Ci commence Remede de Fortune

1

Illustrations from Machaut MS C (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Département des manuscrits, MS fr. 1586), ff. 23, 26, 28v, 30v, 35, 36v, 38, 38v, 45v, 47v, 49, 51, 52, 55, 56v, and 58. Used by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France; all rights reserved.
“Human understanding,” explains our narrator, the Lover, “is able to grasp whatever one wishes and can comprehend everything one sets before it: arms, love, any other art or letter.” He begins to tell the story of the lessons he was taught when a young man, about love, hope, desire, and happiness.

Ballade: Esperance qui m’asseure

Esperance qui m’asseure,
Joie sans per, vie a mon sueil,
Dous penser, sade norriture,
Tres bon eur, plaisant accueil,
Quant Amours ma tant enrichi
Que j’aim dame, s’aten merci.

Et se cest atente m’est dure
En desirant, pas ne m’en dueil,
Car le gré de ma dame pure
Et d’Amours tous jours faire sueil.
Et s’a guerredon sans pareil,
Ce m’est vis, puis qu’il est ainsi
Que j’aim dame, s’aten merci.

Car Souvenirs en moy figure
Sa fine biauté sans orgueil,
Sa bonté, sa noble figure,
Son gent mainteing, son bel accueil,
Et comment si dous riant oueil
Par leur attrait m’ont mené, si
Que j’aim dame, s’aten merci.

Hope which reassures me,
joy without peer, a life to my liking,
sweet thought, pleasing sustenance,
great happiness, pleasant welcome,
and many other great good things I receive,
such riches has Love bestowed on me,
for I love a lady and reward awaits.

And though this waiting is hard for me
because I desire, I don’t complain,
for to do the will of my faultless lady
and of Love is always my wish,
and it is a recompense without equal,
in my opinion, that so it is
that I love a lady and reward awaits.

For Memory depicts in my mind’s eye
her perfect beauty without pride,
hers goodness, her noble mien,
hers gentle bearing, her fair welcome,
and reminds me how her sweet laughing eyes
attracted me and drew me in, so
that I love a lady and reward awaits.

The Lover relates how he first came to fall in love. He was young and inexperienced, while his Lady was perfection, “a sovereign flower above all human creatures,” a model of beauty, wisdom, and comportment. He kept his feelings hidden, but learned to express his despair and exaltation through poetry and song, composing “chansons and lais, ballades, rondeaux, virelais, and songs according to my feelings … And because Sweet Thought was enclosed within my heart, with Memory and Good Hope and Loyalty, in whom I have placed all my trust, I composed this piece which is called a lai.”

Lai: Qui n’aroit autre deport

Qui n’aroit autre deport
En amer
Fors doux Penser
Et Souvenir
Aveuc l’Espoir de joir,
S’aroit il fort,
Se le port
D’autre confort
Voloit rouver ;
Quar pour .i. cuer saouler
Et soustenir
Plus querir
Ne doit merir
Qui aime fort.
Encor y a maint ressort :
Remember,
Ymaginer
En doux plaisir
Sa dame veoir, oyr,
Son gentil port,
Le recort
Dou bien qui sort
De son parler
Et de son douls regarder,
Dont l’entrouvrir
Pueth garir
Et garantir
Amant de mort.

I
He who has no other pleasure
in love
but Sweet Thought
and Memory,
with the Hope of satisfaction,
would be wrong
if he tried to seek
the refuge
of further comfort;
for he who loves deeply
must not seek
further reward
to satisfy
and sustain his heart.
Still, there remain many consolations:
for memory,
to imagine
with sweet pleasure
seeing and hearing his lady,
her noble bearing,
the recollection
of the good that emanates
from her words
and her sweet look,
whose glance
can heal
and protect
a lover from death.
Comment l'amant fait un lay de son sentiment
How the Lover composes a lai about his feelings

II
Et qui vorroit plus souhaitier—
Je n'os cuidier
Si fol cuidier
Que citz aime de cuer entier
Qui de tels biens n'a souffissanche.
Quar qui plus quiet, il vuet trichier,
S'Amours tant chier
L'a que ficher
Deigne par l'ool de son archier
En son cuer d'eaus la congoissanche.
Car on ne les puet espriser
Ne trop prisier,
Quant de legier
Pueent de tous maulz alegier
Et faire par leur grant poissanche
Un cuer navré sain et legier,
Sans nul dangier,
Et eslongier
De mal, et de joie aprovuchier,
Seulement de leur remembranche.

And should anyone want more—
I dare not conceive of
such a foolish notion
that this man loves with his whole heart
if he is not satisfied with such benefits!
For he who seeks more wants to cheat,
even though Love holds him
so dear that she deigned
to shoot knowledge of these things with her arrow
through his eye into his heart.
For one cannot value
nor esteem them too much,
since with ease
they can alleviate all pains
and through their great power
make a wounded heart hale and healthy,
without constraint,
and banish
grief, and draw joy near,
merely through remembering them.

V
Et se par Desire recueil
Aucun grief, pas ne m'en dueill,
Quar son tres doux riant oeil
Tout adouchist
Le grief qui de Desir ist;
Si me plaist et abelist
Tant que au porter me delit
Plus que ne sueil,
Pour sa beaute sans orgueuil
Qui toutes passe, a mon vueul,
Et pour son tres Bel Accueil
Qui toudsis rit;
Si qu'en plaisance norrist
Mon cuer et tant m'enrichist
Qu'einsi vivre me sousfist,
Ne plus ne vueul.

And if, on account of Desire, I experience
any sorrow, I don't complain,
for her sweet laughing eye
completely soothes
the pain that issues from Desire;
so it pleases and delights me,
such that I enjoy bearing it
more than I used to,
On account of her beauty without pride
(which surpasses all others, to my mind)
and because of her most Fair Welcome
which is ever smiling;
so that it nourishes my heart
with pleasure and so enriches me
that to live this way is all I need,
nor do I want more.

VI (instrumental)
Fors tant qu'en aucune maniere
Ma dame chiere,
Qui de mon cuer la tresoriere
Et portiere,
Sceust qu'elle est m'amour premiere
Et derniere,
Et plus l'aim que moy ne mon bien,
Non pas d'amour vaine et legiere,
Mais si entiere,
Quel mueulz amoerie estre en biere
Qu'a parchonniere
Fust, en moy pensee doubliere.
Tels toudsis iere,
Comment qu'elle n'en sache rien.

VI
Except—in no way does
my dear lady,
who is the treasurer
and doorkeeper of my heart,
know that she is my first love
and my last,
and that I love her more than myself or any thing,
not with a vain and frivolous love,
but one so all-encompassing
that I would rather be in my coffin
than share my love
with another, nor think any deceitful thought.
Thus let it be forever,
even though she never learn of it.
Car ne sui tienz qu’a moy affiere
Que s’amour quiere,
Ne que de son vueel tant enquier
Que li requiere;
Car moulzt porroit comparer chiere
Telle prierre
Mes cuers qui gist en son Iyen.
Pour ce n’en foi semblant ne chiere,
Que je n’acquiere
Refus qui me deboute ou fiere
De li arriere;
Car se sa doucheurs m’estoit fiere,
Amours murtirie
Seroit de moy, ce sai je bien.
VIII
Dont la bonne et belle,
Comment sara elle
Que de li voir
En mon cuer s’estelle
Une amour nouvelle
Qui me renouvelle
Et me fait avoir
Joieuse nouvelle,
De quoy l’estancelle
Fait sous la manelle
Mon fin cuer ardoir
S’en frit et sautelle?
Que hons ne damoyselle,
Dame ne pucelle,
Ne le puet savoir,
Si le port et celle.
For I am not worthy
to ask for her love,
nor to so much seek to know her favor
as to request it of her:
my heart, which lies bound in her snare,
could pay very dearly
for such a petition.
For this reason I don’t let it show at all,
so that I am not answered with
a refusal that would drive me
far away from her;
for if her sweetness were denied me,
Love would be my murderer,
that I know well.
IX
Amours que j’en pri,
Qui voult et souffri
Qu’a li, sans detri,
Quant premiers la vi, m’offri,
Li porra bien dire
Que pour s’amour fri
Sans plainte et sans cri,
Et qu’a li m’ottri,
Comme au plus tres noble tri
Que peusse esrire,
Et qu’autre ne tri;
Ainços a l’ottri
Qu’onc ne descouvri,
Dont maint souspir ay murdri
Qui puis n’orent mire.
Main s’en mon depri
Met Amours estri,
Je n’en bray ne cri,
N’autrement ne m’en deffri,
Ne pense a defrire.
XI
Car comment que Desirs m’assaille
Et me face mainte bataille
Et poingne de l’amoureus dart,
Qui souvent d’estoc et de taille
Celeement mon cuer detaille,
Certes bien en vain se travaille,
Car tous garist son dous regart
Car ne sui tielz qu’a moy affiere
Que s’amour quiere,
Ne que de son vueel tant enquier
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Qui me renouvelle
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Fait sous la manelle
Mon fin cuer ardoir
S’en frit et sautelle?
Que hons ne damoyselle,
Dame ne pucelle,
Ne le puet savoir,
Si le port et celle.
Il me fait par son enort
Honnourer,
Servir, doubter,
Et oubier
Ma dame et li tant chierir
Qu'en son effort
Me deport.

Quant il me mort
Et vuet grever,
Mais qu'a li vueille penser
Qu'aim et desir
Sans partir,
Ne repentir :
La me confort.

Qui paist d'amoureuse vitaille
Mon cuer, et dedens li entaille
Sa beauté fine par tel art
Qu'autre n'est de quoy il me chaiile,
Et des biens amoureus me baile
Tant qu'il n'est joye qui me faille
Que n'aie de li, que Deus gart.

XII
Et pour ce, sans nul descort
Endurer
Vueil et celer
L'ardant desir
Qui vuet ma joie amenir
Par soutil sort ;
Si le port
Sans desconfort
Et vueil porter,
Car s'il fait mon cuer trambler,
Taindre et palir,
Et fremir,
A bien souffrir
Dou tout m'acort.

which feeds my heart with amorous sustenance, and within it engraves her perfect beauty with such art that I care for nothing else, and grants me so many loving goods that there is no joy I need that I do not have from her, whom God keep.

XII
Therefore, without any objection
I will endure and conceal the burning desire that seeks to diminish my joy with subtle craft;
I bear it without discomfort and want to bear it, for though it makes my heart tremble, grow wan and pale, and quake, I am fully ready to suffer it.

It provokes me to honor, serve, respect, and obey my lady, and so cherish her that I rejoice in his efforts. When he bites me and tries to wound me, I have only to think of her whom I love and desire without end or regret: from this I take comfort.
But then one day the Lady discovers the lai and commands the Lover to read it aloud. He dares not refuse, but reads it to her from beginning to end.

When she demands to know the author of the lai she has just heard, he is bewildered. Should he tell her the truth and risk rejection? He cannot, for he knows for certain that he will drop dead on the spot if the Lady expresses the slightest disfavor. (No doubt!) But how can he possibly lie to the woman he loves? Abashed and flabbergasted, “miserable, grief-stricken, downcast, and sighing,” he runs off without saying a word.

**Motet: Hareu, hareu! / Helas! ou sera pris confors / Obediens usque ad mortem**

**TRIPLUM**

Hareu, hareu! le feu, le feu, le feu
D’ardant désir, qu’aïnc si ardant ne fu,
Qu’en mon cuer ha espris et soustenu
Amours, et s’a la joie retenu
D’espoir qui doit appeter celle ardure.

La! se le feu qui ensement l’art dure,
Mes cuers sera tous bruis et estains,
Que de ce feu est ja nercis et tains
Pour ce quil est fins, loyaus et certains.

Si que j’espoir que devises y ert, erts,
Que bonne Amour de merci l’asseure
Par la vertu d’esperance seure.

Car pour li seul, qui endure mal maint,
Pitié deffaut ou toute biauté maint:
Durtés y regne et Dangiers y remaint,
Desdains et Loyautés s’i faint.
Et Amours n’a de li de moy cure.

Joie le het, ma dame li est dure,
Et, pour croistre mes doleres meschiés,
Met dedens moy Amours, qui est mes chiés,
Un desespoir qui si mal entechiés.

Est que tous biens ha de moy esrachiés,
Et en tous cas mon corps si desnature
Qu’il me convient morir malgré Nature.

**TRIPLUM**

Help, help the fire, the fire, the fire
of burning desire, burning as never before,
which Love has kindled and stoked
in my heart, withholding the joy
of hope which could soothe this burning.

Alas! if the fire which burns so hot endures,
my heart will be totally burned up and extinguished,
for it is already blackened and charred
just for being pure, loyal, and trustworthy.

So that I hope the fire goes out,
and that good Love will assure my heart of mercy
through the virtue of certain hope.

Because for my heart alone, which endures many pains,
Pity is lacking where all beauty rules:
There Cruelty reigns and Constraint is ever present,
Desdains and Loyalty is feigned; I faint.
And Love cares nothing for my heart or for me.

Joy hates it, my lady is hard towards it,
and, to increase my dolorous trials,
Love, who is my lord, engenders within me
a despair that has so badly infected me
that it has eradicated all good things,
and in all ways so denatures my body
that I must die in spite of Nature.

**TENOR**

Obediens usque ad mortem.

**TENOR**

Obedient unto death.

Overwhelmed by his feelings and lost in his thoughts, he wanders until he comes upon a secluded spot in a pleasure garden called the Park of Hesdin, full of the most wondrous plants, birds, fountains, watercourses, and delights.

**Ballade: Gais et jolis**

Hidden away by a fountain in the park, he sinks into despair. “I used to think that a lover was always happy,” he reflects, “but now I see that a lover who loves deeply is now joyful, now mourful; now laughs, now cries; now sings, now laments … And whether a lover’s heart is happy or sad depends wholly on Fortune, who brings good luck to one lover and bad to another, and to others according to her whim; and which she does, she unfailingly and abruptly undoes, for in her is no stability, love, pity, or permanence … And while I was in this mood, I decided to compose a poem—about Fortune and my sorrows, my thoughts and my weeping—called a complainte, in which there would be many rhymes and a sad subject.”
Complainte: Tieus rit au main qui au soir pleure

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
Pour li aider, qu’elle demeure.
Car Fortune tout ce deveure,
Quant elle tourne,
Qui n’atent mie qu’il ajourne
Pour tourner ; qu’elle ne sejourne,
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 mourne
Fait en po d’eure.

Comment l’amant fait une complainte de fortune et de sa roe
How the Lover composes a complainte about Fortune and her wheel

1
He who laughs in the morning weeps in the evening, and he believes that Love labors on his behalf, while she persecutes and betrays him; he imagines Joy rushing to his aid, while she dawdles. For Fortune destroys everything when she turns her wheel, and she doesn’t wait for daybreak before turning: she doesn’t pause, but turns, turns again, and turns it all the way around until she brings to the top the one who was lying flat in the gutter, returns the exalted one to the bottom, and makes the happiest person sad and gloomy in no time at all.
19
Einsi m’a fait, ce m’est avis,
Fortune que ci vous devis,
Car je souloie estre asevis
De toute joye,
Or m’a d’un seul tour si bas mis
Qu’en grief plour est mué mon ris,
Et que tous li biens est remis
Qu’avoir souloie,
Car la belle ou mes cuers s’ottroie,
Que tant aim que plus ne porroie,
Maintenant veoir n’oseroie
En mi le vis.
Et se desir tant que la voie
Que mes dolens cuers s’en desvoie,
Pour ce ne scay que faire doye,
Tant sui despris.

After thirty-six stanzas of complaining, he has “strayed far from the way of sense, memory, energy, and all other vigor.” Convinced that he is near death, he nonetheless manages to open one eye and discovers a beautiful lady sitting next to him—“the most beautiful lady I had ever seen, upon my soul, except for my own Lady.”
Chant royal: Joye, plaisance, et douce nourreture

Joye, plaisance, et douce nourreture,
Vie d’onneur prennent maint en amer,
Et plusseurs sont qui n’i ont fors pointure,
Doulour, ardour, plour, tristesse, et amer.
Ce dient ; mais acorder
Ne me puis, qu’en la sousfrance
D’Amours ait nulle grevance,
Car tout ce qui vient de li
Plaist a cuer d’ami.

Car vraye Amour en cuer d’amant figure
Tres douce Espoir et gracieus Penser:
Espoir attrait Joie et Bonne Adventure,
Dous Penser fait Plaisance en cuer entrer,
Si ne doit plus demander
Cilz qui a Bonne Esperance,
Douz Penser, Joye, et Plaisance,
Car qui plus requiert, je di
Qu’Amours l’a guerpl.

Dont cilz qui vit de si douce pasture
Vie d’onnour puet bien et doit mener,
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;
Ne je ne scay nommer cy
Nulle autre merci.

Joy, pleasure, sweet sustenance, and a life of honor: many find these in love, but there are many others who find nothing but hurt, sorrow, burning grief, tears, sadness, and bitterness. Or so they say—but I cannot agree, for in the sufferings of Love there is no hurt, for everything that comes from her is pleasing to a lover’s heart.

For True Love in a lover’s heart creates sweetest Hope and Gracious Thought: Hope attracts Joy and Good Luck, Sweet Thought makes Pleasure enter the heart, and one should not ask for more if he has Good Hope, Sweet Thought, Joy, and Pleasure, for if he seeks anything more, I say that Love has abandoned him.

Therefore he who lives on such sweet food can and should live a life of honor, for he enjoys all blessings in full measure, more than any heart could possibly desire, nor does he have the desire, will, or longing to seek further reward, because he has Sufficiency, nor could I name here a better reward.

Comment l’amant s’en dort en ooiant chanter Esperance
How the Lover falls asleep listening to Hope sing

The mysterious lady exudes sweetness and light; she barely seems real. She is there to comfort him, she says, and to teach him about Love and Fortune. “You should not complain about the trials of Love, or of anything Love does to you. In fact, she has blessed you thousands of times over by giving you a perfect lady to love! I shall teach you to love without suffering, how to understand the nature of Fortune and not to rage against her. Heed my lessons and you shall live joyfully and content.” She sings him a song to ease his pains.
As for those who suffer sadness, distress, weeping, moaning, and sorrow without cease, and who say that Love is so hard towards them that they can endure no more without dying, I cannot imagine that they love without deception and that they are not overwhelmed by Desire. That’s why they feel that way, and they deserve it.

For Love, who is of such noble nature that she knows well who loves without duplicity, knows just how to pay lovers their due: she sates the loyal with joy and allows them to savour her sweetnesses in abundance, while the wicked are sentenced like perfidious traitors to banishment from her court.

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

The lady reveals herself to be Hope (Esperance). She admonishes the Lover: “Abandon all melancholy and everything that leads to it except loving, for unless opportunity is seized, it will be lost.” When the Lover asks her how to defend himself against Fortune, who seems to break lovers’ hearts as if for pleasure, she replies, “Fair sweet friend, why do you expect anything else from her? She’s just being true to her nature. If she were not fickle, she would not be Fortune! You are wrong to slander and curse her. Her wheel was not built for you alone, but for every human being in the world.”
Baladelle: En amer a douce vie

En amer a douce vie
Et jolie,
Qui bien la scet maintenir,
Car tant plaist la maladie,
Quant norrie
Est en amoureus desir,
Que l’amant fait esbaudir
Et querir
Comment elle monteplie.
C’est dous maus a soustenir,
Qu’esjoir
Fait cuer d’ami et d’amie.

To be in love is a sweet life
and a happy one
for him who knows how to live it,
for the malady is so pleasing
when it is nourished
by amorous desire,
that it emboldens the lover
and makes him seek to know
how it increases.
It is a sweet trouble to bear,
that brings joy to
the hearts of a lover and his lady.

Hope urges the Lover not to give a fig for the gifts
of Fortune, and teaches that while prosperity is a
bauble dangled before us by Fortune, lost as easily
as it is won, felicity and true happiness are the
sovereign goods of Nature and can never be taken
away. She goes on at considerable length.
Before leaving, Hope sings another song to cheer
the Lover up.

Comment Esperance baille a l’amant
une chançon et la chante devant li

How Hope offers the Lover a song and
sings it for him

Motetus

Ah! Fortune, I have been carried too far from port,
since you sent me to sea without an oar,
in a tiny boat, flat and without rudder,
weak, rotten, without sail; and all around
the winds blow against me, seeking my death,
so that there is no comfort or defense,
no hope of mercy, no route of escape,
or anything good for me, for without cause
I see bitter death approach, wrongfully
ready to send me to my destruction;
but I meet this death through your doing,
false Fortune, and through your treachery.

Tenor

And there is none who might help.

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Tenor

And there is none who might help.

Hope urges the Lover not to give a fig for the gifts
of Fortune, and teaches that while prosperity is a
bauble dangled before us by Fortune, lost as easily
as it is won, felicity and true happiness are the
sovereign goods of Nature and can never be taken
away. She goes on at considerable length.
Before leaving, Hope sings another song to cheer
the Lover up.
Ballade: Dame, de qui toute ma joie vient

Dame, de qui toute ma joie vient,
Je ne vous puis trop amer, ne cherir,
N’assés loer si com il apartient,
Servir, doubter, honnourer, n’obeir,
Car le gracieus Espoir,
Douce dame, que j’ay de vous veoir,
Me fait c. foys plus de bien et de joye
Qu’en cent mil ans desservir ne porroie.
Cilz douls Espoirs en vie me soustient
Et me norrist en amoureus desir,
Et dedens moy met tout ce qui couvient
Pour conforter mon cuer et resjoir;
N’il ne s’en part main ne soir,
Ainçois me fait doucement recevoir
Plus des douls biens qu’Amours aus siens envoie
Qu’en cent mil ans desservir ne porroie.
Et quant Espoir qui en mon cuer se tient
Fait dedens moy si grant joie venir
Lointains de vous, ma dame, s’il avient
Que vo beauté voie que moult desir,
Ma joie, si com j’espoir,
Ymaginer, penser, ne concevoir
Ne porroit nuls, car trop plus en aroie
Qu’en cent mil ans desservir ne porroie.

The Lover makes a great effort to memorize the song and the many wonderful and wise things Hope has taught him. While he is intent on this task, she vanishes so quickly that he has no idea what has become of her. Alone in the garden once more, restored in body and heart by the sweet memory of Hope, he is filled with delight at the joyful songs of the birds all around him and at the thought of seeing his Lady once again. He rises and departs the way he came in order to return to the Lady’s manor. Naturally he composes a new song along the way.
Motet: Trop plus est beau que Biauté/ Biauté parée de valour / Je ne sui mie certeins

TRIPLUM
Trop plus est beau que Biauté
Et millour que ne soit Bonté,
Pleinne de tout ce, à dire voir,
Que bonne et belle doit avoir,
Ce m'est vis, celle que desir
Et aim sans nul vilain desir.
Dont se je l'aim, et je qu'en puis,
Quant en sa fine biauté truis
De tous mes maus la garison,
Leesse, confort, guerredon,
Et secours de tous les meschiés
Dont par desir sui entichiés,
Comment qu'elle n'en sache rien ;
Car toute la joie et le bien
Que j'ay de sa grace me vient,
Sans plus, quant de li me souvient,
N'autre bonté de li n'enport.
Si pri Amours qu'en tel acort
Soit, pour ce que miex l'aim que mi,
Qu'elle me teingne pour ami.
Amen.

Singing happily, the Lover approaches the Lady’s manor, when suddenly he is overcome by fear and doubt. At once Hope reappears to scold and encourage him, urging him, “Take heart and go confidently to your lady, and remember, the closer one is to the fire, the more it burns.” She vanishes once more. The Lover savors what he has been told and is filled with new confidence. He kneels to say a prayer in praise of his Lady and commends himself to the protection of Love and Hope.

Comment l'amant s'agenouille en la sante devant le manoir sa dame
How the Lover kneels in the path before his Lady’s manor

TRIPLUM
Far more beautiful than Beauty itself is she,
better than Goodness,
and full of everything, in truth,
that a good and beautiful lady should have,
it seems to me, she whom I desire
and love without any base desire.
Therefore I love her, and cannot do otherwise,
since in her pure beauty I find
a cure for all my ills,
happiness, comfort, reward,
and help for all the misfortunes
that afflict me through desire—
although she knows nothing of this!
For all the joy and good
which I have comes to me from her grace,
and nothing else, when I remember her,
and I take no other good from her.
And so I pray to Love to grant
that, because I love her better than myself,
she take me for her friend.
Amen.
Motetus

Biauté parée de valour,  
Desirs qui onques n’a sejour  
D’acroistre, eins croist de jour en jour  
En plaisance et en douce ardour,  
Dous Regars pris par grant savour,  
Tous pleins de promesse d’amour,  
Et de pointure de douçour,  
Font que j’aim des dames la flour.  

Or me doint Diex grace et vigour  
Qu’au gré d’Amours et a s’onnour  
La puisse servir sans folour.  
Amen.

Tenor

Je ne sui mie certeins d’avoir amie,  
Mais je suis loyaus amis.

The Lover hasn’t gone far towards his Lady’s tower when he comes across a park with meadows and fountains, where ladies, knights, and maidens are dancing to courtly songs. The Lady sees him and invites him to join the dance, as one of the courtiers sings.

Virelai (Jehan de Lescurel, arr. Nagy) Dis tans plus (instrumental)

The Lover hasn’t been dancing long when the Lady insists that he sing, for it is his turn. He sings this virelai, noting that it is properly called a chanson baladée, a song for dancing.
Pour ce, dame, je m’atour
De trestoute ma vigour
A vous servir,
Et met, sans nul vilain tour,
Mon cuer, ma vie et m’onnour
En vo plaisir.
Et se Pitiés consentir
Vueut que me daigniez oir
En ma clamour,
Je ne quier de mon labour
Autre merir,
Qu’il ne me porroit venir
Joye greingneur.

Dame, a vous sans retollir ...

Therefore, my lady, I prepare myself
with all my strength
to serve you,
and without base artifice place
my heart, my life, and my honor
at your pleasure.
And if Pity should consent
that you deign to hear
my appeal,
I seek no further reward
for my labor,
for no greater joy
could come to me.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

Dame, ou sont tuit mi retour,
Souvent m’estuet en destour
Plaindre et gemir,
Quant vous ne savez l’ardour
Puis que vous tant et desir
Que plus ne le puis couvrir.

Et se tenour
N’en avez, en grant tristour
M’estuet fenir.
Nonpourquant jusqu’au mourir
Vostre demour.

Dame, a vous sans retollir ...

Lady, in whom is my every recourse,
far from you I must often
lament and mourn,
and near you grow pale,
since you do not know the ardor
which I have to suffer
for you, whom I love and desire so much
that I can conceal it no longer.
And if you have no tenderness
towards me, in great sorrow
I must end my days.
Nonetheless, until death
I remain yours.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

Lady, to you without reservation ...

Virelai: Dame, a vous sans retollir

Lady, to you without reservation
I give my heart, thoughts, desire,
body, and love,
as to the best of all
whom one could choose,
the best who has lived or died
until today.
So I must not be thought
mad if I adore you,
for I do not lie when I say that
you surpass Goodness in worth
and surpass in sweet odor
any flower one might smell.
Your beauty makes every other
wither and fade away,
and your sweetness
surpasses all; your color
is that of a rose,
and your glance can heal
every sorrow.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

Dame, ou sont tuit mi retour,
Souvent m’estuet en destour
Plaindre et gemir,
Quant vous ne savez l’ardour
Puis que vous tant et desir
Que plus ne le puis couvrir.

Et se tenour
N’en avez, en grant tristour
M’estuet fenir.
Nonpourquant jusqu’au mourir
Vostre demour.

Dame, a vous sans retollir ...

Dame, in whom is my every recourse,
far from you I must often
lament and mourn,
and near you grow pale,
since you do not know the ardor
which I have to suffer
for you, whom I love and desire so much
that I can conceal it no longer.
And if you have no tenderness
towards me, in great sorrow
I must end my days.
Nonetheless, until death
I remain yours.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

The dancing winds up and the company departs.

Therefore, my lady, I prepare myself
with all my strength
to serve you,
and without base artifice place
my heart, my life, and my honor
at your pleasure.
And if Pity should consent
that you deign to hear
my appeal,
I seek no further reward
for my labor,
for no greater joy
could come to me.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

Lady, in whom is my every recourse,
far from you I must often
lament and mourn,
and near you grow pale,
since you do not know the ardor
which I have to suffer
for you, whom I love and desire so much
that I can conceal it no longer.
And if you have no tenderness
towards me, in great sorrow
I must end my days.
Nonetheless, until death
I remain yours.

Lady, to you without reservation ...

\[34\]
As they are walking back to the manor, the Lady confronts the Lover about running off and pointedly asks him where he has been. Inspired by Hope, he confesses all and relates how Hope appeared to him in the Park of Hesdin and offered him comfort and guidance. The Lady finds the story improbable, although splendid, but eventually she is convinced and grants the Lover the gift of her love.

The Lady and the Lover rejoin the others, taking care not reveal their new relationship, and all go to hear Mass in the Lady’s chapel.

Messe de Nostre Dame: Kyrie I

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.
After Mass a trumpet sounds to announce dinner. The entire company enjoys a great feast followed by music and dancing.

**Estampie Ay mi! dame de valour (Nagy) / Virelai: Dame, vostre douz viaire (arr. Nagy)**

Before the Lover takes his leave, he and his Lady exchange rings as a token of their alliance. The Lover departs, singing a rondelet as he goes.

**Rondelet: Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint**

Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint,  
Comment que de vous me departe.  
Par fine amour qui en moy maint,  
Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint.  
Or pri Dieu que li vostre m’aint,  
Sans ce qu’en nulle autre amour parte.  
Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint,  
Comment que de vous me departe.  

Lady, my heart remains with you,  
although I myself must leave you.  
By the pure love that rules me,  
Lady, my heart remains with you.  
Now I pray God that your heart will love me,  
not sharing itself with any other love.  
Lady, my heart remains with you,  
although I myself must leave you.

**Comment l’amant s’en va chantant**

How the Lover departs singing
After passing the afternoon in a field jousting and enjoying other diversions, the Lover is eager to return to his Lady. But when he finds her, she appears to ignore him, turning her sweet eyes elsewhere. The Lover is stricken with grief and doubt.

Ballade: Biauté qui toutes autres pere

Beauty which is peer of all others, 
towards me inconstant and distant, 
exquisite sweetness, bitter to my taste, 
body worthy of every praise, 
innocent countenance with heart of steel, 
glance that can kill a lover, 
joyful appearance and distressing reply

have brought me to this, that for love I shall die.

Delay in requiting, which costs dearly, 
Fair Welcome who takes revenge on me, 
Cruel Love, unnatural mother, 
Hope which deprives me of joy, 
poor help, burning desire, 
sad thoughts, sighing heart, 
Harshness, Disdain, Refusal

have brought me to this, that for love I shall die.

So I wish that it be made known to my lady 
that she changes my joy to grief, 
and that her fair radiant face 
destroys me, such misfortune do I feel, 
and that I have neither pleasure nor song, 
nor do I sing as I used to, 
for Love, my eyes, and her fair body

have brought me to this, that for love I shall die.
The Lover asks whether the Lady has decided to abandon him. She reassures him that she is merely acting to conceal their love, for true love ought not to be revealed to a slanderous, perverse, and inconstant society such as that of the present world. Although the Lover is assailed by fear and torments of all kinds, he resolves to believe and trust her. The poem ends with a prayer of homage to Love, in which the author signs his name in an anagram: Guillemin de Machaut.

Motet: Trop plus est bele que Biauté / Biauté parée de valour / Je ne sui mie certeins (see 13)

Amen.
Ci fenist Remede de Fortune.

Amen.
Here ends the Remedy for Fortune.


Comment Esperance moustre les droites armes d’Amours a l’amant
How Hope explains the true arms of Love to the Lover
Guillaume de Machaut first enters the historical record in a few ecclesiastical documents from 1330-33 in which he is described variously as a clerk, almoner, notary, and secretary to Jean of Luxembourg, king of Bohemia. Machaut would have accompanied the king in his travels all over Europe. After the king’s heroic if foolhardy death at the battle of Crécy in 1346 (he insisted on being led into battle, although he was by then completely blind), Machaut served a number of other eminent nobles, a confusing number of whom were named either Jean or Charles. His patrons included Jean of Luxembourg’s daughter, Bonne; her husband Jean, duke of Normandy, who would become King Jean II of France; their son Charles, the future King Charles V; Jean, duke of Berry, and Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy; Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus; and King Charles of Navarre. Machaut lived through the Black Death, which peaked in France in the years 1348-50 and killed some 30-60% of the population of Europe, including about half of Paris’s 100,000 inhabitants. By 1360 or so he seems to have taken up residence in Reims, where he had held a benefice at the Cathedral since 1338. (A benefice was an ecclesiastical appointment offering a salary without requirement of service in return: a literal sinecure, sine cura or free of pastoral duties.) He died sometime before November 9, 1377, when his position at the Cathedral of Reims passed to another.

While Machaut’s life is sparsely documented, his artistic creations are richly transmitted in a unique series of six “complete works” manuscripts produced between c. 1350 and 1390, some apparently under the author’s direct supervision; several are abundantly illuminated. The manuscripts contain more than fifteen long narrative poems or dits; a collection of lyric poetry known as the Loange des dames or Praise of Ladies consisting of some 280 poems which are not set to music; and a section of music which eventually comprised 19 lais, 23 motets, a setting of the Mass, a hocket, 42 ballades, 22 rondeaux, and 33 virelais. The order in which the work was presented was specified by the composer, as a rubric in one manuscript compiled towards the end of his life informs us “Vesci l’ordenance que G. de Machau vuet qu’il ait en son livre: “This is the order which G. de Machaut wishes to have in his book.”

Bonne of Luxembourg & the Remede de Fortune

Of all his patrons, the one who seems to have attracted Machaut’s warmest personal devotion was Bonne of Luxembourg. Born May 20, 1315, she died on September 11, 1349, perhaps of the Black Death; at age 34 she was already the mother of ten. Machaut may have undertaken the compilation of his first complete works manuscript for Bonne in the late 1340s, but she died before it was finished and it was completed in the mid-1350s, for her widower or for their son Charles. The last item in the lavishly illustrated book (now known as Machaut MS C) is a motet in the form of a rondeau that was perhaps intended as a memorial benediction for Bonne, Trop plus est bele que Biauté / Biauté parée de valour / Je ne sui mie certeins: “Far more beautiful than Beauty itself is she, and better than Goodness, and full of everything, in truth, that a good and beautiful lady should have.” The Remede de Fortune, too, appears to be dedicated to Bonne: the text identifies her more or less explicitly as the perfect Lady of the tale, to whom everyone rightly gives the name “Bonne.”

... tousdis enclinoie
Mon cuer et toute ma pensee
Vers ma dame qui est clamee
De tous sur toutes belle et bonne :
Chascun par droit ce nom li donne.

... my heart and all my thoughts
were ever inclined towards
my lady, who is proclaimed
by all beautiful and good above all:
everyone rightly gives her this name.

Remede de Fortune, 52-56

The Remede is a dit of over 4000 octosyllabic lines in which the narrator describes the events that befell him as a young and inexperienced lover and his attempts to learn how to be happy and to live and love well despite the reversals dished out by Fortune and her wheel. Interspersed into the highly didactic narration are seven lyric poems set to
music which present a catalogue of exemplary forms arranged from old to new: three
archaic forms inherited from the previous century—a virtuoso lai, a comically extended
complainte, and a chant royal—followed by the new formes fixes of the so-called seconde
rhétorique: a ballad and related baladelle, a virelai, and a rondelet or rondeau. The explicit
goal of the Remede is to instruct its readers, by means of example and plain teaching,
how to live ethically in a world which is not designed to assure human happiness. Lady
Hope teaches the lover to cultivate indifference to the vagaries of Fortune—whether or
not you find yourself momentarily in her favor—and not suffer from desire, but accept
the good things Love has given you without wishing vainly for things which are impossible.
These ideas are summarized in the opening ballade of our program, Esperance
qui m'asseure, and their essential kernel is perfectly expressed in the tenor of the motet
Trop plus est belle que Beauté with which we conclude: “I am not certain of having a lover,
but I am a loyal friend.”

A performance of the Remede?
The mise-en-page of the Remede in MS C is a kind of performance combining the arts of
poetry, music, and illustration,¹ but one in which the music will be inaccessible to anyone
who cannot read mensural notation; in the 14th century that meant just about anyone
who was not a professional singer. And even among musicians, the ability to imagine the
sound of a complete polyphonic texture by reading from individual parts, as the music
in the Remede is copied, is a rare skill, possessed by only the most exceptional individ-
uals, then as now. A “performance” of the Remede for a 14th-century courtly audience,
if such a thing ever occurred, might have combined a spoken recitation of the text (as
if such a thing ever occurred, might have combined a spoken recitation of the text (as
uals, then as now. A “performance” of the

¹ See the recent study by Anne Stone, “Made to measure? On the intimate relations between parchment and text
colored pictures in the manuscript. Poetry, music, and art are ingeniously combined into
mu-

² High-resolution digital images of MS C may be found on Gallica, the website of the Bibliothèque nationale de
France, at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8449043q.
set for a different number of voices: the ballade *Dame de qui toute ma joie vient* for two, the rondelet *Dame, mon cuer en vous remaint* for three, and Hope's baladelle *En amer a douce vie* for four. Later manuscripts prepared under Machaut's supervision transmit two more voices for *Dame de qui toute ma joie vient*; these are probably the work of Machaut although their addition disrupts the calculated scheme of the original. In this performance we sing the first strophe à 2, the second and third à 4.

Only for the virelai do we have any information about how Machaut expected his music to be performed. The text describes how the Lover encounters a festive party of courtiers dancing outside.

Mais n'alay pas le trait d'un arc
Que pres de la tour vi un parc
Ou priaus ot et fontanelles,
Dames, chevaliers, pucelles,
Et d'autres gens grant compaignie
Moult joyeuse et moult envoisy,
Qui dansoient joliment;
N'il n'avoient nul instrument
Ne menestrelz, fors chanconettes
Deduisans, courtoyses, et nettes.

But I'd not gone the distance of a bowshot
when near to the tower I saw a park
where there were meadows and little fountains,
ladies, knights, maidens,
and a great company of other people,
very joyful and very festive,
who were dancing gaily.
There were no instruments
nor minstrels, only songs,
delightful, courtly, and bright.

Remede de Fortune, 3358-68

As he approaches the dancers, a song is sung by a young maiden; after dancing for a short while, the Lover takes his turn and sings his virelai, *Dame, a vous sans retollir*; he is followed by a lady who leaves off dancing to sing the next song. Machaut implies that each of these danced songs was sung without accompaniment of any kind, as you will hear our Lover sing the virelai in this performance (track 13).

We have taken a variety of approaches to the other three monophonic pieces. The lai is accompanied differently from strophe to strophe, by lute, harp, or both, with the fiddle taking one strophe instrumentally and doubling the voice discreetly in another. From time to time lute or harp add a quasi-improvised tenor line, a counterpoint whose presence (whether sounded or not) is strongly implied by the melody with its clearly articulated cadences and progression from harmony to harmony. The melody of the complainte, on the other hand, is harmonically quite static, largely confining itself to outlining the "tonic" triad D-F-A with occasional movement to the "dominant." It is thus very much suited to the drone accompaniment of a hurdy-gurdy, which also alludes to the inexorable turning of Fortune's wheel; douçaine and fiddle add counter-melodies here and there. In the chant royal we deploy a variety of textures: unaccompanied voice, chordal accompaniment on the lute, two-part counterpoint with tenor line, a three-part instrumental interlude, and four-part rendition with a *triplum* played on recorder, gradually returning to solo voice.

The lai, most virtuosic of poems, is highly virtuosic in musical terms as well, with a new melody for each new strophe (each cast in a unique form) until the final strophe, which recapitulates the metrical layout and rhyme scheme of the first: here the music is the same as for the first strophe, but transposed up a fifth. The "key" changes from strophe to strophe, as does the range: the entire lai covers a range of just under two octaves. Although a performance by one singer is certainly conceivable, we have allotted the music to three singers in turn, representing the Lover's many moods and multifaceted sentiments, somewhat like the way one individual's thoughts and feelings are conveyed by several musical parts in the polyphonic songs.

In the polyphonic songs, just one line—not always the top line—is supplied with text. The scribes of MS C and the other Machaut manuscripts took pains to group notes together so as to indicate which notes are meant to be sung to which syllable. We have adhered to the scribe's text deployment scrupulously for the most part, even in places where it seems counter-intuitive or even awkward; only very occasionally have we devised a slightly different solution after repeated performances. (In some cases, for example in the virelai *Dame a vous sans retollir*, the "unnaturality" of the text setting requires a verbal dexterity that may very well be part of the game of accomplishing something very difficult and very artificial without apparent effort.) The implication of such careful alignment of music and text syllable in one part and the complete absence of text in others is that parts lacking text are not meant to carry it, and we perform untexted parts on instruments or vocalized wordlessly.
A fantastic ensemble, which includes all of the instruments heard on this recording and many more besides, entertains the Lady’s guests after the meal at her manor.

Car, je vi la tout en un cerne
Violle, rubelle, guiiterne,
Leu, morache, micanon,
Cytolle, et le psalteryon,
Harpe, tabour, trompes, nacaires,
Orgues, cornes, plus de dis paires,
Cornemuses, flajos, chevretes,
Douceinnes, simbales, clocettes,
Tymbre, le fléuste brehaingne,
Et le grant cornet d’Alemaigne,
Flajos de Scens, fistule, pipe,
Muse d’Aussay, trompe petite,
Buissines, eles, moncorde
Ou il n’a c’une seule corde,
Et muse de blef tout ensemble.
Et certainement, il me samble
Qu’ongques mais telle melodie
Ne fu veue ne oye,
Car chacuns d’eaus, selonc l’acort
De son instrument, sans decorct,
Viole, guiiterne, cytolle,
Harpe, trompe, corne, flajole,
Pipe, soufle, muse, naquaire,
Taboure, et quanque on puet faire
De dois, de penne, et de l’archet
Ouy je et vi en ce parchet.

For I saw there, all in a circle,
fiddle, rebec, gittern,
Lute, Moorish guitar, small psaltery,
cittern, and the psaltery,
harp, tabour, trumpets, nakers,
organs, horns—more than ten pairs—
bagpipes, flutes, musettes,
doucaines, tymbrels, bells,
timbrel, the Bohemian flute,
and the large German cornet,
flute of willow, fife, pipe,
Alsatian reed pipe, small trumpet,
herald’s trumpets, another psaltery, monochord
(which has only one string),
and straw pipe, all together.
And certainly it seemed to me
that such melody had never before
been witnessed or heard,
for each of them, according to the harmony
of his instrument, without discord—
fiddle, gittern, cittern,
harp, trumpet, horn, flute,
pipe, bladder pipe, bagpipe, naker,
tabor, and whatever could be played
with finger, pick, or bow—
I heard and saw in that little park.

Remede de Fortune, 3963-88

This highly implausible orchestra plays an estampie, but Machaut does not supply music for it. In fact, there is no extant estampie from Machaut’s era and, indeed, very little instrumental music of any kind. The estampie heard after the banquet in our Remede was composed by Debra Nagy based on Machaut’s monophonic virelai Ay mi! dame de valour, using the virelai’s B section with its open and closed endings for the estampie’s refrain, adapting the melodic material of the virelai’s refrain for some of the estampie’s puncta or episodes, and then composing new puncti of her own. Debra also composed the polyphonic instrumental settings of Dame a vous sans retollier and Jehan de Lescurel’s Dis tans plus and most of the accompaniments added to the monophonic songs.

—Scott Metcalfe
Blue Heron has been acclaimed by *The Boston Globe* as “one of the Boston music community’s indispensables” and hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* for its “expressive intensity.” The ensemble ranges over a wide repertoire from plainchant to new music, with particular specialties in 15th-century Franco-Flemish polyphony and early 16th-century English sacred music, and is committed to vivid live performance informed by the study of original source materials and historical performance practices.

Founded in 1999, Blue Heron presents a concert series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival; in New York City at Music Before 1800, The Cloisters (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the 92nd Street Y; at the Library of Congress, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.; at the Berkeley Early Music Festival; at Yale University and the University of California, Davis; in Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Providence, St. Louis, San Luis Obispo, Seattle, and Vancouver; and in England, Germany, and Belgium. Blue Heron has been in residence at the Center for Early Music Studies at Boston University and at Boston College, and has enjoyed collaborations with A Far Cry, Dark Horse Consort, Les Délices, Parthenia, Piffaro, and Ensemble Plus Ultra.

Blue Heron’s first CD, featuring music by Guillaume Du Fay, was released in 2007. Between 2010 and 2017 the ensemble issued a 5-CD series of *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks*, including many world premiere recordings of works copied c. 1540 for Canterbury Cathedral and restored by Nick Sandon. The fifth CD was awarded the 2018 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Early Music and the five discs are now available as a set entitled *The Lost Music of Canterbury*. Jessie Ann Owens and Blue Heron won the 2015 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society to support the world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore’s *I madrigali a cinque voci*, released in 2019. In 2015 Blue Heron inaugurated Ockeghem@600, a multi-season project to commemorate the circa-600th birthday of Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497) by performing his complete works. A parallel project to record all of Ockeghem’s songs bore its first fruits in 2019 with the release of *Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs, Volume I*, which was named to the Bestenliste of the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik; Volume 2 will follow in 2023. Blue Heron’s recordings also include a CD of plainchant and polyphony to accompany Thomas Forrest Kelly’s book *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*, the live recording Christmas in Medieval England, and a compilation of medieval songs entitled A 14th-Century Salmagundi.

Les Délices explores the dramatic potential and emotional resonance of long-forgotten music. Founded by baroque oboist Debra Nagy in 2009, Les Délices has established a reputation for unique programs that are “thematicaliy concise, richly expressive, and featuring composers few people have heard of … Concerts and recordings by Les Délices are journeys of discovery” (*The New York Times*). The group’s debut CD, *The Tastes Reunited*, was named one of the “Top Ten Early Music Discoveries of 2009” (NPR’s Harmonia) and their performances have been called “beguiling” (Cleveland Plain Dealer), “astonishing” (Cleveland Classical.com), and “first class” (*Early Music America Magazine*). Les Délices’ twelfth season, “Embracing Change,” marked an important evolutionary period for the organization, which reconceived concerts for the virtual space and created SalonEra, a web series variety show for early music. Critics called the concerts “sensational” and “a cultural gift,” while SalonEra opened a world of music to audiences at home as sixteen original episodes and 60 remote musical collaborations created feature opportunities for over 40 artists. Highlights of the 2021-22 season included a new global streaming partnership with Marquee.TV, newly commissioned works by Jonathan Woody and Sydney Guillaume, twelve new episodes of SalonEra, and the premiere of *The White Cat*, a pastiche Baroque opera for singers and chamber ensemble with puppetry and projections, based on a 1690s feminist fairytale by the Countess D’Aulnoy.
MUSIC FROM THE PETERHOUSE PARTBOOKS
Canterbury Cathedral, c. 1540

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