behordis. Liquels qui i fust estordis Silence en ot le jor le pris Por cui li behordis fu pris.	5130
Moult le fist bien ens en l'arainne Entre .ii. rens a la quintainne. Ainc feme ne fu mains laniere De contoier en tel maniere. Kil veïst joster sans mantel	5135
Et l'escu porter en cantiel Et faire donques l'ademise, La lance sor le falstre mise, Dire peüst que Noreture Puet moult ovrer contre Nature,	5140
Quant ele aprent si et escole A tel us feme et tendre et mole. Tels chevaliers par li i vierse	5145
	5150
	5155

- 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
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?
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. 5160
- 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
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. 5170
- 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 tiennent tolt cil de la terre.
La avint si qu'en Engleterre 5180
- Mut une guerre fors et fiere,
Qu'avierse gent et poltoniere
Se revelerent viers le roi
Pat grant orguel et par derroi. 5190

De Silence vait la noviele
En maintes terres bone et biele.
Ja set on bien par fais, par dis,
Qu'il est pros, sages et hardis.
Quant li rois Ebayns l'a seü
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
 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. 5160
- And do you know what I really think?
 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. 5165
- 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;
 they're only practicing what they've learned. 5170
- 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
 a fierce war broke out in England:
 hostile and dastardly men
 rebelled against the king
 out of great pride and folly. 5185
- 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,
 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." 5190

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

- "Whatever you want, it's yours,"
said the queen. "What is it?" 5200
 "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. 5205
 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 5215
 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. 5220
 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! 5230
 This kind of love is really hatred,
 betraying a man and killing him.
 When a treacherous whore of a woman
 wants to get her claws into a man,
 she gets her way by weeping and swooning.
 Yet she's never so taken with a man 5235
 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 cudiés vos ja a nul fuer
 Silences me soit contre cuer,
 Se il vos puet mestier avoir." 5245
 "Suer dolce, or dites vos savoio."
 "Bials sire, cudiés que jo soie
 Si fole que jo haïr doie
 Home qui vos puist rien aidier?
 Se jel peüssce soshaidier,
 Jo l'i* soshaideroie, sire." 5250
 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 ravoir entresait.
 Viegnent od lui si compagnon,
 Car si voisín li sont gagnon
 Entre icele gent haïe,
 Car or ont grant mestier d'aïe
 Ke* moult l'ont assalli de guierre. 5260
 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 esploitiers 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 ravoir
 Silence ariere en Engletierre,
 Et de ses pers, qu'il a grant guierre.
- Li rois fait Silence atorner 5275
 Ki plus ne violt la sejorner.
 De ses pers mainne trosqu'a .xxx.
 Tolte la cors en est dolente;/
 Plorent Silence a desmesure:
 "Ahi!" font il, "quel noreture
 Et quels atrais est d'estrange home!
 Quant on l'a norri, c'est la some,
 Et miols apris, sil pert on donques."
 Mais Silences ne fina onques 5280

- "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
raise a stranger in your midst!*" 5280
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 Entros qu'il a passé la mer. Et quant il vint en Engletierre A Cestre se traist a la guierre. Al roi en vait grant aleüre A sa moult grant male aventure, 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, Si com drois est, et retenu. Tolt mainnent de Silence joie Gregnor que jo dire vos doie.	5285
	5290
	5295
Droit al tierc jor que li François Vinrent al roi, un poi ançois Que il presist a ajorner, Li rois fait sa gent atorner, Cat aler violt desor un conte Ki li a fait et tort et honte. Trois contes ot ains amatis. Or s'est moult forment aäitis Que de cestui sera vengiés, U ja nen iert longes engiés De quanque il el siecle tient. En la contree al conte en vient 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, 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 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 Ki honist moult chevalerie./	5300
	5305
	5310
	5315
	5320
	5325

- 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.
There would be blows exchanged before nightfall. 5315
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
before the count left Chester. 5320
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,
with heavy loss of life. 5325

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 Que li cuens lués l'enconterra Quant en sa tiere les verra. Se bon vos est, et atalente, De Silence et des François .xxx.	5330
Dirai, mais qu'escoltés en soie. Desor un ganbizon de soie Giete l'obierc malié menu Que li rois de France ot tenu En tel cierté qu'il nel donast Por rien c'on li abandonast.	5335
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,	5340
Se li fremerent maintenant. Doi sien vallet de gregnor los Li gietent donc l'obierc el dos. Sa bone espee a donques çainte C'uns siens vallés li a atainnte.	5345
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.	5350
Pierres i a et cercle d'or Ki valent bien tolt un tressor. Li rois de France li dona. Bien ait quant il l'abandona.	5355
Il ot esté a un sien oncle: El nasal a un escarboncle. Li auferans est amenés. Uns siens vallés li plus senés	5360
L'estraint moult bien et donc li rent. Puis monta sus, qu'arçon n'i prent. Des esporons d'or qu'il avoit Com cil qui faire le savoit	5365
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 5355
 that were worth a fortune.
 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,
 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:
 "Segnor, jo vos ai amenés
 Par vos mercis en ceste tierie.
 Or si vos voel jo moult requierre
 Que vos soiés ensi par vos
 Que nus ne puist dire de nos
 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,
 Et bien et mal avrons commun." 5385

Li François sunt bien a conroi.
 Bien pert qu'il viennent de bon roi.
 Il ont tramis estor furnis,
 Des obiers, des elmes burnis,
 Et des escus a l'or d'Espagne
 Dont resplendist tolte la plagne. 5390
 Jo le vos di, bien le sachiez,
 Que li cuens ot esté cachiez
 De Cestre, car n'ert pas garnis,
 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 amassee. 5400
 Dist bien qu'il iert vengies del roi
 Car il li a fait grant desroi.
 Li cuens a moult de gent haie
 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
 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;
 we will face triumph or defeat together." 5385
- 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 hasteément,
Il et li .iii. 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 ensanble
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 abassier 5445
.m. en covint a mort quassier.
Dont veïsscié tronçons voler,
Tamainte jovente afoler,
Escus estroër et percier.
Nus hom ne poroit entiercier 5450
Ne savoir el premier enbronc
Al quel fu miols u pis adonc.

S I L E N C E

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.

5415

He armed himself at once
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,
and the royal troops didn't stop
until they reached the mountain.

5425

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:
each army rushed upon the other.

5435

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,
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.

5445

As soon as battle was joined,
no one could tell
who was getting the better or worse of it.

5450

- Mais cui qu'il fust u pis u miols
 Si s'entrefierent des espiols
 Qu'escu n'i vallent plus que palle, 5455
 N'obierc, tant aient bone malle,
 O les trenchans de alemieles
 N'estuece espandre lé boieles.
 Et quant les lances sont perdues
 Dont traient les espees nues. 5460
 A l'acointier des brans tallans
 Parut liquels fu plus vallans.
 La commencierent tel estor
 Dont li plus hardis ot paôr.
 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 manoiant.
 N'est hom qui tolte vos pardie
 Com le cuens ot la car hardie
 Ki Cestre tint, tant com lui lut. 5480
 Mais or a il tel plait 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 alsi, al voir dire.
 Il voit le roi, li rois voit lui;
 L'uns fera sempres l'autre anui.
 L'uns ne violt l'autre deporter.
 Tant com chevals les puet porter
 Et randoner les sals menus 5490
 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,
 as were hauberks, no matter how strong their mesh;
 nor did the sharp edge of the lance's blade
 spare the spilling of entrails. 5455
- And when the lances were gone,
 they drew their naked swords.
 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 5460
 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.
- 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. 5470
- 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
 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,
 with short strides, could carry them,
 they rushed upon each other. 5490
- 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 secore:	
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'autre part.	
O ses François fait grant essart.	
Il ont piece a les lances fraites	
Et si ont les espees traitez	
Et fierent tolt en un tenant:	5525
Moult les vont laidement menant.	
Entre Silence et ses Franchois	
Orent fait pais de .c. anchois	
Qu'il onques oïsscent noviele	
Del roi, ki lor fust laide u biele.	5530
Moult vont les rens aclaroiant.	
Il nes vont mie tariänt	
Li Franchois 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 unshaven. 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:	5540
Ne se trast pas a l'un des cors	
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 Franchois voient son effors.	5550
Acuellent gregnor hardement	
Quant voient son contenement.	
"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 Franchois, 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 acoimentement.	5565
Or vait al conte malement.	
Enviers Silence a gros le cuer.	
Il nel puet amer a nul fuer	
Ne les Franchois, et si ne set	
Quels gens il sunt, mais moult les het.	5570
Orains oï en la bataille:	
"C'est li vallés de Cornuälle!"	
Mais ne set pas la verté fine,	
Tant c'uns des suens viers lui s'acline,	
Se li a dit: "Dont estes nés?	5575
Et des Franchois qua[nz] amenés?"	
Dont ont recommandié 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,
but went straight through the middle. 5540
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,
and by their efforts succeeded 5560
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 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.	5580
Silences en a une prise Deseur le cheval qu'il justise. Tant com chevals puet randonner Se vont donques entredonner. Çaingles n'estrier n'i ont valu	5585
Ne çaient andoi el palu. Salent en piés isnielement, Si se requierent vivement Des brans forbis trenchans d'acier. Se Dex Silence nen a chier	5590
Que il le mece en noncaloir, Ne li pora gaires valoir Elmes, ne brogne, ne escus. Li cuens est forment irascus, Et vos savés benignement	5595
Que il rest plains de hard[em]ent. Grans cols i ot a l'envaïr. Li uns fierit l'autre par aïr Qu'il funt de lor escus astieles. Silences dist: "Bials Dex, chaieles,	5600
Ki m'a jeté de maint anui, Done moi vertu viers cestui! Cho qu'afoblle en moi Nature Cho puist efforcer T'aventure. Mais se Tu viols ne me puet nuire	5605
Rois, n'amirals o son empire."/	5610
Li cuens atant son elme empire [Li cuens atant son elme empire] 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 ferit. 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
to get acquainted with the French. 5580
 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,
spurred his horse forward, 5585
 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.
 They jumped to their feet immediately 5590
 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.
 He was assailed by dreadful blows. 5600
 They struck each other so savagely
 that their shields were shivered to pieces.
 Silence said, "Dear God, for heaven's sake,
 you who have rescued me from many a peril,
let me prevail against this foe! 5605
 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."
 Just then the count damaged Silence's helmet so badly 5610
 [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
 for my own suffering and for his rebellion
 against the king." 5620
 Then he went at the count with renewed vigor

Del branc d'acier le conte fier 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. Mais que valt longes aconter? Silences le fist remonter. Al roi le rent, revient en l'ost,	5630
Ne mais icil de la, si tost Com il sorent lor segnor pris Dont Silences a tolt le pris, S'en vont fuiant a moult grant honte.	5635
O als s'enfuent li .iii. conte.	
Silences n'a soig de juërl Ne violt pas le guerre atriuërl Cui colpe jambe, u piet, u puig.	5640
Li Franchois viennent al besoig; A "Monjoie!" que il escrie N'i a un seul qui se detrie, Cil del fuïr, cil del cacier.	5645
Savoir poës 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 Enaise li sens ne marist.	5650
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—
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.
 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,
 "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.
 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. Por veir Silence et coisir. Li Franchois puis par bon loisir Prendent congé. Bien les soldoie Li rois, adonc s'en vont a joie. Moult [est] Silences dolans ore, 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,	5670
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;	5675
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,	5680
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	5685
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!	5690
Car il ne se set preu gaitier. Eufeme le cuide afaitier D'aspre dit, ains que il anuite, Se ses espoirs ne li afruitie. Ele a ja tant a lui jenglé	5700
Qu'a une part l'a enanglé./ "Sovent vos or," fait ele, "amis, De la viés amor de jadis?" "Dame," fait il a la roïne,	5705

- 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
 to admire Silence and honor him. 5670
 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,
 but he would be even sorrier before long. 5675
 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,
 for she was filled with dreadful rage. 5680
 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,
 but often a man is punished 5685
 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
 and occasion to do so, 5690
 and felt the urge;
 so before he even decides to sin,
 God deters him by chastizing him.
 But Silence had never committed,
 nor would he, even if he lived 5695
 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,
 because he's defenseless in this situation. 5700
 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
 that she has pretty well cornered him. 5705
 "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 abandonee.
 Ja ne l'arés, n'ensi, n'ensi,
 Ensi me consalt Dex, espi!"
 Dist la dame: "Creés vos cho? 5735
 Creés vos cho, dites, que jo
 Vos apartasse ensi a certes?
 Anchois vos doinst Dex males pertes
 Que jo deûisce a vos entendre;
 Ains me lairoie ardoir en cendre. 5740
 Ahi!" fait ele, "quel delit
 Avroit en vos!" Dont vait el lit.
 Tranble d'angoisse 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 espris, 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,
 Que Silences me volt ochire
 Por cho que jo nel vol amer,
 Quant l'envoiantes de la mer
 Ne vos calut gaires de moi.
 Vos me proisiés, certes, moult poi
 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,
 Qu'il ne me violt en pais lasscier.”
- 5755
- Li rois l'entent, sin a tel ire
 C'on nel vos puet conter ne dire.
 Soffle de maltaalent, s'a dit
 A la roïne: “Prent respit!
 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.
 Savés vos or en nul endroit
 Coment jo vengier m'en peuissce
 Sans moi honir, gré vos seuissce.”
- 5760
- 5765
- La dame est plaine de grant rage.
 L'engien a prest en son corage,
 Et dist al roi: “Bien le ferés
 Que vos ja blasmés n'en serés.”
 “Puis donc ensi c'on ne men fierne?”
 “Oil!” “Comment?” “Rois Fortigierne
 Fist une tor jadis ovrer
 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.
 La tor ne pot nus faire estable
 Fors sol Merlin, fil al diâble,
 Car autre pere n'oit il onques.
 Merlin ert petis enfes donques.
- 5770
- 5775
- 5780
- 5785
- 5790

- although you obviously don't care what happens to me
or what's going on or who my enemies are.
- From the time, Sire, that you saw
that Silence wanted to kill me
because I wouldn't sleep with him,
and you just sent him abroad,
you haven't cared a thing about me.
- You certainly think very little of me
by tolerating his presence in this land.
He may have won the war for you,
but he's asking too much for his services:
he never stops trying to reduce
the value of your honor at any cost, Sire;
he doesn't give me a minute's peace." 5755
- 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! 5760
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.
Now, if you know of any way
I could get revenge
without getting caught, I would appreciate hearing it." 5775
- The lady was filled with violent rage.
She had a clever plan all prepared,
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,* 5780
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.
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. 5785
5790

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 visiōn despondre.	
S'otés qu'il vos volra respondre;	5810
Et, se il Merlin ne puet prendre	
Faites li, sire, bien entendre	
Mar renterra en ceste tierre.	
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 sachies vos tres bien,	
Jo volentiers. N'a sos ciel rien	
C'om de mon pooir faire puet."	
Cho dist li rois: "Cho vos estuet.	
Or esoltés que vos dirai.	5835
Tolt mon conseil vos gehirai.	
Jo et ma feme giziōns	

- He made the king's tower stand,
and then was ready to leave. 5795
 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
that he could never be taken, 5800
 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 viziöns Me vint devant qui m'espooënte. Or si vos convient metre entente Que Merlins soit pris, qui me die La visiöns que senefie Car il set bien qu'ele despont," "Coment, sire?" cil le respont. "Coment prendroie jo celui 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/ 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 conmant avés desdit." 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 tristes, tolz plorant Et Dameldeu sovent orant	5840
Et Dameleu sovent orant Que il son traval 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 traval et li dur lit Li atenuissent son delit.	5855
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, 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	5860
Li vient uns hom tols blans al dos, Tolt droit a l'oriere d'un bos. Salue le moult gentement, Or escoltes confaitement:	5875
"[C]il qui fait son soleil 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
attenuated his happiness. 5865
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,
for happiness is born of joy. 5870
He was very miserable and discouraged.
And yet, not quite
half a year later,
a man with long white hair flowing down his back
came right up to him at the edge of a grove
and greeted him very courteously. 5875
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 recoverer."	
Silences li respont: "Bials sire, Vos dites bien, Dex le vos mire."	
"Amis," fait il, "se Dex vos salt, Quels bezoinz vos chace en cest galt?	5885
Chi n'a cemins, ci n'a sentiers, Si passe bien li ans entiers	
C'om ne repaire en ceste agaise. Jo cuit vos avés grant mesaise."	5890
"Ciertes, bials sire, cho ai mon, Car très le tans al viel Aimon	
Ne cuit c'uns hom fust vis ne nés Ki por niënt fust si penés."	
"S'il fait a dire, dites moi Que vos querés et se jo voi	5895
Qu'aidier vos puissce si n'ensi, Gel ferai, 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, 'Trosque Merlin aie trové.'	5905
Et par les .ii. iols de ma tieste, Ne sai s'il est u hom u bieste;	
Ne nus ne sot ainc qu'il devint Tres puis que Fortg[i]e[r]ne le tint	5910
Por la soie tor conpasser. Mais on me fait niënt lasser."	
Cil voit celui, si l'enorta D'esleechier, sel conforta.	
"Amis, lasscier le dementer. Jo ai veü jadis enter	5915
Sovent sor sur estoc dolce ente, Par tel engien et tele entente	
Que li estos et li surece Escrut trestolt puis en haltece.	
Alsi pora en ceste voie Sor vostre dol naistre tels joie	5920
Ki tolte amenira 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
or what I'm looking for, friend, 5900
except that the king has sent me
to seek out Merlin, because he hates me
and wants to banish me from the land.

'Do not return,' he said to me, 5905
'until you have found Merlin.'
And I swear by the two eyes I have in my head,
I don't know if he's man or beast,
and no one has any idea what has become of him
since he was commissioned by Vortigern 5910
to build his tower.

I am being made to suffer for no reason."

The old man looked closely at the youth
and told him to rejoice and be comforted.

"Friend, cease your lamentation. 5915

I have often seen
a young bud grafted onto a sterile stock
with such skill and purposefulness
that both stock and graft
soon grew and flourished. 5920

Similarly,
such joy may be born of your sorrow
that it will completely transform

La dolor que vos avés ore.	
Amis, ne vos esmaiés rien,	5925
Car Merlin prenderés 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 viände.	
Chi a un bos u il soloit	
Venir boire, quant il voloit,	
Mais .v. jors a voie n'i tint	5935
Car l'aigue i falt por quoi il vint.	
Li lius est ses, n'i a que boivre.	
Se vos le volés bien deçoivre	
Faites cho donc que jo dirai.	
Vos remanrés, et g'en irai,	5940
Et jo vos di en mon latin	
Que jo revenrai le matin./	
Or ne vos soit d'atendre lait:	
J'enporterai vin, miel et lait,	
En trois vasscials, et car bien fressce.	5945
Tenés chi mon fural et m'esce.	
Si faites demain u anuit	
Un fu, que trop ne vos anuit.	
Le car cuisiés, quant vos l'arés,	
Al miols que vos sos ciel sarés,	5950
En rost, sans flame et sans lumiere,	
Car donc jetra forçor fumiere.	
Et quant Merlins le flaërra,	
A la car lués repaiërra.	
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,	
Angoïscols 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:
you will surely capture Merlin. 5925
- 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
because the water he came for was lacking:
the watering-place was all dried up. 5935
- 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.
Keep my flint and tinder here. 5945
- 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
before he catches sight of the milk. 5965
- 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 tolت en sus: Se il en boit, tolت iert confus. S'i[l] boit del vin, tost iert sopris, Car il n'est pas del boivre apris.	5975
S'il dort, ainz qu'il soit esvelliés, Soiés, amis, apparelliés." Cho dist li blans hom, puis s'en vait. Si a porcacié entresait	
Miel, lait et vin, et car avoec. Si s'en revient tolت droit illuec U il Silence avoit lasscié,	5980
Entre .i. bos et .i. plasscié. Que vos diroie? Tolت li livre, Se li a mostré a delivre	
Le bos u Merlins vait et vient. Dont prent congié, sa voie tient.	5985
Silences s'en fu a estruit. Or l'en doinst Dex venir a fruit. Le miel, le sait, le vin i mist, Tolt si com li blans hom li dist. /	5990
La car salee cuist en rost Et li fumiere en va moult tost Par tolت le bos destre et senestre. Et Merlins qui estoit en l'estre	
Flaire la car, met se a la voie, Quant Noreture le desvoie. "Ahi!" fait Noreture. "Ahi! Com cil sont malement trahi	5995
Ki noriscent la gent a faire Cho que lor nature est contraire.	
Quanque jo noris et labor Me tolت Nature a un sol jor. Tant a esté noris en bos	6000
Bien deüst metre ariete dos Nature d'ome, si voloit	
Herbes user, si com soloit."	6005
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
before he wakes up, my friend." 5975
- 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
he had left Silence, 5980
in a clearing near the grove.
What can I tell you? He gave him everything,
showed him all around
the grove that Merlin frequented,
then took his leave and was on his way. 5985
- 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 choroe Nature.	
Dist: "Ah! ah! Noreture!	
Tant anui m'as ja fait, par dis,	
Tant gentil home abastardis."	
"Ja non fac, voir, ains faites cho,"	6015
Dist Noreture, "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 noreture,	
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 Noreture.	
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!"
 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." 6015
 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
 to those who value honor. 6020
 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
 of that evil which claimed Adam as its first victim. 6025
 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,
 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
 and deceive and sin. 6035
 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,
 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. 6040
 Nothing in his nature
 caused him to go bad.
 For if Adam's original sin 6045
 6050

Qu'Adans pecha ensi el fust, Dont peüst on par cho prover 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.	6055
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.	6060
Noreture, car te repoze? Quanques Adans fist de rancure, Fu par toi, certes, Noreture. Car li diâbles le norri Par son malvais conseil porri.	6065
Tant l'enasprist, tant l'enorta, Que la pome le sorporta. Quanque gens font de vilonie Tolt naist de cele felonie.	6070
Tant si delitent li alquant, Li honi, et li recreänt, Qu'il font alsi com par nature, Mais tolt lor vient de Noreture.	6075
Dont l'enemis Adan enbut* Quant par la pome le deçut. De cel pechié et de cel visce Naist envie et avarisse,	6080
Escarsetés et gloternie, Et malvaistiés et felonie. Jo te command que tu t'en voises	6085
Et que tu mais ichi n'estoises. / A Merlin as tu tolt falli."	
Et Noreture en empali, 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 Ronpent ses costés, ses escines, Si que sor lui n'a point d'entier	6095

- were the fault of Nature,
that would be clear
and irrefutable proof
that he was meant to do other than good. 6055
Nothing was ever in Adam
except what God created
and placed there.
It is not like God 6060
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.
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.
He urged him and inflamed him until 6070
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.
From this sin and vice 6080
arose envy and avarice,
gluttony and stinginess,
spitefulness and evil-doing.
I command you to leave
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
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 viände. 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 déçoivre.
 Ki donc veïst home a mesaise!
 Merlins crieve d'anguisse enaise.
 Il voit le lait, si en boit donques. 6125
 Or n'ot il mais tele angoisse onques.
 Ki donc veïst ventre eslargin,
 Estendre, et tezir, et bargir,
 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 traïs,
 Et si en boit a moult grans traïs./
 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.

S I L E N C E

- for she didn't keep to road or path;
 a woodland deer could not have stood the pace.
 He was greedy for the meat. 6100
 He came to the roast and seized the whole thing.
 "Oh!" he said. "This looks good!"
 Silence hid in the woods,
 and Merlin got ready to eat.
 He tore into the meat at once. 6105
 If God is on Silence's side,
 Merlin will pay dearly for it
 before he leaves.
 Merlin was so greedy for the hot meat
 he had seized from the fire
 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!
 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. 6120
 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
 and the mixture worth a Scottish pound. 6125
 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.
 Silence jumped out and seized him.
 Now Merlin was sorry! 6135
 "Friend," he said, "what is your name?
 And why are you doing this to me?"
 "I am called Silence, and I left home
 in order to track you down. 6140

- Ta mort te volrai porcacier."
 "Ma mort?" dist Merlins. "Tu por quoi?"
 "Mes ancetres fu mors par toi,
 Gorlains, li dus de Cornuâlle. 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 sejornet 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 entiercer
 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.*
- 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
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:
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.
- 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,
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,
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
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.
- 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 sor,	6185
Mais il decouerra 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 nuës 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'quoisoins li fist gehir. . .	
Dont vient devant une abeÿe	
Et voit un mezel tarteler	
Et por Deu l'almosne apieler.	
Dont rit Merlins, por poi ne derive,	6205
Et quant il les povres enterve	
Et cil prient que il lor die	
L'quoisoins, 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'entierer	
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 malalent respont:	6225
"S'il oreンドroit ne le despont,	

- The whole country was excited.
 They thought that Merlin was a fool,
 but he was about to lift the lid off the pot,
 and make things unpleasant for certain people. 6185
 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,
 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
 to confess the reason. 6200
 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 Merlin 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 vuelt.
 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 Merlin 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
 Confait prophesie il dist!”
 Merlin l'esgarde, si en rist.
 Tels voloires de parler li vient
 Qu'il a moult grant painne se tient.
 Demandant 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 confait 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,
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
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,
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.
- 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!"
- Merlin looked at her and laughed.
- He wanted to speak out so badly
that he could scarcely restrain himself.
- They asked him in vain
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
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,
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. 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."	6270
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.	6275
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.	6280
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	6285
Et sel fait .iii. jor geüner. Et al quart jor fait aüner Et ses barons et ses princiers Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers. Verront quel fin Merlins fera:	6290
U ochis, u pendus sera. Se il ne dist sa prophesie, N'en portera, cho dist, la vie.	6295
[M]erlins est menés en la place. Jo ne cuit pas que tant se hace Qu'il ne parolt ains c'on le tue. Li rois tient une espee nue. Dist li: "U tu diras, dant fol,	6300
U jo te trenceraï le col."	
Or voit bien Merlins qu'il morra 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	6305
Servir a gré, ne rien plasir. Or ne voel jo mal gré avoir.	6310

- 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
 and starved for three days. 6290
 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:
 whether he would be beheaded or hanged. 6295
 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
 that he won't talk to save his own life. 6300
 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
 if he didn't speak, and that he could
 save his life by talking. 6305
 He said to the king, "Now listen, Sire.
 I cannot please you and do your will
 by remaining silent,
 but I have no wish to incur your wrath" 6310

- 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 entraï,
 Un fol vilain i encontrai
 Si com il venoit del marchié.
 Uns nués sollers ot encargié:
 Sis ot fais ramender tols nués
 Mais onques ne li orent wés.
 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 oire,
 Si l'a tolt altressi trové. 6315
- 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 mervelle,
 Des povres gens qu'illuec estoient
 Et por Deu l'almosne apieloient.
 Il demandoient la le mains,
 Et li plus ert devant lot mains.
 Desos lor piés ot un tresor 6320
 Moult merveillols 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. 6325
- "Merlin, Merlin, li rois a dit,
 Or t'ai jo plus chier un petit,
 Por cho que m'as dit verité.
 Mais, se Dex me gart m'ireté,
 Jo te rehac moult d'autre part
 Car tu desis que ja par art 6330
 N'estroies pris, n'estoit par feme.
 Par cele foi que doi Eufeme,
 Sor cuer te rai por ta mençoingne,
 Car tes dis torne ichi a songe."
 Merlin respont: "N'aiés paör,
 Qu'al wespre loe on le biel jor.
 N'ai soing encore de fuür."
 "Merlin, tu veïs enfoïr 6335
- 6340
- 6345
- 6350

- 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.
- I had good reason to laugh, 6320
 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.
- And then he asked Merlin 6325
 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
- at the paupers who were standing there 6330
 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,
- huge quantities of gold and silver, 6335
 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.
- "Merlin, Merlin," said the king, 6340
 "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,
- because you said you would never be tricked 6345
 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."
- Merlin replied, "Don't fret. 6350
 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. Por verité le vos desneu.	6360
[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."	6365
"Merlin," dist la roïne Eufeme, "Com tu ses mesdire de feme! Quels joies est de ton mesdire? Ja nel deüst sofrir mes site! Ains te deüst faire tuer,	6370
U en .i. malvais liu jeter."	6375
Que que la dame die u face, Merlins n'a soig de sa manace. El le tient or por menteör, Por medisant, por trecheör, Mais il le fera véritable	6380
Et la dame fera menchable Ki dist qu'il ne set deviner. Or primes vient a merliner: Jo croi bien qu'il devinera Huimais, et qu'il merlinera	6385
Par tel engien et tele entente Que la roïne en iert dolente. Si est ele oreンドroit 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?" 6355
Merlin said, "I'll tell you, Sire.
A priest was chanting for the dead
and a man was weeping bitterly there. 6360
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. 6365
I will solve the mystery for you:
[line repeated]
it wasn't the man who hammered the nail home:
the priest helped him do it,
may God punish him." 6370
"Merlin," said Queen Eufeme,
"you certainly know how to speak ill of women.
What good will come of your slander?
My lord shouldn't tolerate it.
We should have you killed, 6375
or thrown into some foul place."
- Whatever the lady said or did,
Merlin was unmoved by her threats.
She thought he was a liar,
slanderer and trickster, 6380
but he would reveal the truth
and prove the lady a liar
for saying he was a false prophet.
Now he will finally be himself.
I am certain that he will reveal the truth 6385
and show that he is Merlin
with such skill and such results
that the queen will regret it.
But right now she was feeling strong enough
to threaten Merlin with death. 6390
- "You are wrong, lady," the king said.
"If a Scotsman or Irishman
were to tell me something, wise or foolish,
he would be entitled
to have peace in my presence. Am I not king? 6395
You will kindly allow me to speak and act

- Faire mon bon et mon plaisir.
 Sens de feme gist en taisir.
 Si m'aît Dex, si com jo pens,
 Uns muials 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."
 Merlin, 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,/br/>
 Et savoir voel la verté fine
 Por quoi resis de la roïne." 6420
 Merlin respond: "Moult volentiers,
 Si faites pais endementiers.
 Sire, jo ris, bien le savés
 Trestolt si con vos dit avés.
 N'en puis mais se jo ris de vos, 6425
 Car, par la foi que jo doi vos,
 N'a home el mont qui ne resist
 Por quoi que ses cuers li sesist
 Si com li miens cuers siet, bials sire,
 Et s'il seüst altretant dire 6430
 Con vos orés ains que j'en voise,
 Cui qu'il soit biel, ne cui en poise."
- Quant cho entendi la roïne
 Forment se diolt, la teste encline;
 Sue, sospire moult a trait, 6435
 Moult crient qu'ele ait tel baing atrait
 Qu'ele n'est mie par tolt vraie.
 Et li none forment s'esmaie.

- according to my pleasure.
A woman's role is to keep silent.
So help me God, I think
a mute can tell what women are good for,6400
for they're only good for one thing,
and that is to keep silent. They are all alike,
and it's hardly a coincidence
that there isn't one in a thousand
who wouldn't earn more praise by keeping silent6405
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 spicy6410
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 much6430
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 consiēnce. “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 destract et castie, C'or ai 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 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	6440
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.	6445
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	6455
Selonc qu'ele a tols jors ovré,/ Ja certes ne m'en pesera. Et jo sai bien que cho sera: Novilement n'avra garant, Merlins fait tres bien l'aparant.”	6460
Merlins s'estost, dist: “Oiés, 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,	6465
Et en apriés de la roïne. De nos .v. ris, cho sachies vos, Car il n'i a celui de nos Ki nen ait l'un l'autre escarni. Mais or vos ai jo, rois, garni.	6475
302	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,
 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
 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
 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. 6450
- 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,
 in keeping with her behavior, 6465
- 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 sachies vos,
Ont escarnis les .ii. de nos,
Sos fainte vesteure 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 coverture. 6490
Ne mais li .iv. qui i sont
Sevent bien priés qu'ele despont;
Merlins, Silences et la none
Sevent que la parole sone.
Si set la roïne altressi, 6495
Ele le set tres bien de fi.
- Cil de le cort s'esmaient fort,
Li uns a droit, l'autres a tort.
Cascuns s'esmaie moult de s'uevre:
Criement que Merlins ne descuevre. 6500
Ne mais icil sont esmaiable
Ki sevant bien qu'il sont copable.
Or commence mals a monter.
Ne vos puis dire ne conter
Com sont en male sospechon.
Merlins a liute tel lechon 6505
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.
Et li none en sera honie 6510
Qu'ele n'est pas par tolt onie
As autres nonains par le mont.
Atant li rois Merlin semont/
Que parolt plus apertement.
"Merlin, jo voel savoir coment 6515
L'uns de nos puet l'autre escarnir.
Merlin, tu m'en dois bien garnir,
Et si me fai descoverture
Puis de le fainte vesteure.
Quel sont li doi qui gabé sont 6520
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—
 she knew very well indeed. 6495
- 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.	
Escrnist 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, <i>ni vent</i> , 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,	
Quelle merveille est se j'en ris,	
Qu'ansdeus nos ont ensi deçut,	
Qu'elles nos ont tel plait esmut	6550
Comme .xx. .m. ne parent 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'ainc 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 soufraitolse d'onesté.	
Poi prometoit et mains donoit	6565
Et moult vilment s'abandonoit.	

- Merlin, I want you to tell me!" 6525
 "My lord king, the truth is
 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,
 he is a girl beneath his clothes. 6535
 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
 such as twenty thousand men couldn't? 6550
 Sire, I think this is really funny."
- Now the king was much more upset
 than anyone else in his kingdom, Scot or Englishman. 6555
 He almost wished for death:
 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;
 she was vile and depraved. 6565

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 tolte.
 En la sale ot moult grant esclot:
 Nus n'i parla se li rois non,
 U s'il nel commanda 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."
 "Site, se Dex bien me consente
 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,
 Et jo nel vol pas contredire. 6600
 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
 Et mostrast avant *ma* nature./ 6605
 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
 brought forward and disrobed,
 and he ordered Silence to be undressed. 6570
 It was just as Merlin had said:
 he found everything in its proper place.
 There was complete silence in the hall:
 no one would speak except the king himself,
 or whomever he commanded by name. 6575
 The king said so that everyone could hear,
 "Silence, you have been a very valiant,
 courageous and worthy knight;
 neither count nor king ever fathered better. 6580
- 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,
 it is only right that I should tell you the truth. 6590
 My father did with me as he saw fit. . .
 and when I reached
 the age of understanding,
 my father explained to me
 that I could never inherit
 in your land, Sire. 6595
 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.
 I didn't want to go against him. 6600
 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
 and reveal my true nature. 6605
 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 Que jo le vol a force amer. Vos m'envoiastes dela mer. Cuidastes le, par verité. Jo me celai por m'ireté; Ne vos vol pas le verté dire.	6610
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,	6615
Et la dame me rasali. N'euc cure de parler a li: Por cho me volt, sire, avillier Et fors del païs essillier.	6620
La vertés nel puet consentir Que jo vos puisse rien mentir, Ne jo n'ai soig mais de taisir. Faites de moi vostre plaisir."	6625
Li rois a dit .iii. mos roials: "Silence, moult estes loials. Miols valt certes ta loialtés Que ne face ma roialtés.	6630
Il n'est si preciose gemme, Ne tels tresors com bone feme. Nus hom ne poroit esproisier Feme qui n'a soig de boisier.	6635
Silences, ses qu'as recovré Por cho que tu as si ovré? Amer te voel <i>et</i> manaidier."*	6640
"Sire, cho me puet bien aidier." "Ses que jo ferai por t'amor, Que jamais nen oras clamor? Femes taront lor iretage."	6645
Silence respont come sage: "Chi a gent don, Dex le vos mire, Et al fait pert quels est li sire." Cil del palais en sont moult lié.	6650
Le roi enclinent trosqu'al pié. Prendent Silence a beneir Et dient Dex le puist tchir.	

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 respir,
 Ne nus nel quist ne demanda.
 Si com li rois le commanda/
 I fu la none donc deffaite,
 Et la dame a chevals detraite. 6655
 Li rois en a fait grant justice.
 Or est la roïne as las prise
 Dont el volt Silence lachier.
 Si vait: tels cuide porcachier
 Honte et damage avoec altrui
 Ki soi meïsme quiert anui.
 Nus hom qui fust ne plaints Eufeme.
 Silence atornent come feme.
 Segnor, que vos diroie plus? 6660
 Ains ot a non Scilensiüs:
 Ostés est -us, mis i est -a
 Si est només Scilentia.
- D'illuec al tierc jor que Nature
 Ot recovree sa droiture
 Si prist Nature a repolir
 Par tolt le cors et a tolir 6670
 Tolt quanque ot sor le cors de malle.
 Ainc n'i lassa nes point de halle:
 Remariä lués en son vis*
 Assisement le roze al lis.
 Li rois le prist a feme puis—
 Cho dist l'estorie u jo le truis—
 Par loëment de ses princhiens,
 Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers. 6675
 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
 Que haïr malvaise u blasmer. 6680
 Si mosterroie bien raison:
 Car feme a menor oquoison,
 Por que ele ait le liu ne l'aise,
 De l'estre bone que malvaise,
 S'ele ouevre bien contre nature. 6685
 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
 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 Silentia.

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
 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. 6675
 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
 more than one should blame a bad one. 6680
 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. 6685
 Doing the right thing comes unnaturally to her.
 I put it to you directly
 that one should take far greater account of these circumstances 6690

Que de celi qui le mal fait. Se j'ai jehi blasmee Eufeme 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, 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 Otroit Jhesus cho qu'il desirent.	6695
	6700

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.

