

TONUS PEREGRINUS  
The True Story – love and loss in 14th-century France

**Guillaume de Machaut: *Le Voir Dit***

“The True Story of Guillaume de Machaut & Péronnelle d’Armentières”

abridged by Antony Pitts with generous help from Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Crook  
semi-staged performance in mediaeval French and modern English by TONUS PEREGRINUS

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John Crook - Guillaume de Machaut

Joanna Forbes, soprano - Lady Hope

Rebecca Hickey, soprano - Guillemette

Kathryn Knight, alto - Péronne d’Armentières

Alexander L’Estrange, countertenor - chief messenger

Matthew Long, tenor - Sir Desire

Alexander Hickey, tenor - the king who never lies

Francis Brett, bass - Morpheus

Antony Pitts, bass/director

## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

### Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300-1377)

Seven hundred years ago a boy grew up in the Diocese of Rheims infused with the mediaeval liturgy of the Church. That boy was to become a composer ahead of his time, adorning both Rheims Cathedral and the courts of kings and nobility with sounds that are still new today. Guillaume de Machaut's music has a similar effect to the huge rose windows in his home cathedral: it stuns with intense harmonic colour, and intrigues with melodic detail and rhythmic chicanery. Machaut was also one of the finest poets of the 14th century: his musical experimentation grew from his experience of poetic form and wordplay in the most refined environments of court and cathedral.

### the road to Rheims...

Guillaume de Machaut was born, as far as we can tell, around 1300 and very probably in the little village of Machault, which is about a day's walk from the cathedral town of Reims (French spelling). We know very little of Machaut's early life, but in 1323 he became secretary to John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia and spent many stimulating years in John's service, travelling as far as Lithuania and Italy. In around 1340, Machaut returned to Rheims to take up the position of canon, along with his brother Jean.

### besieged by an admirer...

In 1359 the English attempted to lay siege to Rheims – a crucial prize in the Hundred Years' War because of its significance as France's coronation city (since the baptism of Clovis in 496). Two years after the unsuccessful siege Machaut entertained the heir to the throne and in 1364 witnessed the coronation of Charles the Fifth. But the early 1360s were exciting and fruitful for Machaut for other reasons: he began a lengthy and involved correspondence with a young female admirer, and documented their friendship in a book which he called the "true story", *Le Livre du Voir Dit*. The book contains over 9000 lines of poetry, and includes their letters, the love-poems and songs that they sent to each other. The accuracy of the narrative of events that Machaut sets down in his "true poem" – perhaps his finest work – is difficult to establish, but there is a ring of veracity in the haphazard and occasionally even contradictory sequence of recollections. The narrative in *Le Voir Dit* doesn't really come to a satisfactory ending, happy or otherwise (another sign of its being mired in reality), and Machaut simply sums up his relationship with the "All-Beautiful" by leaving both their full names entwined as an anagram in the final lines of the poem. Rather like carving lovers' names on a tree in the forest, he hopes they will still be there after a long, long time...

### my end is my beginning...

Fortunately for us as well as for his own reputation, Machaut seems to have spent the last decade of his life supervising the copying of his complete works into several lavish manuscripts. That he did so makes him by far the most well-represented composer of the 14th Century. Machaut's words and music come together in a number of different forms: the four most common are the ballade, the rondeau, the virelai and the lay. Each of them has a repetitive structure of music and verse – within which Machaut sets up the most unexpected counterpoint of sounds and ideas.

When Machaut died in 1377 he was mourned by poets and composers across Europe:

"War and love, knights and ladies,  
Priests, musicians, poets,  
All wits, all poems,  
All you with sweet voices,  
or who sing with instruments,  
and cherish the gentle art of music:  
wear mourning now, and weep; it is time.  
Machaut, the noble poet, is dead."

## PROGRAMME NOTE

### The True Story of Guillaume de Machaut & Péronnelle d'Armentières

Machaut's words and music come together most spectacularly in what is perhaps his finest work (and the ultimate 14th-century multimedia presentation): *Le Livre du Voir Dit – The Book of the True Story*. The accuracy of the narrative of events that Machaut sets down in his "true poem" is difficult to establish, but there is a ring of veracity in the haphazard and occasionally even contradictory sequence of recollections...

### ACT I – ONCE UPON A TIME...

Machaut is in his early 60s, and either lovesick or physically ill from lack of affection, when he receives a message from a young admirer called Péronne, who loves his music. This sparks a three-year romance, mostly conducted from afar through courtly poetry and song. Machaut describes his state of mind (before Péronne got in touch with him) in the three-part ballade *Ploures dames*, in which he requests "ladies to weep for your servant", and to wear black in mourning for him.

**Ballade 32: *Ploures dames***

Péronne is delighted with the songs that Machaut sends to her in return, even if they haven't been written specially for her. In the rondeau *Dame se vous n'avez aperçu* the lover attests his love and his fidelity, asking his beloved to "try him and see that it's true".

**Rondeau 13: *Dame se vous n'avez aperçu***

### ACT II – OVER THE MOON

Machaut is petrified about actually meeting Péronne, thinking that (rather like Cyrano de Bergerac) he would be a big disappointment off the written page. After all, he's seen how beautiful she is from the portrait that she sent him. At the same time Machaut describes in the next ballade *Nes que on porroit* the desire he has to see Péronne, and how it's as impossible for anyone else to understand as it is to count the stars in the sky.

**Ballade 33: *Nes que on porroit***

Machaut even considers (again like Cyrano de Bergerac) swapping identities with someone else, but with the specific object of discovering whether Péronne would be able to discern if it were actually him or not. At last they do meet... and Machaut is so overcome by her beauty and her tenderness that he is unable to speak coherently or turn his attention to anything else. He digs out an old two-part rondeau *Sans cuer dolens* to signify his sorrow in their parting.

**Rondeau 4: *Sans cuer dolens***

**ACT III – HOPE'S RANSOM**

After meeting Péronne again in church, and a further escapade which ends up with Machaut sharing a room with his beloved and her companion Guillemette, Péronne entrusts her lover – actually or symbolically – with the “key to her treasure”.

Machaut's state of mind is now as intoxicated and confused as can be, and he then embarks on an adventure into fantastical/allegorical realms where he is kidnapped on the way home by Lady Hope. This, of course, is really just an excuse for a song – in honour of Hope – the *Lay de bonne esperance*.

**Lai 13: 'Le Lay de bonne esperance' *Longuement me sui tenus***

Unlike the other music in *Le Voir Dit*, this “Lay of Hope” is purely monodic (in just one part) but elsewhere in the story it becomes clear that Péronne is also used to treating polyphonic songs simply as melodies, i.e. not bothering about the lower parts.

**ACT IV – YOUR NUMBER'S UP**

Back in the real world, Péronne is particularly struck when she receives the rondeau *Dix et sept, cinq* in which Machaut encodes the letters of her name (17=R, 5=E, 13=N, 14=O, 15=P).

**Rondeau 17: *Dix et sept, cinq***

It's at this point that things start to go wrong: Machaut has a dream in which the clothes in Péronne's portrait change colour from blue to green, which leads him to conclude that she's no longer faithful. Machaut discusses this crisis with a king (no doubt modelled on one of the kings he knew well) who tells him to wake up! Péronne also has a dream about Machaut of a much less sinister kind, but it seems that something has disturbed the balance of their relationship.

**Rondeau 18: *Puis qu'en oubli***

Machaut sends her one of his most touching rondeaux *Puis qu'en oubli*, but it's a melody that Péronne knows, so she's not impressed. Machaut, however, has added two new lower parts of which he's very proud. Machaut also mentions his dream and its implications in his letter; Péronne is deeply shocked and sends back an accusatory torrent of emotional blackmail designed to leave Machaut in no doubt as to who is in the wrong.

**ACT V – RHAPSODY IN GREEN**

In the middle of all this, we find one of Machaut's most striking (and multi-texted) ballades *Quant Theseus / Ne quier veoir* with the brilliantly catchy refrain: “I see enough when I see my lady”.

**Ballade 34: *Quant Theseus / Ne quier veoir***

But Machaut has also written a ballade – *Se pour ce muir* – about the lady who has abandoned the blue of fidelity for the green of novelty, and Péronne comes across these words and realizes that he must be referring to her.

**Ballade 36: *Se pour ce muir***

Péronne writes a tender rebuke this time, reminding him that he, and no other, has her “key”, and she sends a rondeau with Machaut's own Christian name encoded (5=E, 7=G, 12=M, 1=A, 9=I, 11=L, 20=U).

The narrative in *Le Voir Dit* doesn't really come to a satisfactory ending, happy or otherwise (another sign of its being mired in reality), and Machaut simply sums up his relationship with the “All-Beautiful” by leaving both their full names entwined as an anagram in the final lines of the poem. Rather like carving lovers' names on a tree in the forest, he hopes they will still be there after a long, long time...

**Ballade 31: *De toute flours***

## ENSEMBLE BIOGRAPHY

TONUS PEREGRINUS is one of the most exciting young ensembles in Britain, with major successes in both early music and new music, including the prestigious Cannes Classical Award for the ensemble's debut release of Arvo Pärt's *Passio*, and a shortlisted nomination for the first-ever BBC Music Magazine Awards in 2006 for part of a series of milestones of early Western music, *Sacred Music from Notre-Dame Cathedral*. Critical acclaim in the BBC Music Magazine, The Telegraph, and The Gramophone speaks for itself: "utterly spellbinding", "utterly beguiling", "captivating excitement", "gloriously sung by this superb choir", as does the selection first of *Passio*, and then of *Seven Letters and other sacred choral music* (Hyperion CDA67507) as Editor's Choice in The Gramophone. TONUS PEREGRINUS was founded while director Antony Pitts was studying under Dr Edward Higginbottom at New College, Oxford. The name *tonus peregrinus* is taken from an ancient plainchant psalm tone dating back to Jewish liturgical sources linked to the Passover, and hence the Last Supper. This chant has a different starting-note in each half, so was called the "wandering tone", and also gained the nickname of *tonus novissimus*, the "newest tone". TONUS PEREGRINUS combines these two characteristics in a repertoire that ranges far and wide from the end of the Dark Ages to scores fresh from the printer, and has an interpretative approach that is both authentic and highly original. TONUS PEREGRINUS has a history of performing at unusual occasions, and was honoured to be asked to sing at the memorial for former audience member Alexander Litvinenko. The ensemble's *a cappella* version of Tears for Fears's *Mad World* can be found on iTunes, and scores of Antony Pitts's music are available from [www.tonusperegrinus.co.uk](http://www.tonusperegrinus.co.uk).

## ENSEMBLE DISCOGRAPHY

TONUS PEREGRINUS Antony Pitts: *Alpha and Omega* (HYPERION CDA67668)  
a cycle of eight motets for one to eight voices and the choral coda to the oratorio *Jerusalem-Yerushalayim*

TONUS PEREGRINUS *The Naxos Book of Carols* (NAXOS 8.557330)  
C8<sup>th</sup>-C21<sup>st</sup> - 24 carols old and new - an Advent Calendar in sound

TONUS PEREGRINUS Léonin, Pérotin - *Sacred Music from Notre-Dame Cathedral* (NAXOS 8.557340)  
C9<sup>th</sup>-C13<sup>th</sup> - a hauntingly beautiful sequence of organum from the birth of polyphony to the first music in four parts

TONUS PEREGRINUS *Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion* (NAXOS 8.557337)  
C13<sup>th</sup> - a mediaeval musical (or the first opera) by Adam de la Halle 'the Hunchback'

TONUS PEREGRINUS *The Mass of Tournai* (NAXOS 8.555861)  
C14<sup>th</sup> - the earliest surviving complete polyphonic settings of the Mass and of the Passion

TONUS PEREGRINUS *Sweet Harmony* - John Dunstable (NAXOS 8.557341)  
C15<sup>th</sup> - mass movements & motets by the musical godfather of the Renaissance, Dunstable (the composer formerly known as Dunstable)

TONUS PEREGRINUS *Hymns and Songs of the Church* (NAXOS 8.557681)  
C17<sup>th</sup>, C20<sup>th</sup>/C21<sup>st</sup> - the complete Orlando Gibbons melodies (1623), with new realizations and original settings by L'Estrange & Pitts

TONUS PEREGRINUS Arvo Pärt: *Passio* (NAXOS 8.555860)  
C20<sup>th</sup> - Arvo Pärt's iconic *St John Passion* 'Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi secundum Joannem'

TONUS PEREGRINUS *Mad World* (CD.TP/MWEP)  
C20<sup>th</sup>/C21<sup>st</sup> - *a cappella* version of Tears for Fears hit *Mad World* - a CD.TP exclusive on iTunes

TONUS PEREGRINUS *Seven Letters and other sacred choral music* by Antony Pitts (HYPERION CDA67507)  
a sequence of unaccompanied choral music inspired by the sacred number seven

## COMPLETE TEXTS OF MACHAUT'S SONGS FROM *LE VOIR DIT*

### **Plourez dames plourez vostre servant**

Qui ay toudis mis mon cuer et mentente  
Corps et desir et penser en servant  
L'onneur de vous que dieus gart et augmente  
Vestez vous de noir pour my  
Car j'ay cuer teint et viaire pali  
Et si me voy de mort en aventure  
*Se dieus et vous ne me prenez en cure.*

Mon cuer vous lais et met en vo commant  
Et l'ame a dieu dévotement presente  
Et voist ou doit aler le remenant  
La char aus vers car c'est leur droite rente  
Et l'avoit soit departi  
Aus povres gens hélas en ce parti  
En lit de mort sui a desconfiture  
*Se dieus et vous ne me prenez en cure*

Mais certains sui qu'en vous de bien a tant  
Que dou péril ou je sui sans attente  
Me getterez se de cuer en plourant  
Priez a dieu qu'a moy garir s'assente  
Et pour ce je vous depri  
Qu'a dieu vueilliez faire pour moy depri  
Ou paier creing le treu de nature  
*Se dieus et vous ne me prenez en cure*

### **Dame se vous n'avez aperceu**

*Que je vous aim de cuer sans decevoir  
Essaiez le si le sares de voir*  
Vo grant biauté m'avoit trop deceu  
Et vo douceur qui trop me font dolour  
*Dame se vous n'avez aperceu  
Que je vous aim de cuer sans decevoir*  
Car mon cuer ont si tres fort esmeu  
A vous amer que ne puis concevoir  
Que jamais bien doie ne joie avoir  
*Dame se vous n'avez aperceu  
Que je vous aim de cuer sans decevoir  
Essaiez le si le sares de voir*

### **Nes que on porroit les estoilles nombrer**

Quant on les voit luire plus clerement  
Et les gouttes de pluie et de la mer  
Et le greve seur quoy elle s'estent  
Et compasser le tour dou firmament  
Ne porroit on penser ne concevoir  
*Le grant désir que j'ay de vous véoir.*

Et si ne puis par devers vous aler  
Pour fortune qui le wet et deffent  
Dont maint souspir me couvient estrangler  
Quant a vous pense et je sui entre gent  
Et quant je sui par moy secrètement  
Adont me fait tous meschies recevoir  
*Le grant désir que j'ay de vous véoir.*

Car il me fait complandre et dolouser  
Et regretter vostre viaire gent  
Et vo bonté souverainne et sans per  
Et la tres grant douceur qui en descent  
Einsi me fait languir piteusement  
Mon cuer esprent et esteint mon espoir  
*Le grant désir que j'ay de vous véoir.*

### **Weep ladies, weep for your servant,**

Who has every day put my heart and soul,  
Body and mind and desire into serving  
Your honour – may God preserve and increase it!  
Dress in black for me  
Because my heart is torn, my face is pale,  
And I reckon I'm in danger of dying  
*If God and you will not take care of me.*

I leave you my heart – under your command –  
And devoutly I present my soul to God,  
And the rest will go where it must,  
The flesh to the worms, as is their due,  
And my possessions handed out  
To the poor – alas, leaving like this,  
It is agony on my deathbed  
*If God and you will not take care of me.*

But I'm sure you have enough goodness in you  
To rescue me from the hopeless danger I'm in  
If weeping, you pray from the heart  
That God will consent to my cure,  
And for this I implore you  
That you will plead with God for my sake,  
Or I'll go the way of all Nature,  
*If God and you will not take care of me.*

### **Lady, in case you haven't noticed**

*That I love you from the heart unfeignedly,  
Try me and you'll see it's true.*  
Your great beauty would have undone me,  
And your sweetness too, which gives me such grief  
*Lady, in case you haven't noticed  
That I love you from the heart unfeignedly,*  
For my heart has been so moved  
With love for you that I cannot conceive  
Ever finding comfort or joy.  
*Lady, in case you haven't noticed  
That I love you from the heart unfeignedly,  
Try me and you'll see it's true.*

### **Just as no-one can number the stars**

Even when they're shining at their brightest,  
Or every raindrop and drop in the ocean,  
Or the grains of sand which lie beneath,  
Or map the heavens above,  
So no-one can begin to imagine  
*My overwhelming desire to see you.*

And if I cannot get to you  
Because of the tyranny of Fortune's ways  
Then I must extinguish my sighing  
When I'm in company and thinking of you,  
And when I'm by myself in secret,  
It gives me all kinds of trouble –  
*My overwhelming desire to see you.*

As it gives me cause for complaint and sorrow  
And regret for your noble form,  
And your sovereign beauty without peer,  
And the very great sweetness which flows down from it,  
So it makes me to languish pitifully,  
My heart to burn and my hope to disappear,  
*My overwhelming desire to see you.*

*Sans cuer dolens de vous departiray  
Et sans avoir joie jusqu'au retour.  
Puis que mon corps dou vostre a partiray  
Sans cuer dolens de vous departiray  
Mais je ne scay de quelle part yray  
Pour ce que pleins de douleur et de plour  
Sans cuer dolens de vous departiray  
Et sans avoir joie jusqu'au retour.*

*Without heart, and sorrowing I go from your presence,  
Joyless until my return,  
Because my person must part from yours,  
Without heart, and sorrowing I go from your presence,  
But I don't know where to go,  
Because I'm so full of sadness and weeping,  
Without heart, and sorrowing I go from your presence,  
Joyless until my return.*

### Lay de Bonne Esperance

1. Longuement me sui tenus De faire lais Car d'amours estoie nus Mais desormais Feray chans et virelais G'y sui tenus Qu'en amours me sui rendus A tous iours mais Se'un petit ay este mus Je n'en puis mais Car pris sui et retenus Et au cuer trais Tout en un lieu de deux trais D'ungs yeus fendus Vairs poingnans ses et agus Rians et gais
2. Car ma dame que Dieus gart Pour un dous riant regart D'ardant désir fist un dart Et un d'esperance Mais mort m'eust sans doubtaunce Désirs et sans deffiance S'espoirs ou j'ay ma fiance Ne fust de ma part Car quant je senti l'espert Dou resgart qui mon cuer art Ne perdi a tiers na quart Scens et contenance Mais tout maniere et poissance Lors me fist penre plaissance En ma jolie souffrance Espoirs par son art
3. Mais ce durement m'esmaie Que ne say Se ceste amoureuse plaie Qu'au cuer ay Vient d'amours ou de cuer vray Car dous regards maint cuer plaie Qu'ailleurs dame amy a gay S'en murray S'ainsi m'est mais d'amour vraie L'ameray Ne voloir que m'en retraie Je n'aray Pour dolour que mes cuers traie Eins seray Vrais et de cuer serviray Ma dame plaisant et gaie Et quant mes jours fineray Sans delay Mon cuer que s'amour deplaie Li lai ray
4. Ne savioie Quant fui pris Se j'estoie Mors ou vis N'entendoie Gieu ne ris Eins sambloie Homs ravis Ne queroie Paradis N'autre joie N'autre pris Ne sentoie Riens tandis Que veioie Son cler vis Qui m'a de s'amour esprits Toute voie Je repris En la coie Mon avis A qui proie Com sougis Qu'elle moie Car envis Garioie S'escondis Me trouvoie A toudis Faut que soie Ses amis Or soit moie Ne devis Plus si seroie assevis
5. Ne say se je dor ou veil Quant son riant oueil Son gent corps qui n'a pareil Et son dous accueil Voy et son cointe appareil Simple et sans orgueil Et son vis blanc et vermeil Plus que fleur en brueil A qui d'amer me conseil Dont maint plaisant mal accueil Son chief d'or samble au soleil Et sa bel entueil Pour ce avoir autre conseil Ja ne quier ne weil Einsois dou tout m'apareil A faire son weil Et a li servir m'esveil Qu'en li tel bien cueil Dont je me seingne et merveil Car tous vices en despueil
6. Ne fait il bon tel dame amer Et désirer Et honnourer Ou homs trouver Ne puet amer Fors douceur fi ne a savourer Tres noble destinée Ha cils qui si puet assener Sans dessevrer Qu'elle na per Eins est nomper Et sans doubter On ne puet milleur resgarder Ne si tres belle née Dont doy je bien s'onneur garder Et sans cesser Ymaginer A li porter Foy sans fausser Et la tout mon scens appliquer Sans villeinne pensée Mais mieus vorroie estre outre mer Sans retourner Qu'entroublir Son dous vis cler Ne que penser Chose qui peust empirer Sa bonne renommée
7. Certes j'ay si grant deport Quant je voy son noble port Et quant sans villain rapport J'oy que chascuns son effort Fait de li prisier tres fort Dessus toute créature Que je n'ay pensée obscure Tristesse mal ne pointure Ne chose qui me soit dure Eins ay une envoiseure Si tres douce et si tres pure Qu'elle vaut merci au fort Qu'en li veoir me deport En li servir me confort En li amer pren confort Et l'esperoir qui me fait fort Contre désir qui me mort Mais riens ne pris sa morsure Et s'on dit qu'elle m'est dure Ou qu'elle na de moy cure Ne men chaut qu'en sa figure Preng si douce norriture Que ne doubte rien que j'endure Mal d'amour ne desconfort
8. Et quant je puis vivre ainsi Liement et sans sousci Trop grant folour Seroit de rouver s'amour Ou sa merci Car je n'ay pas desservi Si grant honneur Et si n'en sui par nul tour Dignes aussi Tost m'aroit dit va de cy Hélas se ce avoie oy De sa doucour Bien seroit la joie plour Dou cuer de my Car il partiroit parmy Pour ce demour En souffrance et en cremour Subjes a li
9. La sont mis tuit mi plaisir La m'ottroy La porter foy Weil bonnement La weil amouement Vivre et morir La me tyr La my désir Sont la m'employ La maint tous li cuers de moy Entierement Doucement Et humblement Pour li servir D'amer ne me puis tenir Quant je voy Le meintieng coy De son corps gent A qui je sui ligenment Sans retollir Sans partir Sans repentir Faire le doy Car cent mille biens recoy Contre un tourment Autrement Certainnement N'ay a souffrir
10. Si n'est vie Si jolie Com de désirer amie En espoir Qui chastie Et maistrie Desir si qu'il n'ait maistrie Ne pooir Qu'il detrie Vie lie Quant espoirs ne lamolie Pour ce avoir Quoy qu'on die Sans partie Weil d'Espoir la compaignie Main et soir
11. Car je fusse lonc temps a mors S'il ne fust a martyre Par l'ueil qui trahi en mon corps De désir une vire Qui ja n'en sera traite hors Se m'amour ne l'en tire Ou bons espoirs qui ma des lors Visete com dous mire Et conforte mes desconfors Doucement dieus li mire C'est mes chastiaus c'est mes ressors C'est ce qui estaint mire C'est li avoires c'est li trésors Dont homs ne puet mesdire C'est de ma vie li drois pors C'est ma joie a droit dire Tous li argens et tous li ors De France et de l'empire Ne vaut pas l'un de ses confors Ou Desespoirs s'aire
12. Et quant ad ce sui venus Qu'amis suis vrais Et d'esperoir bien pourvus Un joli fais Gracieus et plein de pais M'est accrés Qui ne sera mis ensus De mi jamais Car se j'amoie assez plus Que je ne fais Et se eusse plus que nuls Pris en tous fais Si suis je norris refais Et pourvés Largement et bien péus De ses biens fais

### The Lay of Good Hope

1. For a long time I've held back From writing lays, Because I've been bereft of love, But from now on I'll write songs and virelays, I'll keep to this, Having surrendered myself to Love Everyday from now on. If I've been rather quiet, I can't be now, Because I've been taken and am being held prisoner, And pierced through the heart With two shots in one spot By a pair of eyes, Sparkling, piercing, charming and sharp, Laughing and gay.
2. For my lady - may God protect her! - Through one sweet smiling look Has sent a dart of ardent Desire And one of Hope, But no doubt Desire Would have killed me without warning If Hope whom I trust Had not been on my side. Because when I felt the glow Of the look which burns my heart, I lost not a third or fourth Of sense and countenance, But everything, manners and strength! Then I was made to take pleasure In my happy suffering By skilful Hope.
3. But my depression is such, That I don't know If this wound of love Which is in my heart Comes from Love or from a true heart, Because a sweet look wounds many hearts When the lady has pleasure in a lover elsewhere, And I will die If this should be so, but with a true love I will love her. Even if I wanted to retreat I have no power Because of the sorrow that strikes my heart, But I will be True, and will serve with my heart My lady pleasing and gay, And when I come to the end of my days, Without delay I'll leave her my heart, wounded by love.
4. I didn't know When I was taken If I was Dead or alive, Neither did I hear Game or laughter, But I seemed Like a man in seizure, I did not look for Paradise Or any other joy, Or other reward, Nor did I feel Anything while I looked on That bright face of hers, Which ignited my love for her. All the same I returned To my senses In her presence, With her I pleaded Like a subject That she'd hear me, For I'd have no chance Of being healed If ever She refused me, Forever I must be Her friend; Now let her be mine! I'll say No more and be satisfied.
5. I don't know if I'm asleep or awake When her smiling eye, Her noble body (there's none like it), And her sweet welcome I see, her cute look too, Simple without showing off, And her face, paler yet rosier Than a leaf in the woods, Which urges me to love, From which I receive many pleasurable pains. Her head is golden like the sun, And her forehead so pretty, Because of this there's no other To seek, Rather I prepare myself To do her bidding And to serve her well, From her I receive such good, That it amazes me How I am able to put away all wickedness!
6. Is it not a good thing to love such a lady, And to desire, And to honour her Where men find No bitterness, Only a refined sweetness to enjoy? It is a very noble destiny There for the man who can reach it Without losing it, For she has no peer, Is peerless indeed, And doubtless One cannot find better, None so well-born as her. And so I ought to guard her honour well And without ceasing Determine To bear her Faith without pretence, And to devote to her all my thoughts Without one evil one, But I would rather be across the ocean And not return Than forget Her sweet shining face, Or to think Of anything which might tarnish Her good name.
7. Certainly I take such great pleasure When I see her noble carriage, And when without any word of villainy, I hear that everyone tries their best To prize her high above All other creatures, That I have not one dark thought, No sadness, evil, or pain, Nothing is too hard for me, Instead I have a happiness So very sweet, so very pure That it deserves the greatest thanks. Seeing her lifts me up, Serving her comforts me, In loving her I take comfort And Hope which makes me strong Against Desire, who stings me But his bite is nothing to me, And if people say she's tough on me Or that she doesn't care for me, It doesn't affect me because her figure Offers me such sweet nourishment That I do not despair when I suffer Either lovesickness or trouble.
8. And since I can live like this So happily and without care, It would be such great foolishness To ask for her love Or good favour, For I do not deserve So great an honour, And am not in the least bit Worthy. If she told me to go, Alas, if I'd heard that From her sweet mouth, How my joy would become tears In my heart Because it would break in two, So still In fear and trembling, I am in subjection to her.
9. In her are all my pleasures, To her I give all of myself, To her I will be true, And that gladly, For her I will all lovingly Live and die, To her I am drawn, It is her I desire, With her I busy myself, With her is all of my heart, Entirely, Sweetly, And humbly I serve her. I cannot stop myself from loving When I see The way she holds herself With her noble body, Whose liege I am, Without turning back, Without taking leave, Without repentance - This I must, Because I receive a hundred thousand benefits For each torment - Otherwise, Certainly Nothing can make me suffer.
10. There's no life So delightful As being in a state of desire for a beloved, Living in Hope, Who curtails And masters Desire so that he no longer has either mastery Or power. For he destroys The good life When not weakened by Hope, This is it, Whatever they say, Without ever leaving I want to be in the company of Hope, Morning and evening.
11. Because I would have died a long time ago Had Hope not been at my side in my suffering When through my eye my whole person was struck By the arrow of Desire, Which can never be pulled out, If my love does not remove it, Or good Hope, who tends to visit me With her sweet medicine, And comforts me in my distress With tenderness - May God reward her! She is my castle, she's my refuge, She's the one who puts out my raging, She's the having, she's the holding That cannot be spoken ill of, She's my life's true haven, She's my joy, to tell the truth, All the silver and all the gold Of France and the empire Are not worth one of her comforts When Despair is on the attack.
12. And when I got round to being A true lover Overflowing with Hope, A delightful thing, Graciously, and so peacefully Happened to me, Which can never be Taken away from me. And if I had to cope With even more than I do, And if I was, more than any other, Bound at every move, Yet I would be nourished, refreshed, And supplied, And would benefit so very much From all her good works.

### *Dix et sept, cinq, trese, quatorse et quinze*

*M'a doucement de bien amer espr  
Pris a en moy une amoureuse pris  
Dix et sept, cinq, trese, quatorse et quinze  
Pour sa bonté que chascuns loe et prise  
Et sa biauté qui sur toutes ont pris  
Dix et sept, cinq, trese, quatorse et quinze  
M'a doucement de bien amer espr*

### *Puis qu'en oubli sui de vous dous amis*

*Vie amoureuse et joie a dieu comment  
Mar vi le jour que m'amour en vous mis  
Puis qu'en oubli sui de vous dous ami  
Mais ce tenray que je vous ay promis  
C'est que jamais n'aray nul autre amant  
Puis qu'en oubli sui de vous dous amis  
Vie amoureu se et joie a dieu comment.*

### *Seventeen, five, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen*

*With a wonderful love has sweetly aroused me,  
Has captured me in a loving embrace.  
Seventeen, five, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen  
For her virtue which everyone commends and praises,  
And her beauty which they rate above all others.  
Seventeen, five, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen  
With a wonderful love has sweetly aroused me.*

### *Since you have forgotten me, sweet friend,*

*I say adieu to joy and the life of a lover,  
Terrible was the day I fell in love with you,  
Since you have forgotten me, sweet friend,  
But what I promised you will still hold true,  
That is, I shall never have another lover.  
Since you have forgotten me, sweet friend,  
I say adieu to joy and the life of a lover.*

1a. **Quant Théséus Hercules et Jason**  
Cercherent tout et terre et mer parfonde  
Pour accroistre leur pris et leur renom  
Et pour veoir bien tout l'estat dou monde  
Moult furent dignes d'onour  
Mais quant je voy de biauté l'umble flour  
Assevis sui de tout si que par m'ame  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

1b. **Ne quier veoir la biauté d'Absalom**  
Ne de Ulysse le scens et la faconde  
Ne esprouver la force de Sanson  
Ne regarder que Dalida le tonde  
Ne cure n'ay par nul tour  
Des yeus Argus ne de joie gringnour  
Car pour plaisance et sans aide d'ame  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

2a. Quar en veant sa biauté sa facon  
Et son maintieng qui de douceur seuronde  
Je y preing asses bien pour devenir bon  
Car le grant bien de li en moy redonde  
Par gra ce de fine amour  
Qui me contraint a hair deshonour  
Et tout vice si puis dire sans blâme:  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

2b. De l'ymage que fist Pymalyon  
Elle n'avoit pareille ne seconde  
Mais la belle qui m'a en sa prison  
Cent mille fois est plus belle et plus monde  
C'est ungs drois flungs de doucour  
Qui puet et scet garir toute dolour  
Dont cils a tort qui de dire me blame  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

3a. Veoir ne quier la dorée toison  
Ne les indes ne de rouge mer londe  
N'aus infernaus penre guerre ou tenson  
Pour eslongier le regart de la blonde  
Dont me vient joie et baudour  
Et dous penser si tieng pour le millour  
Que a tout conter et bien penser a drame:  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

3b. Si ne me chaut dou scens de Salemon  
Ne que Phebus en termine ou responde  
Ne que venus s'en mesle ne mennon  
Que Jupiter fist muer en aronde  
Car je di quant je l'a our  
Aim et désir ser et criem et honnour  
Seur toute rien et que s'amour m'enflame  
*Je voy assez puis que je voy ma dame.*

**Se pour ce muir qu'amours ay bien servi**  
Y fait mauvais servir si fait signour  
Car je n'ai pas mort d'amours desservi  
Pour bien amer de tres loyal amour  
Mais je croy bien que fine sont mi jour  
Quant je congnoy et voy tout en appert  
*Qu'en lieu de bleu dame vous vestez vert.*

Hélas dame je vous ay tant chieri  
En désirant de mercy la doucour  
Que je n'ay mais scens ne pooir en my  
Tant m'ont mine mi souspir et mi plour  
Et m'esperance est morte sans retour  
Quant souvenirs me moustre a descouvert:  
*Qu'en lieu de bleu dame vous vestez vert.*

Pour ce maudi les yeus dont je vous vi  
L'eure le jour et le tres cointe atour  
Et la biauté qui ont mon cuer ravi  
Et le plaisir enyvre de folour  
Le doulz regart qui mi mist en erreur  
Et loiaute qui sueffre et a souffert:  
*Qu'en lieu de bleu dame vous vestez vert.*

1a. **When Theseus, Hercules, and Jason**  
Crossed the whole earth and the deep ocean  
To increase their worth and renown  
And see the state of the whole wide world,  
Surely they were most worthy of honour,  
But for me, when I see beauty's humble flower,  
I'm entirely satisfied, by my soul:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

1b. **I don't need to see Absalom's beauty**  
Nor the skill and prowess of Ulysses,  
Nor do I need to test Samson's strength,  
Nor watch Delilah cut his hair,  
I don't give a passing thought  
To the eyes of Argus or any greater joy,  
Because for real, unalloyed pleasure:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

2a. For in looking on her beauty, her demeanour,  
And her manner, surrounded with sweetness,  
I take enough goodness to become good myself,  
For her great virtue rubs off on me  
By the grace of purest love,  
Which charges me to abhor dishonour  
And every vice, so I can say, by my soul:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

2b. The statue which Pygmalion made  
Had no equal, and nothing else came close,  
But that beauty who has me in her prison  
Is a hundred thousand times more beautiful and pure.  
She's a true fountain of sweetness  
Who can and knows how to heal all sadness,  
So you're wrong if you blame me for saying:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

3a. I don't need to see the golden fleece,  
Nor the Indies, nor the waves of the Red Sea,  
Nor take my conflict to the infernal regions,  
To put at a distance the look of the blonde lady  
From whom joy and boldness come to me,  
And every sweet thought, when in fact it's better  
To reckon all else but a trifle:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

3b. I'm not interested in the wisdom of Solomon,  
Nor how Phebus dies or reappears,  
Nor how Venus interferes, nor how Menon  
Was changed into a swallow by Jupiter,  
Because I say of the one I adore,  
Love and desire, serve and respect and honour  
Above all others, who inflames me with love:  
*I see enough when I see my lady.*

**If I die from serving Love well,**  
Then it's no good to serve such a lord,  
Because I don't deserve death from Love -  
For loving her with a most loyal affection,  
But I see well my days are numbered  
When I notice and all-too-clearly perceive that  
*Instead of blue, lady, you are wearing green.*

Alas, lady, I've cherished you so  
In desiring the sweetness of your mercy,  
That I no longer have either sense or power in me,  
So greatly have my sighs and tears deflated me,  
And my hope is dead and gone,  
Because Memory makes it clear to me:  
*Instead of blue, lady, you are wearing green.*

For this I curse the eyes with which I saw you,  
The hour, the day, the utterly enticing display  
And the beauty which ravished my heart,  
And the pleasure drunk with madness,  
And so I curse Fortune and her deceptive turns  
And Loyalty too, who suffers and has suffered:  
*Instead of blue, lady, you are wearing green.*

addendum (not from *Le Voir Dit*):

**De toutes flours n'avoit et de tous fruis**

En mon vergier fors une seule rose  
Gastes estoit li seurplus et destruis  
Par Fortune qui durement s'oppose  
Contre ceste douce flour  
Pour amahir sa colour et s'odour  
Mais se cueillir la voy ou trebuchier  
*Autre apres li jamais avoir ne quier.*

Mais vraiment ymaginer ne puis  
Que la vertu ou ma rose est enclose  
Viengne par toy et par tes faus conduis  
Ains est drois dons natureus si suppose  
Que tu n'avras ja vigour  
De amanrir son pris et sa valour  
Lay la moy donc qu'ailleurs n'en mon vergier:  
*Autre apres li jamais avoir ne quier.*

He! Fortune qui es gouffres et puis  
Pour engloutir tout homme qui croire ose  
Ta fausse loy ou riens de biens ne truis  
Ne de seur trop est decevans chose  
Ton ris ta joie t'onnour  
Ne sont que plour tristesse et deshonnour  
Se ty faus tour font ma rose sechier:  
*Autre apres li jamais avoir ne quier.*