

3

D'ardant desir celle amoureuse peigne
Mellé d'espoir me fait languir en joie,
Dont *par* dolçour sovent jeo me compleigne
Pour vous, ma dame, ensi com jeo soloie.
5 Mais quant jeo pense *qe* vous serretz moie,
De sa justice amour *moun* coer enhorte
En attendant *qe* jeo me reconforte.

La renomée, dont j'ai l'oreile pleine,
De vo valour *moun* coer pensant envoie
10 Milfoitz le jour, u tiel[e]ment° me meine
Q'il m'est avis *qe* jeo vous sente et voie,
Plesante, sage,° belle, simple, et coie.
Si en devient° ma joie ades plusforte
En attendant° *qe* jeo me reconforte.

15 Por faire honour a dame si halteigne
A toutz les jours sanz departir me ploie,
Et si dieus voet *qe* jeo le point atteigne
De mes amours *qe* jeo desire et proie,
Lors ai d'amour tout ceo q'avoir voldroie.
20 Mais pour le temps, espoir *moun* coer supporte
En attendant *qe* jeo me reconforte.

A vous, ma dame, ensi come faire doie,
En lieu de moi, ceo *lettre* vous apporte
Q'en vous amer *moun* coer dist toute voie
25 En attendant *qe* jeo me reconforte.

10 MS tielment. The middle syllable is supplied for the meter. Tielement is the normal spelling in both MO and 50B, e.g. in 9.3, 34.20, 38.20.

12 MS sage written over the erasure of a longer word. Very faint cross in margin by line 13.

13 MS endevient

14, 21, 25 MS Enattendant

3

°This amorous pain of burning desire
mixed with hope makes me languish in joy,
so that out of sweetness, I often complain
on your account, my lady, just as I have been accustomed.
5 But when I think that you will be mine, °
with its power ° Love incites my heart
while awaiting that I be comforted.

The renown, of which my ears are full, °
of your great worth sends forth my pensive heart °
10 a thousand times a day, where it so leads me
that it seems to me that I perceive ° and see you,
pleasant, wise, beautiful, modest, and demure. °
Then my joy immediately becomes greater
while awaiting that I be comforted.

15 In order to do honor to so exalted ° a lady
I strive ° unceasingly ° each day,
°and if God wishes that I reach the point °
in my love ° that I desire and pray for,
then I have all that I would wish from Love.
20 But in the meantime, hope sustains my heart
while awaiting that I be comforted.

°To you, my lady, just as it should, °
in place of myself, this letter brings to you
what my heart says constantly ° in loving you,
25 while awaiting that I be comforted.

Ballade 3 covers much of the same emotional ground as 2, and it uses some of the same language. The persona relies upon Hope (3.20, 2.6); he seeks comfort in the face of a long delay (3R, 2.6); he acknowledges that the outcome of his wishes rests with God (3.17, 2.15, 26). And under the influence of hope, his imagination becomes his reality — “vous serretz moie” (3.5) — just as for his counterpart in 2.1-5, who is so sure, at least momentarily, that his prospects in love will warm with the seasons. If 3 is somehow a rewriting of 2, it is at the same time even more conventional in its diction. There is no way to count how many earlier lyric lovers have languished in joy or experienced the mixed effects of hope and desire that 3 describes. Also more like its predecessors, 3 is focused even more exclusively than 2 on the persona's own

Balade 3

feelings: there is not the slightest allusion to the couple's mutual joy, and by the third stanza, he no longer even seems to be speaking to the lady.

But in the envoy he turns to her directly as he steps back from the focus on himself to talk about the poem: this, my lady, is what my heart constantly says to me and that sustains my love. That stepping back makes this poem very different from 2: by treating the first three stanzas as an overheard interior monologue, it both recognizes the self-absorption of the rhetoric that Gower inherited and artfully adapts it to the dramatic address that is characteristic of 50B.

Like 2, 3 is offered as a "letter," and it has some of the same looseness of structure, shifting from stanza to stanza from one image to another. It is united almost imperceptibly by the references to the heart in each stanza, culminating in the invocation of the heart in the envoy.

- 1-2 Hope and desire are frequently linked in earlier poems on love. In Machaut's *dits*, they stand opposed, as Hope overcomes the most harmful effects of Desire (see in particular *Remede* 2156-58, 3281-83), as also in Machaut, *Lou.* 182.10-12. Elsewhere they work in tandem (Machaut, *Lou.* 59.3-4), or hope incites desire, as in Granson 12.12-13, *T&C* 3.1333-34.
- 5 The lover's thinking it does not make it real: the persona here only imagines what that of 4¹.R promises and what that of 5 is able to affirm.
- 6 For "justice" as "power" see *AND* s.v. "justise¹," 2; *DMF* s.v. "justice," II.A; but it is not impossible that the persona is invoking his confidence in Love's fairness or "justice" as well. *Love.* "Justice" suggests that "Love" is personified here, which carries over to line 19 as well though the context there is less specific.
- 8 Cf. Granson 78.2488, "Vostre renom m'a tout emply l'oreille [your renown has completely filled my ear]"; also 78.2449-51. Gower uses the same image again in 6.1-6 and, with reference to a man's reputation, in 44.8-11.
- 9 Gower uses the image of the heart traveling again in 6.18-19, 9.10-12 and 25.7. Here it is his "coer pensant [pensive heart]" that is the voyager; in 8.1-7 it is the thought that emerges from the heart; and in 34.25-26 it is his thought alone. For variations on the theme, cf., among others, Machaut, 45.1-2; Mudge 74.15-16; Froissart, *Esp.Am.* 2437-38. The notion of the heart, in traveling, leading the persona (in his imagination) to his lady so that he seems to see her may be original to Gower.
- 11 *perceive.* "Sentir" can be used with reference to any of the five senses in Middle French (not just "feel" in the tactile sense) and even more broadly to mean "perceive" (a translation that works well in 4¹.10) or "to be aware of" (see *DMF* s.v. "sentir"). When the object of the verb is the lady (here and in 5.11), it might suggest something like "feel your presence."
- 12 The enumeration of the lady's best qualities (here in adjective form) might well be considered a formula in the poetry of Gower's contemporaries. Butterfield, "Forms of Death," p. 173, treats such clusters as one of the "clichés" of medieval French courtly poetry. Taking examples almost at random: Granson, 51.2: "Belle, pleasant, jeune, fresche et nouvelle [beautiful, charming, young, fresh, and new]"; Machaut, *Lou.* 21.1-2: "Gentile dame, douce, plaisant et sage, / Bonne, belle, gracieuse et jolie [Noble lady, sweet, charming, and wise, good beautiful, gracious, and pretty]"; and for a variation on the theme, *T&C* 8.823, "Charitable, estatlich, lusty, and fre." Cf. 4¹.11 and note.
- simple and demure.* As Fisher notes (p. 76 and p. 344, n.16), "simple et coie" is a common expression in medieval French lyrics, especially in Machaut, who uses it at least 10 times. See *DMF* s.v. "simple," C.1.c (all but one citation from Machaut). In Froissart, the same phrase appears in Lay 9.19, 11.106, and *Vir.* 9.2; and Chaucer famously employs it in *GP CT* I.119, with reference to the

Balade 3

- Prioress' smile. Gower uses it here and in 9.33, and also in *MO* 11917, describing "Vergogne [Shame]"; in 14012, describing "Pacience"; and in 27963, with reference to the Virgin Mary. "Simple" covers a wide range of meanings; here it suggests "modest, unassuming." "Coi(e)" or "coy(e)" (from Latin "quietus") most often simply means "quiet" in its many other appearances in *MO*, but in the formula "simple et coie," it suggests "demure, reserved, discreet." See *DMF* s.v. "coi," 3; also *MED* s.v. "coi," (a). *AND* offers "coy, demure" (s.v. "coi," 3), but in French, the word seems never to have taken on the implication of elusiveness, of affected shyness, or of coquettishness of Modern English "coy," and it did so in English only later; see *OED* s.v. "coy," 2.a, b.
- 15 *exalted*. Like "noble" (2.25), "halte(i)g)n" might refer to social rank (*AND* s.v. "haltein," a.2; *DMF* s.v. "hautain," C.2; *MED* s.v. "hautein," 1.[b]) or to character, in which case, however, the implication is usually pejorative (*AND*, *loc.cit.*, 3; *DMF*, *loc.cit.*, D; *MED*, *loc.cit.*, 1[a]). See, for instance, *MO* 1211, where it is paired with "fiere," both meaning "haughty," but compare *MO* 12078, where it is paired with "noble" instead. It might also refer only to physical height (as in 48.11), from which it can be used figuratively for anything high or superior (*DMF*, *loc.cit.*, C.1). In this line the word is certainly not pejorative. The more precise implication is not completely clear, but the context seems to be provided by the preceding stanza, which describes the lady's character rather than her rank. Cf. 14.3, also referring to the lady's character but where the context is her "fierté [haughtiness or pride]" (14.13); 39.26, which invokes the lady's rank; and 33.23, where the reference is more ambiguous. On the lady's aristocratic rank in *50B* see the notes to 6 and 13.
- 16 *strive*. "Se ploier" most literally means "to bend" and hence "to bow" (see *AND* s.v. "plier"; *DMF* s.v. "plier"), which works well in 15.10, in 25.15, and in most uses in *MO*, and that isn't entirely inappropriate here. But in 9.3 and in *MO* 3379, 11863, 14323, and 27794, some more active effort seems to be implied, and "strive" (or Yeager's "exert myself") seems to be the better meaning, as it does here as well, especially in combination with "sans departir." Gower's use may have been affected by two related verbs. See *AND* s.v. "emploier," v.refl., "to devote oneself"; *DMF* s.v. "employer," II.b., "*S'employer à/en qqc. 'S'appliquer, s'occuper, se consacrer à qqc. [to apply oneself to, occupy oneself with, devote oneself to something].*" See also *DMF* s.v. "apployer," II, "*S'aploier à qqc. 'S'adonner à qqc [to devote oneself to something],*" and "*S'aploier à + inf. 'S'appliquer à [to apply oneself to],*" where the only two citations are from Gower, *MO* 5739 and 2982, standing in for his eight uses of this verb in the reflexive in *MO*.
unceasingly. On "sans departir," the phrase that links 3 to 4¹ and 4², see the note to 4².1.
- 17-19 The tenses here are a bit confusing. One expects "I will have" or "I would have" in line 19, and Gower could have written "averai [I will have]" (two syllables; see the note to 1.21) instead of "lors ai" since "lors" is not required and is actually infrequent after an *if*-clause in *50B* (cf. 31.9-12 and 31.17-19). As it is, the persona is saying that he is glad if God wishes him to achieve his love, not that he will be glad when he does achieve it.
- 17 *point*. *AND*, s.v. "point¹," 6, "point, stage of a process," "state, condition (as the result of a process)"; *DMF*, s.v. "point," II.B.2.c, "[À propos d'une chose] "État, situation [With regard to a thing: condition, situation]."
- 18 On "mes amours" (in contrast to "amour" in the following line) see the note to 2.5.
- 22-25 Macaulay and Yeager place a semicolon at the end of line 23. The first of the two resulting clauses is complete grammatically, but "In place of myself I bring this letter to you" suggests both that the persona is present and that he is not, and "dist [says]" in line 24 is left without an object. Removing the semicolon and understanding the "Q[e]" of line 24 as the equivalent of "ce qe [that which]" supplies a different object for "apporte [brings]," it makes "ceo lettre" the subject, and it supplies the object for "dist." For "qe" = "ce qe" see 2.21, 8.20, 17.22, and 40.12, 15; and *DMF* s.v. "que"

- II.A.2, II.B.2.c. Cf. Gower's use of "that" for "that which" or indefinite "what" in CA 1.603, 2.2397, *et al.*
- 22 *doie*. While the context requires a third-person indicative here (normally "doit," as in 15.11 *et al.*), "doie" is normally either first-person (as in the same phrase in 12.26) or subjunctive, or both. Gower allows rhyme to determine form here, as also in MO 14779, "malgré q'il doie [despite what it ought to do]," where the subject is not ambiguous and where the verb also rhymes with a different "voie."
- 24 *constantly*. One might expect "toute voie" to mean "nonetheless" (Modern French "toutefois"; DMF s.v. "toutevoie," B), as in MO 15402, or "in every way," as perhaps in MO 16327 and 22761. Neither sense works well here, however. See instead AND s.v. "veie¹," under the phrase "Tut, tute(s) veie(s) . . ." 2, "always, constantly (thereafter)," with seven citations, a sense that could also work in the latter two passages in MO. Cf. AND s.v. "feiz," under the phrase "tute(s) (les) feiz," "always" or "continually."