

4²

- Sanz departir, j'ai tout mon coer assis
U j'aim toutditz et toutdis amerai.
Sanz departir, j'ai loialment promis
Por toi cherir tancome jeo viverai.
5 Sanz departir, ceo qe jeo promis ai
Jeo vuill tenir a toi, ma debonaire.
Sanz departir, tu es ma joie maire.
- Sanz departir, jeo t'ai, m'amie, pris,
Q'en tout le mond si bone jeo ne sai.
10 Sanz departir, tu m'as auci compris
En tes liens, dont ton ami serrai.
Sanz departir, tu m'as tout, et jeo t'ai,
En droit amour, por ta plesance faire.
Sanz departir, tu es ma joie maire.
- 15 Sanz departir, l'amour qe j'ai empris
Jeo vuill garder, qe point ne mesprendray.
Sanz departir, come tes loials amis,
Mon tresdouls coer, ton honour garderai.
Sanz departir, a mon poair jeo frai
20 Des toutes partz ceo qe toi porra plaire.
Sanz departir, tu es ma joie maire.
- De coer parfit, certain, loial, et vrai,
Sanz departir, en trestout mon affaire,
Te vuil amer, car ore est a l'essai.
25 Sanz departir, tu es ma joie maire.

Balade 4²

4²

- Undividedly*, I have placed my entire heart
where I love always and will always love.
Without condition, I have promised faithfully
to cherish° you as long as I live.
- 5 *In every respect*, what I have promised
I wish to uphold to you, my gracious one.°
Without exception, you are my greatest joy.
- Fully* have I taken you, my *amie*,
for in all the world I know not so good a woman.
- 10 *Wholly* have you so captured me
in your bonds that° I will be your *ami*.
Completely do you have me, and I have you,
in true love, in order to do your pleasure.
Without exception, you are my greatest joy.
- 15 °*Perpetually*, the love that I have entered into
I wish to preserve, for I will not act wrongfully.°
Constantly, as your loyal *ami*,
my sweetheart, will I preserve your honor.
Ceaselessly, within my power I will do
- 20 everywhere whatever can please you.
Without exception, you are my greatest joy.
- With all my heart, firm, loyal, and true,
undividedly, in all my undertakings,
I wish to love you, for now it is put to the test.°
- 25 *Without exception*, you are my greatest joy.

4² is closely linked to 4¹ not just in theme but also in diction: by the initial appearance of “sans departir” and “sans departie” in 4¹.1 and 13; by the repetition of “promis” (4².3, 5), echoing the repeated pledges of 4¹; by the echo of 4¹.3-4, “En droit amour. . . pour faire vo plesance,” in 4².13, “En droit amour por ta plesance faire”; by the repetition of “amie” (4¹.R, 4².8); by the echo of “vous serrez m’amie” (4¹.R) in “ton ami serrai” (4².11); by the more distant echo of the refrain of 4¹ in 4².12, “tu m’as et jeo t’ai”; by the echo of “rejoir” (4¹.17) in the refrain of 4²; and by the repeated insistence upon the firmness and permanence of the relationship in 4². Though 4² uses none of the language specifically associated with betrothal, the two may well have been intended as a pair, and in fact 4¹ provides the only context for 4².24, “car ore est a l’essai [for now it is put to the test]”, for 4² itself contains no explanation for the reference.

Balade 4²

This ballade is obviously most remarkable for its extended use of anaphora, the regular repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of the line. There are precedents for use of the device among Gower's predecessors (see Poirion, *Poète et Prince*, p. 465, and for more examples, Granson 17, 28, and 46), and Gower turns to it more than once in *MO* (10201 ff., 10623 ff., *et al.*). But perhaps uniquely, in 4² Gower has chosen to repeat an expression that can have more than a single meaning, depending on the context, creating a greater than normal interest rhetorically but also a nearly impossible task for the translator. "Departir," like Modern English "part," has two general senses, "to depart, to leave" (*DMF* s.v. "departir," III.A) and "to divide or separate" (*DMF*, *loc.cit.*, I, II); and it can also be used to mean, somewhat less commonly, "to cease, come to an end" (*DMF*, *loc.cit.*, III.B). "Sans departir" (and the related phrase "sans departie") thus might mean "without departing," "without division, undividedly" (and thus by extension "unreservedly" or "totally") or "without ceasing, ceaselessly"; and it is in the latter two senses that the phrase is commonly used in the lyrics, and also in *MO*. For the first, *DMF* (*loc.cit.*, I.B.1) gives "[Dans le langage amoureux] . . . 'Sans partager (son coeur), en restant loyal et fidèle' ["in the language of love . . . 'without dividing (one's heart), remaining loyal and faithful']," citing examples from Froissart and Charles d'Orléans; and for the second, it offers "sans cesser [without ceasing]" (*loc.cit.*, III.B). Given the choice, the precise sense is often specified by context. References to time, for instance, point to "unceasingly," as in Machaut, Bal.Not. 26.3, "Sans departir ne nuit ne jour [*sans departir* by night or day]." Similarly the phrase "sans jamais departir [*sans departir* ever]" (e.g. Granson 72.28) must be a temporal reference, as do the three uses of "sans departie" in *MO* 6876, 23146, and 29183, which refer to eternal rewards. In *MO* 10685-86, on the other hand, Gower writes of Contemplation's union with God, "Qe tout en un se sont tenu / Sans departir [that they are bound together as one / *sans departir*]," and the primary sense is "undividedly" though "eternally" also clearly applies. In one of Granson's ballades, the woman speaker declares "je vous ay donné outrement / Mon cuer, m'amour, sens nulle departie [I have given you my heart, my love entirely, *sens nulle departie*]" (32.19-20), suggesting "undividedly" or "unreservedly." In another poem, Granson writes "Pour ce suis sien sans departir / Entierement jusqu'a la fin [thus I am hers *sans departir* / Entirely, until the end]" (76.263-64), evidently invoking both "undividedly" and "unceasingly"; and the existence of more than a single possibility means that neither general sense can ever be totally excluded, especially when the context provides no clues. In 3.16, "a tous les jours [every day]" leads to "unceasingly," as does the "jammes [never]" in 4¹.1, but in the latter case "undividedly" might also apply, and in 4¹.21-22, 25.14, and 51.18, "undividedly" seems to be primary but "unceasingly" is also possible, especially in the latter case, with reference to the persona's love for the Virgin Mary.

Here in 4², both senses come into play. The first two stanzas invoke "undividedly," but the third refers more to a continuous action over time. Instead of trying to find a single expression that works in all circumstances, I have instead tried to choose the best equivalent for each context, destroying, of course, the incantatory effect of the anaphora that reinforces the persona's pledge and also making precise what is probably intended to be fluid, and one should be alert to the possibility that in each use of the expression, any of the other possibilities might also be in play.

Balade 4²

4² is unique in *50B* in the male persona's regular use of *tu* to address the lady. (As Macaulay notes [1:462], a woman uses *tu* for very different effect in 41-43.) It is also the first ballade not to refer to its written form in the refrain: we might well imagine this poem not as a letter but as the male lover's spoken vows.

One of the puzzles in the manuscript of *50B* is why there are two poems bearing the number 4. The misnumbering might be due simply to the inattention of a scribe, of course, but the fact that the last numbered poem bears the number 50, consistent with the title in the heading, suggests that that was at some point the planned total. It is also possible therefore that one or other of the two "4s" was inserted late, after the other poems had already been numbered. If so, 4² seems to be the latecomer because of the otherwise non-contextualized reference in 4².24.

- 4 Macaulay points out (in his note to *MO* 6328, I:411) that "'pour' is often used by our author instead of 'de' or 'a,' representing perhaps the English 'forto'." See also 45.12, [51].12. For a different use of "pour" where one might find in English "forto" see the note to 11.5.
- 6 "Debonaire" is one of Machaut's favorite words for describing his lady, using it at least a dozen times. It also occurs half a dozen times in Granson. See *DMF* s.v. "debonnaire," with citations from, among many others, Machaut, Deschamps, and Christine de Pizan. With reference to a woman, the word often occurs in the company of "douce," "gentille," and even "belle et bonne" (as in *MO* 29875, with reference to Mary), and it has a range of meanings all describing the qualities of character and comportment that would be most pleasing to a man. This is Gower's only use of the word in *50B*.
- 11 Macaulay also points out (in his note to *MO* 217, 1:395) that in Gower's usage, "dont" commonly occurs instead of "que" after words such as "auci" (this line), "si" (14.6), "tant" (41.2), and "tiele" (45.13).
- 15-16 Somewhat hidden by the difference in form is the etymological link between "empris" (from "emprendre") and "mesprendray" (from "mesprendre"). See also "pris" (from "prendre") and "compris" from "comprendre") in lines 8-10. Gower uses the same group of words in two stanzas in his discussion of marriage in *MO* 17665-88.
- 16 *for I will not do wrong*. Since "mesprendre" can be either transitive or intransitive (as I have translated it here), the "qe" might be a relative, referring back to "l'amour": "the love . . . that I will not take wrongfully." See *AND, DMF* s.v. "mesprendre." But one must let context rule.
- 24 *put to the test*. *DMF* s.v. "essai," A.1, A.3, citing Machaut, *Font.Am.*, "Car je l'ay tant mis a l'essay / Que fin et vray amant le say [for I have so put him to the test that I know him to be a pure and true lover]." Cf. *CA* 5.3239-40, "Bot whan it comth unto thassay, / Their finde it fals an other day"; and *T&C* 3.1002, "And dredeles, that shal be founde at preve" (Criseyde speaking, with reference to her own fidelity).