

Machaut, *Remede de Fortune* 905–2892 (extracts). Song between touch and thought
Text edited by Wimsatt and Kibler. Translation SK.

[*Extracts from the complainte “Tieus rit”*]

905 Tieus rit au main qui au soir pleure,
et tieus cuide qu’Amours labeure
pour son bien, qu’elle li court seure
et mal l’atourne;
et tieus cuide que Joie acqueure
910 pour li aidier, qu’elle demeure.
Car Fortune tout ce deveure,
quant elle tourne,
qui n’atent mie qu’il ajourne
pour tourner; qu’elle ne sejourne,
915 ains tourne, retourne, et bestorne,
tant qu’au desseure
met celui qui gist mas en l’ourne;
le seurmonté au bas retourne,
et le plus joieus mat et morne
920 fait en po d’eure.

.....

Amours, ce n’est mie raison
de me donner tristrece en don
1355 en lieu de joieus guerredon;
ains est pechiés,
quant je suis sans condicion
tous mis en ta subjection.
Or me mes a destruction
1360 et entrepiés
qui deüsses estres mes chiés,
car par toy m’est li dés changiés,
et par toy de joie essiliez
sans occoyson
1365 sui, et de ma dame eslongiés.
Mais s’auques einssi dure m’ies,
confort n’espoir de mes meschiés
ne garison.

He who laughs in the morning weeps in the evening, and he who fancies that Love labors for his benefit finds she attacks him and brings him harm, and thinks Joy is running to his aid when she hangs back. For Fortune, as she turns, consumes everything; she doesn’t wait till daybreak to turn but rather turns, turns further, turns upside down, until she raises up high the man who lies defeated in the gutter and returns down below the one who was raised up, and makes the happiest man feel laid low and miserable in no time.

Love, it is not in the least right to give me sorrow as a gift instead of a joyful reward; on the contrary, it’s wrong of you when I’ve put myself unreservedly in your power. Now you destroy me, and trample me underfoot who ought to be my head; it’s thanks to you that my dice have changed and that, for no reason, I have been robbed of joy and parted from my lady. But if you are so harsh toward me, I have no hope of consolation or cure for my misfortunes.

Et quant Esperance ne joint
 1370 a mon cuer, einçoys s'en desjoint,
 se Fol Espoir a li se joint
 n'est pas merveille,
 puis que tu fais si mal a point
 que tu m'as maté et empoint
 1375 par ton mesfait en l'angle point,
 vueille ou ne vueille.
 La n'est il bien que je recueille;
 la mon vis de lermes se meuille;
 la n'est il riens que me conseille,
 1380 ne qui me doint
 confort dou mal qui me traveille;
 la san je doulour nompareille;
 la Pytié dort; la Desirs veille,
 qui trop me point.

.....

Las! dolens! C'est ce qui esface
 en moy d'Esperance la grace;
 c'est ce qui a la mort me chace
 et fait penser
 1405 qu'ensement comme uns chiens de chace
 après sa beste fuit et chace
 et la sieut partout a la trace
 pour li tuer,
 einssi Desirs de saouler
 1410 mes fols ieus d'assés remirer
 de la belle et bonne sans per
 la douce face
 me berse et chace sans cesser
 et me cuide a la mort mener.
 1415 Mes humblement vueil endurer
 quoy qu'il me face.

Mes il n'a pas si grant pouoir
 de moy faire douleur avoir
 com j'ay bon cuer dou recevoir;
 1420 or y parra:
 se pour ce que j'ay povre espoir
 de ma douce dame veoir
 et qu'Amours m'a en nonchaloir,
 qu'il me fera?

And since Hope does not attach to my heart,
 but rather detaches from it, it's no wonder if
 Foolish Hope attaches itself there, for you
 [Love] hurt me so, and by your own
 wrongdoing you have weakened and goaded
 me and pinned me in a corner, whether I like
 it or not. There is nothing good for me there,
 my face is wet with tears, there is no
 creature to advise me or give me any
 consolation for the ill that ravages me; there
 I feel incomparable pain; there Pity sleeps
 and Desire stands vigil, goading me
 excessively.

Alas! Unhappy me! This is what effaces the
 grace of Hope in me and drives me to my
 death and makes me think that, just like a
 hunting hound chases and runs down its
 quarry and follows its every trace in order to
 kill it, in the same way Desire, sating my
 foolish eyes with gazing intently at the
 sweet face of my matchless, lovely, and
 perfect lady, hunts and pursues me
 relentlessly and means to drive me to my
 death. But I intend to endure meekly
 whatever he does to me.

But he has not so much power to cause me
 pain as I have a brave heart to receive it.
 Now we will see: because I have little hope
 of seeing my sweet lady, and love kills me
 with her indifference, what will Desire do?

1425 M'occira il? Il ne pourra,
 car ma loyauté m'aidera.
 Qu'ai je dit? Einçoys me sera
 contraire, espoir;
 car puisqu'Amours me grevera
 1430 et Fortune qui honni m'a,
 ma grant loyauté m'occirra,
 si com j'espoir.

Car mes cuers ne se pourroit feindre
 d'amer ma dame ne refraindre;
 1435 ainçoys est tousdis l'amour greindre
 qui en moy maint,
 ne riens ne la porroit estaindre;
 car quant elle me fait plus teindre,
 dementer, gemir, et complaindre,
 1440 tant plus m'enceint.
 J'ay oï recorder a maint
 que quant uns malades se plaint,
 que sa doulour fait de son plaint
 un pou remaindre.
 1445 Las! et c'est ce qui mon cuer taint,
 c'est ce qui plus griefment l'ataint,
 c'est ce qui tout mon bien estaint,
 sans joye ateindre,

pour ce que riens de ma pensee
 1450 ne scet ma dame desiree,
 seur toute creature amee
 dou cuer de mi,
 ne la tres dure destinee
 qui m'est pour lui amer donnee,
 1455 ne comment s'amour embrasee
 est tout en mi
 mon cuer qui est siens sans demi,
 ne comment je pleure et gemi
 souvent pour s'amour et fremi,
 1450 qui enflamee
 est en moy, dont je di: "Aymi!
 Occirrés vous dont vostre ami
 entre les mains son anemi,
 dame honnouree?"

Kill me? He won't be able to because my
 steadfastness will support me. What am I
 saying? Perhaps, on the contrary, it will
 bring me down; since Love and Fortune,
 who has brought disgrace on me, will harm
 me, my steadfastness will be the death of
 me, I hope.

For my heart cannot feign, nor refrain from,
 loving my lady; rather the love within me
 keeps growing and nothing can extinguish it;
 for the more Love makes me change color,
 lament, groan, and complain, the more she
 hems me in. I've heard many say that when
 a sick man complains, his suffering causes
 some aspects of his complaint to lose their
 effect. Alas, and this is what darkens my
 heart and assails it the most painfully and
 extinguishes all my well-being, without my
 ever attaining joy,

because my desired lady—beloved of my
 heart above every other creature—knows
 nothing of my thoughts, nor of the very
 harsh fate that I get for loving her, nor of
 how my love for her is on fire within my
 heart's core, which is hers entirely, nor how
 I continually weep and groan and tremble
 because of my love of her, which flames
 within me, causing me to say "Ah, me! Do
 you mean to slay your lover amid the hands
 of his enemy, esteemed lady?"

1465 C'est de Desir qui mon cuer flamme
 et point de si diverse flamme,
 qu'en monde n'a homme ne fame
 qui medecine
 y sceüst, se ce n'est pas ma dame
 1470 qui l'art, qui l'esprent, qui l'enflame
 et bruït d'amoureuse flame,
 n'elle ne fine.
 Fortune est sa dure voisine,
 et Amours l'assaut et le mine,
 1475 dont mourir cuit en brief termine
 sans autre blanme.
 Mais s'ainssi ma vie define,
 a ma dame qu'aim d'amour fine,
 les mains jointes, la chiere encline,
 1480 vueil rendre l'ame.

This comes from Desire, who inflames my heart, shooting it through with hostile flames so there is no man or woman in the world who could heal it, except my lady—and she is the one who burns it, sets it alight and makes it flame and consume away with such an amorous flame that has no end. Fortune is Desire's harsh ally, and Love attacks and undermines [my heart], so I think I will die soon, through no fault of my own. But if this is how I am to die, with hands pressed together and head bowed I wish to surrender my soul to my lady, whom I love with a pure love.

[Extracts from the narrative: the first touch, followed by exposition]

1570 Et quant elle vit mon estat,
 si en sousrist moult doucement;
 lors se traï courtoisement
 vers moy pour savoir de mon estre,
 et si me prist par la main destre
 1575 de la sienne, blanche et onnie,
 pour miulz savoir ma maladie.
 si senti mon pous et ma vaine
 qui estoit foieble, mate, et vaine.

And when [Hope] saw my condition she smiled most sweetly; then she stepped toward me courteously to inquire how I was, and took me by my right hand with her smooth white one in order to know more about my sickness. And she felt my pulse and my vein that was feeble, weak, and faint.

....

1581 Car bien pensoit, la bonne et sage,
 que du cuer me venoit la rage
 qui si griefment me demenoit
 et que d'ailleurs ne me venoit.

For the good, wise lady rightly thought that the madness that was so painfully ravaging me came from my heart, and from nowhere else.

....

1977 Lors d'une voys clere et serie
 douce, saine, en tel melodie
 commença son chant delez mi,
 1980 c'un petitet m'i endormi.

Then with a clear and peaceful voice, sweet and health-giving, to a tune like this, she began her song beside me so that I dozed off for a while.

.....

[*The chant royal* “Joie, plaisance”]

1985 Joye, plaisance, et douce nourreture,
vie d’honneur prennent maint en amer;
et plusieurs sont qui n’i ont fors pointure,
doulour, ardour, plour, tristesse, et amer.
ce dient; mais accorder
ne me puis, qu’en la sousfrance
d’amours ait nulle grevance,
car tout ce qui vient de lui
plaist a cuer d’ami.

Joy, pleasure, and sweet sustenance, a life of
honor—many find these in love; yet there
are some who find in it nothing but pricking,
aching, burning, unhappiness, and a bitter
taste, so they say: but I cannot agree that
there is any hurt in Love’s suffering, for
everything that comes from Love is pleasing
to a lover’s heart.

Car vraye Amour en cuer d’amant figure
1995 tres dous Espoir et gracieus Penser:
Espoir atrait Joie et Bonne Adventure;
Dous Penser fait Plaisance en cuer entrer.
si ne doit plus demander
cilz qui a bonne Esperance,
2000 Doulz Penser, Joye, et Plaisance;
car qui plus requiert, je di
qu’Amours l’a guerpi.

For in a lover’s heart, true Love represents
sweetest Hope and gracious Thought. Hope
brings in Joy and Felicity; and sweet
Thought introduces Pleasure into the heart.
Someone who has good Hope, Sweet
Thought, Joy and Pleasure should ask for
nothing more; if anyone does seek more, I
tell you, Love has left him.

Dont cilz qui vit de si douce pasture,
vie d’honneur puet bien et doit mener,
2005 car de tous biens a a comble mesure,
plus qu’autres cuers n’en saroit desirer;
ne d’autre merci rouver
n’a desir, cuer, ne beance
pour ce qu’il a Souffisance;
2010 ne je ne sçay nommer cy
nulle autre merci.

Anyone who lives on such sweet
nourishment can and should lead a life of
honor, for he is filled to the brim with all
good things, more than any heart would
know how to desire. And he has no desire,
or heart, or longing to ask for any other
favor, because he has Sufficiency. And I
cannot name here a single other favor [to ask
for].

Mais ceulz qui sont en tristesse, en ardire,
en plours, en plains, en doulour sans cesser,
et qui dient qu’Amours leur est si dure
2015 qu’il ne peuent sans morir plus durer,
je ne puis ymaginer
qu’il aiment sans decevance
et qu’en euls trop ne s’avance
Desirs. Pour ce sont ainssi,
2020 qu’il l’ont deservi;

But those who sorrow or burn, or are
endlessly in tears, lamentation, and grief,
and who say that Love is so harsh to them
that they can’t endure it any longer but will
die, I cannot picture to myself that they love
without deceit or that Desire does not have
too much the upper hand over them. They
are like this because they deserve to be.

qu'Amours, qui est de si noble nature
 qu'elle scet bien qui aime sans fausser,
 scet bien paier as amans leur droiture:
 c'est les loyaus de joye saouler
 2025 et d'eaus faire savourer
 ses douçours en habondance;
 et les mauvais par sentence
 sont com traîtres failli
 de sa court banni.

For Love whose nature is so noble that she
 can tell who loves without falsehood, knows
 how to pay lovers what is due to them and
 fill the upright with joy and make them
 relish her sweetnesses in abundance, while
 the wicked are condemned to be banished
 from her court like a guilty traitor.

2030 Amours, je scay sans doubance
 qu'a .c. doubles a meri
 ceuls qu'i t'ont servi.

Love, I know without a doubt that you have
 rewarded 100 times over all those who have
 served you.

.....

[Extracts from the narrative: the second and third touch, Esperance reveals who she is]

2033 Et quant elle ot son chant finé
 vers moy a son chief encliné,
 2035 en riant doucement, com celle
 que je tieng pour vierge et pucelle;
 si mist sa main dessus mon chief
 et me demanda derechief:
 Comment t'est? Que me diras tu?
 2040 Ay je ton chief bien debatue?
 Que te semble de ma chançon?

And when she had finished her song she
 bowed her head toward me, smiling sweetly
 like the one I believe to be a Virgin Maid,
 placed her hand on my head and asked me
 straight out, "How are you? What do you
 have to say to me? Have I discussed your
 concerns well? What do you think of my
 song?"

....

2094 Lors prist .i. anel en son doy,
 2095 bel, bon, chier, precieus, et riche,
 et doucement ou mien le fiche.
 Et je qui encor soumilloie—
 non pas fort, car bien entendoie
 ce qu'elle avoit chanté et dit
 2100 en rime, en musique, et en dit—
 senti la froideur de l'anel;
 et lors d'esperit pou ysnel
 me tournay au mieus que je pos
 vers li et lessay le repos
 2105 ou sa belle voys clere et saine,
 plus douce que nulle seraine,
 qui les homes scet enchanter
 par la douçor de son chanter,
 m'avoit mis.

Then she took a ring from her finger—
 beautiful, endowed with virtues, valuable
 and splendid—and sweetly places it on
 mine. And I, who was still dozing—not
 deeply, for I could perfectly hear what she
 had composed and sung with its rhyme,
 music, and text—felt the coldness of the
 ring; and then, somewhat slow-wittedly, I
 turned toward her the best I could, and left
 the state of rest into which her beautiful,
 clear and full voice—sweeter than any siren
 who knows how to bewitch men with the
 sweetness of her song—had put me.

2126 Lors parlai, si com je pouoie,
et li dis sans faire demeure:

....

2141 “Ma dame, qu’il vous vueille plaire
que je sache de vostre afaire
vostre non et vostre venue,
et comment estes cy venue.”

.....

2151 “Je suis li confors des amans
qui font les amoureux commans;
je les aide; je les conseil;
je sui de leur estroit conseil;
2155 je les deffen; je les deporté;
je les secour; je les conforte
contre Desir qui les assaut
et fait maint doulereus assaut;

...

2286 Esperance sui appelee.

Then I spoke as best I could, saying to her
without delay:

“My lady, may it please you for me to know
something about you—your name and
where you come from, and how you came
here.”

“I am the consolation of lovers who obey
Love’s commands; I help them; I counsel
them; I am their closest adviser; I defend
them; I cheer them; I come to their rescue; I
comfort them against Desire who assails
them with many a painful attacks.

I am called Hope.”

[*Esperance discourses, then sings this balladelle*]

2857 En amer a douce vie
et jolie,
qui bien la scet maintenir,
2860 car tant plaist la maladie
quant norrie
est en amoureux desir,
que l’amant fait esbaudir
et querir
2865 comment elle mouteplie.
C’est douz mauls a soustenir,
qu’esjoir
fait cuer d’ami et d’amie;

To be in love is a sweet and happy life, if
one knows how to lead it well, because the
malady’s so pleasing when it’s sustained by
amorous desire that it emboldens the lover
to seek out ways to increase it. It’s a sweet
pain to bear, which brings joy to a lover’s
and a lady’s heart;

2870 qu'amour par sa seignourie
 humelie
 l'amoureux cuer a souffrir,
 et par sa noble maistrie
 le mestrie,
 si qu'il ne puet riens sentir
 2875 que tout au goust de joïr
 par plaisir
 ne prengne, je n'en doubte mie.
 Ainssi saouls de merir
 sans merir
 2880 fait cuer d'ami et d'amie.

Si doit bien estre cherie
 et servie,
 quant elle puet assevir
 chascun qui li rueve ou prie
 2885 de s'aïe,
 sans son tresor amenrir.
 De la mort puet garantir
 et garir
 cuer qui de santé mendie;
 2890 de souffisance enrichir
 et franchir
 fait cuer d'ami et d'amie.

for I have no doubt that Love, through her
 dominion, humbles the loving heart so that it
 can suffer, and rules it by her noble mastery
 so that it cannot feel anything without
 finding in it the taste of enjoyment though
 pleasure. Thus she rewards, without their
 deserving, a lover's and a lady's heart.

So Love must be cherished and served, since
 she can help everyone who requests and
 invokes her aid without diminishing her
 treasure. She can protect and save from
 death a heart that begs for health; she fills
 with sufficiency and liberates a lover's and a
 lady's heart.