

Qui bien aime a tart oublie

“Le Lay de plour”

Machaut MSS A (F-Pn fr. 1584, 410v-12v) and C (F-Pn fr. 1586, 187r-89r)

Guillaume de Machaut (1300-77), L22/16

text from Hœpffner, *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut I*: 283-91, translation by Sarah Kay

music transcribed by Christopher Preston Thompson

Stanza 1

Qui bien aim - m'a tart oub - li - e, Et cuers qui oub -
Car Plai - sen - ce si me li - e Que ja - mais l'a -
8 lie__ a__ tart Res - sam - ble le feu qui__ art Qui de le - gier
mou - reus__ dart N'iert hors trait, a tiers n'a__ quart, De mon cuer, quoy
15 n'es-teint__ mi - e. Aus - si__ qui a__ ma - la - di - e
que nuls__ di - e. Car tant m'a fait__ com-paig - ni - e,
23 Qui plaist, en - vis__ se__ de - part. En ce point, se Dieus me__
Que c'est ni - ant__ dou de - part, Ne que ja mais, par__ nul__
30 gart, Me tient A - mours et mais - tri - e. ...Qu'en-vis peut
art, soit sa poin - tu - re ga - ri - e... Cer - tes, ein -
36 on des - ra - ci - ner Un grant ar - bre, sans de - mou - rer, De
si est il d'a - mer: Car quant uns cuers se vuet en - ter En
43 la ra - ci - ne, Qu'on voit puis flou - rir et por - ter
a - mour fi - ne, En - vis puet s'a - mour ou - bli - er,
50 Et ses bran - ches crois - tr' et ge - ter En brief ter - mi - ne.
ein-sois a - dès, par ra - mem - brer A li s'en - cli - ne...

Stanza 3

...Car l'iau - e qui chiet des - seu - re La ra - ci - ne qui de -
Et c'est ce qui me de - veu - re; C'est ce qui mon vis es -

meu - re Fait ren - ver - dir et flo - rir Et por - ter fruit; Tout ein -
pleu - re; C'est ce pour quoi je sou - pir; A ce me duit Vraie A -

si mes cuers qui pleu - re Par - fon - de - ment a toute heu - re
mour qui me court seu - re Et Bon - té qui l'as - sa - veu - re:

Ac - rois - tre mon sou - ve - nir Fait jour et nuit. Rai - sons
Qu'en moy ne puis - sent ve - nir, Ce me des - truit. Et je

et Droï - tu - re, Plai - sen - c'et Na - tu - re
m'as - se - u - re Que, tant com je du - re,


Font par leur po - oir Tou - te cre - a - tu - re
Ne por - ray ve - oir A - mour si se - u - re,

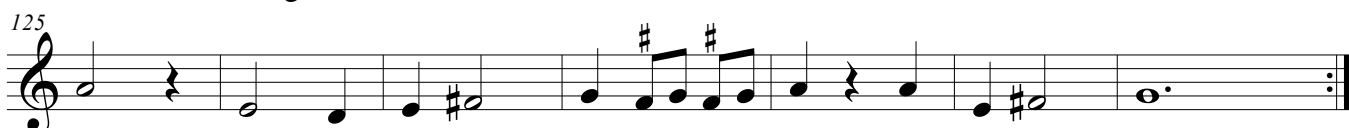
De vo - len - té pu - re Tend - r'a mieus va - loir.
Bon - té si me - u - re N'a tant de sa - voir.

Stanza 5

Aus - si voit on cle - re - ment Que li cuer qui loy - au -
Or say je cer - tein - ne - ment Que mienne es - toit li - ge -

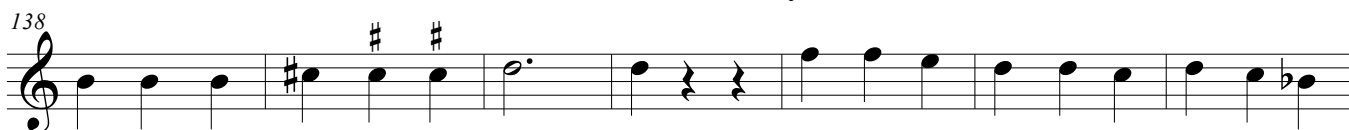
ment Et sans fo - lour Aim - ment de tres fine a - mour Cui -
ment La droï - te flour De ceaus qui ont plus d'on - nour; Car

118

 8 dent sou - vent Qu'en mil - leur et en plus gent Ai - ent se -
 tou - te gent Di - soi - ent com - mu - ne - ment, Et li mil -

125

 8 jour; Car plai - sence et sa ri - gour Ce leur a - prent:
 lour, Qu'il a - voit tou - te va - lour En - tie - re - ment.

Stanza 6

8 Et quant si bon ne mil - lour ne plus coin - te N'est, ne si
 Qu'en mon cuer est si tres ferme et si join - te L'a - mour de


138

 8 bel ne d'on - neur si a - coin - te, A droit ju - gier, Mer - vil - lier Ne se
 li qu'es - tre n'en puet des - join - te; Car cuer en - tier Qui tri - chier Ne sa -

145

 8 doit Nulz, se ne vueil par l'a - mou - reu - se poin - te Nou - vel - le -
 roit Par sou - ve - nir vuet que dou tout m'a - poin - te, Si qu'au - tr' a -

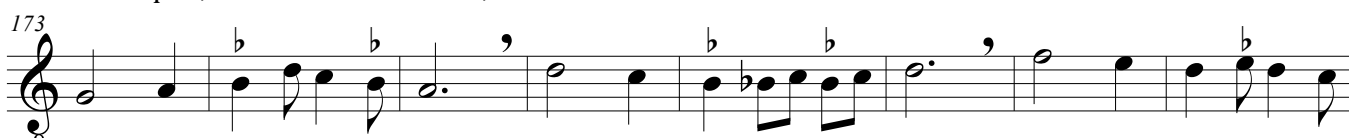
152

 8 ment d'au - tr' a - mour es - tre poin - te. Pour ce chan - gier Ne me quier, Et j'ay
 mour n'en - tre - preing - ne, n'a - coin - te; Qu'au - tr' a - coin - tier Em - pi - rier Me fe -

159

 8 droit; Dont le bon re - cort Qui de li re - cort
 roit. "A - mis, mi con - fort, Mi joi - eus de - port,

166

 8 Fait qu'a ce m'a - cort Que ja ne soie en a - cort
 Ma pais, mi res - sort, Et tuit mi a - mou - reus sort

173

 8 D'a - voir autre a - my; Mais en des - con - fort, Sans nul re - con -
 Es - toi - ent en ty. Or ay un re - mort De toy qui me

181

 8 fort De tout mon ef - fort Vueil pleindre et plou - rer sa
 mort Et point si tres fort Qu'o toy sont tuit mi bien

188

 8 mort, En di - sant ein - si: Dous a - mis, tant fort me
 mort Et en - se - ve - ly." Dous a - mis, seur ton sar -

195

 8 dueil; Tant te plaint, Tant te com - plaint Le cuer de moy, Tant ay grief
 cueil Sont mi plaint Et mi com - plaint; La m'es - ba - noy, Par pen - sé -

202

 8 que, par ma foy, Tout mal re - cueil; Dont mi oueil Que sou - vent mueil, Et
 e la te voy; Plus que ne sueil La me vueil; La sont mi vueil; La

209

 8 cuer es - treint, Vi - ai - re pa - li et taint, Gar - ni d'ef -
 mes cuers maint. La mort pri - que la me maint, Car la m'ot -

216

 8 froy Et d'a - noy, Sans es - ba - noy, Mon - strent mon dueil. La sous -
 troy. La, ce croy, De la mort doy Pas - ser le sueil. La s'em -

223

 8 pi - re, La s'a - i - re Mes cuers qui tant a mar - ti - re Et de
 pi - re Tire a ti - re; La ne fait que fondre et fri - re; La son

231

 8 mor - tel pei - ne Et tant d'ir - e, Qu'a voir di - re Son mal
 dueil de - mein - ne; La, sans ri - re, se mar - ti - re; La se

239

 8 ne por - roit des - cri - re Cre - a - ture hu - mein - ne.
 mour - drist; la de - si - re Qu'il ait mort pro - chein - ne.

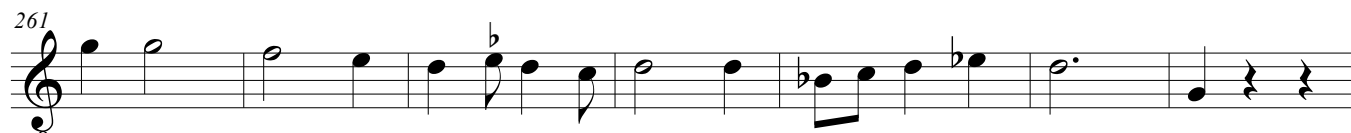
Stanza 10



Dous a - mis, tant ay gre - van - ce, Tant ay grief souf - fran - ce,
En toy es - toit m'es-pe - ran - ce Toute et ma fi - an - ce,



Tant ay dueil, tant ay pe - san - ce, Quant ja - mais ne te ver - ray,
Ma joi - e, ma sous-te - nan - ce. Las-sette! or per - du les ay.



Que do - leur me point et lan - ce De si mor - tel lan - ce
Bien pert a ma con - te - nan - ce Et a ma lo - quan - ce,



Au cuer qu'en de - ses - pe - ran - ce Pour toy mes jours fi - ne -
Car ma - nie - re ne puis - san - ce N'ay, tant me dueil et es -



Stanza 11.
ray. A cuer pen - sis Re-gret et de - vis Ton haut pris
may. Mes es - pe - ris Et mes pa - ra - dis Es - tient mis



Que tant pris. Ein - si le con - vient; Et vis a vis Te voy,
Et as - sis En toy; s'a - par - tient Que soit fe - nis Mes cuers:

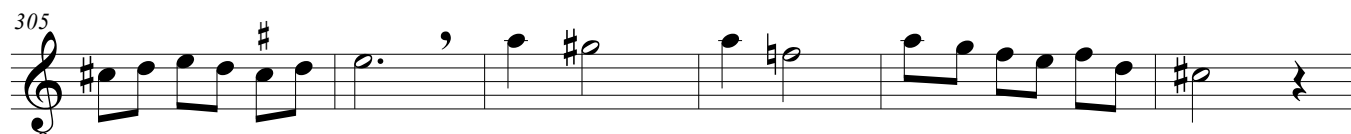


ce m'est vis, Dous a - mis, Et tou-dis De toy me sou - vient.
et pe - ris (Qu'est che - tis) Et re-mis Quant vi - e le tient.

Stanza 12



A - mis, je fus - se moult li - e, S'e - us - ses cuer
Ta mort tant me con - tra - li - e Et tant de maus



plus cou - art; Mieux vau - sist a mon es - gart
me re - part, A - mis, que li cuers me part;

311

8 Que vo - len - té si har - di - e. Mais hon - neur, che -
Mais ein-sois que je de - vi - e, Hum - ble - ment mes

318

8 va - le - ri - e Et tes re - nons qui s'es - part Par le
cuers sup - pli - e Au vray dieu qui nous re - gart De si

325

8 monde en main-te part Ont fait de nous de - par - ti - e.
a - mou - reux re - gart Qu'en li - vre soi - ens de - vi - e.

Whoever loves well is slow to forget; and a heart that is slow to forget resembles a burning fire that is difficult to put out. In the same way, anyone who has a sickness that pleases them is unwilling to give it up. In this state, so God watch over me, Love holds and rules me, and my Pleasure in it binds me so that the dart of love will not be pulled out of my heart, not even a third or a quarter of the way, whatever anyone may say. For it has been with me so long that there is no question of its leaving or of its wound being healed by any art...

...for one can hardly uproot a big tree without leaving behind some of the root, which can then be seen flowering and fruiting, in a short while, and its branches growing and sprouting. Certainly, this is what it is like to love: for when a heart resolves to graft itself in true love, it cannot forget its love but on the contrary, through remembering it, is constantly submissive to it...

...for the water that falls onto the root that remains causes it to grow green again and to flower and bear fruit. In the same way my heart, that weeps deeply all the time, makes my memory grow day and night. And this is what consumes me; this is what covers my face in tears; this is what I sigh for. To this I am brought by true Love who pursues me along with Goodness who gives Love greater savor: and that they should not be able to reach me, destroys me.

Reason and Uprightness, Delight and Nature, make every creature that has a pure heart incline to be more worthy. And I draw confidence that, as long as I live, I will not be able to see a Love so sure, or a Goodness so mature or with so much understanding.

And so it is clearly to be seen that hearts which, loyally and without folly, love with a very true love, often imagine that they place their love in those who are better and nobler [than they in fact are]: for delight in love and its rule teaches them to do so. Now I know for certain that [my love] was without a doubt the *fine fleur* of those who have the most honor, for everyone, and the best of men, used to concur that all worth, in its entirety, was his.

And since there is no one so good, nor braver nor cleverer nor so handsome or so acquainted with honor, then to judge rightly, no one should be surprised if I have no wish to be pierced anew by the amorous shaft of another love. And so I don't seek to change and I'm right not to; for love for him is so firm in my heart and so bonded that it cannot be unbonded; for a committed heart that would not know how to deceive determines me entirely, mindful of him, to continue on, not undertaking another love or acquainting myself with one, for the acquaintance of another would make my situation worse.

And so the good recall [*recort*] that I recall of him makes me accord never to be in accord with taking another lover; but disconsolate, without any consolation, with all my strength I wish to lament and bewail his death, saying this: "Lover, my comforts, my joyous enjoyments, my peace, my recourse, and all my chances of love, lay in you. Now, in return, I have a single grief for you that gnaws at me and pierces me so hard that with your loss all my well-being is dead and buried."

Sweet lover, I grieve so greatly, my heart weeps and laments for you so much, I have so much sorrow that, by my faith, I gather up every woe; and so my eyes that are often wet, my aching heart, my pale discolored face, joyless and full of anguish, manifest my sorrow. Sweet lover, on your coffin are my weeping and laments and there I find pleasure, there I see you in my mind's eye; there more than ever I wish to be, there are my desires, there dwells my heart. I beg death to take me there: there I offer myself, there, I think, I should pass the threshold of death.

There my heart sighs, there it is distressed, so great is its suffering [*martyrdom*] and mortal pain, and so much distress that, to tell the truth, no human creature could describe its woe. And bit by bit, there [in my heart] it gets worse, there it does nothing but melt and burn, there it abandons itself to grief, there without smiling it is martyred, there it kills itself, there it desires immediate death.

Sweet friend, I have so much grief, such intense suffering, so much sorrow, so much melancholy at never seeing you again, that pain pierces and cuts me through the heart with such a deadly blade that I will end my days in despair over you. In you were all my hope and trust, my joy and sustenance. Wretched me! Now I have lost them. You can easily tell from my appearance and my way of speaking, for I am so full of grief and distress that I have no more countenance or strength.

With a melancholy heart, I lament and praise your high merit that I so value, as is proper; and it seems to me that I see you face to face, sweet love, and have you always in my thoughts. My spirit, my heaven, were set on you; and so it is fitting that my heart should be a phoenix: both dead on account of being wretched, and revived when life preserves it.

My love, I would be very glad if you had more a coward's heart: this would have been better for me than such a bold will. But honor, chivalry, and your reputation that spreads everywhere throughout the world have brought about our separation. Your death grieves me so, and brings me so many woes, my love, that my heart is breaking. But before I die, my heart humbly petitions the true God who watches over us with such a loving look that we may be written in his book of eternal life.

Notes on the text:

l. 190, I have re-punctuated and entirely reinterpreted these lines from 190 on. *Fenis* (190) is usually understood as the past participle of *fenir* (“to end”) and a synonym of *peris*, but it can also be a spelling of “phoenix” and the bestiary image makes better sense of *remis* (193) and the final line. l. 210, “Qu’en livre soiens de vie”—my translation follows the *Dictionnaire du moyen français*, sv. livre (1), D (2) (a) “Registre symbolique où s’inscrivent depuis l’origine les noms de ceux qui appartiennent à Dieu.” Machaut similarly uses the expression *estre en livre de mort* in another of his lais (also quoted in DMF).

– Sarah Kay

Notes on the music:

This transcription draws from both Machaut MSS A and C. While the two sources consistently coordinate in rhythmic notation and base note value, they each provide varied pieces of information regarding *mi/fa* signs. In cross-examining the two, I found that where one manuscript seems ambiguous with respect to placement of the signs, the other often provides clarity. Therefore, accidental indications here are derived from both sources, and editorial suggestions are offered accordingly.

– Christopher Preston Thompson