

10

Mon tresdouls coer, mon coer avetz souleine.  
Jeo n'en puiss autre, si jeo voir dirrai,  
Q'en vous, ma dame, est toute grace pleine.  
A bone heure est qe jeo vous aqueintai,  
5 Maisqu'il vous pleust qe jeo vous amerai  
Au fin qe vo pité vers moi se plie  
Q'avoir porrai *vostre* ameisté complie.

Mais la fortune qui les amantz meine  
Au plussovent me met en *grant* esmai,  
10 En si halt lieu qe jeo moun coer asseine  
Qe passe toutz les autres a l'essai,  
Q'a mon avis, n'est une qe jeo sai  
Pareil a vous, *par* quoi moun coer s'allie  
Q'avoir porrai *vostre* ameisté complie.

15 S'amour me volt hoster de toute peine  
Et faire tant qe jeo m'esjoierai,  
Vous estes mesmes celle *sovereine*  
Sanz qui jammais en ese viverai,  
Et puis q'ensi moun coer doné vous ai,  
20 Ne lerrai, dame, qe ne vous supplie  
Q'avoir porrai *vostre* ameisté complie.

A vo bealté, semblable au Mois de Maii  
Qant le solail s'espant sur la florie,  
Ceste balade escrite envoieurai  
25 Q'avoir porrai *vostre* ameisté complie.

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*Balade 10*

10

My sweetest heart, you alone have my heart.  
I cannot help it,° if I tell the truth,  
for in you, my lady, is every grace complete.  
It is an auspicious moment° when I met you,  
5 were it to please you° that I love° you,  
so that your pity might turn towards me  
so that I might have your complete affection.°

°But the fortune that guides lovers  
most often puts me in great dismay,  
10 for° I have set my heart° in so high a place  
that surpasses all others, when put to the test,  
°for in my opinion, there is no other woman that I know  
equal to you, because of which my heart binds itself°  
so that I might have your complete affection.

15 If Love wants to remove me from all pain  
and cause me to have joy,  
you are yourself that sovereign lady  
without whom I will never live in ease,  
and since I have thus given you my heart,  
20 I will not cease, lady, to beseech you  
so that I might have your complete affection.

To your beauty, similar to the month of May°  
when the sun spreads out over the fields in bloom,°  
I will send this ballade in writing °°  
25 so that I might have your complete affection.

Ballade 10 is the first complete poem in what is in effect a new section of 50B. Ballades 1-3 and 6-9 presume a physical separation: they are shaped by the persona's wish merely to see his lady, and the most common image is that of sending forth his heart. In 10-20 the separation is emotional in nature: each presents the persona's request for "merci" or "pité" in face of the lady's "durté" or "danger" (or in 13, his request for "allegance [relief]"). Otherwise they are very diverse, and they do not have the same degree of inter-reference as is found either in 1-3/6-9 or in 4<sup>1</sup>-4<sup>2</sup>-5 (as will be reflected in the smaller number of notes on interconnections, here and below).

10 is perhaps the most generic among the poems on unrequited love. The ballades that follow all use more interesting imagery, and in all but 15, the persona wrestles with a paradox

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*Balade 10*

or dilemma in some way. Here, in three stanzas loosely united by the allusion to the heart, the persona expresses his praise of his lady, his devotion to her, and his hope for the "pité" that will cure him of his pain, all in polite but conventional language, without providing very much sense of either the nature or the extent of his suffering or even of the degree of his lady's indifference to him. The address to "mon tresdoulz coer" in the first line, moreover, suggests that the whole may not be a complaint at all but a pose and a rather tepid compliment.

- 2 *I cannot help it.* More precisely, "I cannot [be or do] anything else."
- 4 *auspicious moment.* Gower uses a similar line as the refrain to 23. As DMF explains (s.v. "heure," II), the implication of the phrase "a bonne heure [at a good hour or time]" was influenced by the proximity to "(h)eur," from Latin "augurium," meaning "luck, good fortune." Machaut frequently cites "eür" as his enemy, often in conjunction with "Fortune," e.g. in *Lou.* 38.11, 56.6-7, 113.1, 164.4. Drawing the two similar words together, *Lou.* 56 begins, "Helas!, je suis de si male heure nez [alas! I am born at so inauspicious a time]."
- 5 *were it to please you.* "Maisque" offers a number of possibilities to the translator. When it does not follow a negative (as in 17.27, 40.7, *Tr* 14.10), where it means simply "but" or "but that," there is no single good translation. For "mes que," conjunction, AND (s.v. "mes<sup>4</sup>") offers "even if," "except that," "provided that," and "as soon as." "Provided that" (or "as long as," as the expression of a condition) is the most common use in *MO* (e.g. at 5387, 5408, *et al*), and that appears to be the sense too in 11.8, 23.10, and perhaps 43.13, in all of which "maisque" (or "mais que") is little more than an alternative expression for "if." A slightly different use occurs in 38.8. In 16.28 and in *MO* 29878, however, in both of which the verb that follows is "to please," a wish seems to be implied as much as a condition, and the same appears to be true here, though the context is somewhat different. "Provided that" might suggest that the speaker would be just as satisfied with the alternative were the condition not met. The imperfect subjunctive "were," on the other hand, seems to capture both the qualification to the preceding statement and the wish. I borrow it here from Yeager's translation of 11.8.
- amerai.* On the use of what appears to be a future tense where we might expect a subjunctive see the note in the Introduction, pp. 21-22.
- 7 *affection.* "Ameisté," in this context, apparently means the condition of being one's *ami* or *amie*. See the note to 4<sup>1</sup>.7. AND gives three citations supporting such a use from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (s.v. "amisté," 2); the relevant citations in DMF (s.v. "amitié," B), on the other hand, are all from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century or after, and it is not a common word in 14<sup>th</sup> century French lyrics. Machaut uses it only twice that I know of, in *Lou.* 186.20 and *Lai* 4.48; it does not appear in either *100B* or in Granson. Gower uses it again in this sense in 33.9, 40.21, 44.6, and 44.16, and in *MO* 17516, cited above in the commentary to 4<sup>1</sup>.
- 8-14 The compliment to the lady is more evident than the logic in this stanza, which seems to associate the persona's dismay with the qualities that he most admires in her.
- 10 On the word order see the note to 6.6-7.
- for.* This might instead be "that," following "en si halt lieu [in so high a place]" in line 10.
- set my heart.* Macaulay, in his note to 39.9 (1:468), notes that Gower uses the verb "assener" in a different sense in each of its three appearances in *50B* (the third is at 14.17), each of which must therefore be inferred from context. For this line he gives "I direct (the affections of) my heart," a plausible solution supported by one of the eight uses of the verb in *MO*, in lines 15748-49: 'D'almoisne donne ton denier, / U meulx le quidez assener [give your alms wherever you think best to direct them]." There is no precise analogy for such a use in either DMF or AND, however. DMF s.v. "assener," I.A.1.a offers "diriger, guider qqn; conduire qqn (qq. part, vers qqn) [to direct, to

guide someone; to lead someone (somewhere, towards someone)],” and under I.A.1.b, “placer, installer qqn qq. part [to place someone somewhere],” but in all the citations the direct objects are people, not things, and in virtually all, an actual physical action is involved. Under I.C.2, “régler, diriger qqc. [to control, direct something],” the single citation (from Froissart) is about directing one’s path. Machaut uses the verb several times (e.g. in *Lou.* 8.9, *Comp.* 6.165), usually in the past participle, and in the sense of “provided for” (*DMF*, loc.cit., I.A.4), which doesn’t work here. The translation I offer is based, like Macaulay’s, on context, including the references to the lady possessing the persona’s heart in lines 1 and 19.

- 12-13 This might be “there is no woman whom I know to be equal to you” or “there is no woman with whom I am acquainted who is equal to you,” not that it makes any difference to the sentiment being expressed. “Savoir [to know]” could be used in Middle French in contexts in which “connaître [to be acquainted with]” would be required in Modern French. See *DMF* s.v. “savoir,” I.B.1.a.
- 13 *binds itself*. From Macaulay (1:463), who adds, in parentheses, “(to you).” As he suggests, one expects “s’allie” to be followed by a prepositional phrase, as in Christine de Pizan, *100BD*, 88.12-13, “on m’a bien dit qu’il [vo cuer] s’alïe / A un autre [I have been told that your heart has become attached to another],” cited in *DMF* s.v. “allier,” I.B.1.a; but see I.B.3 for a small number of citations in which the verb stands alone.
- 22 It is the lady’s generosity that reminds the persona of May in 23.22-23. The comparison to the month of May occurs frequently in Chaucer, with reference both to women (*KnT CT* I.1037, *MerT* IV.1748, *MkT* VII.2120, *LGW* 613) and to men (*GP* I.92, *SqT* V.281, *FranT* V.927-28, *T&C* 5.844). As commonplace as it might seem, I cannot recall seeing any similar passages in earlier lyrics.
- 23 *fields in bloom*. From *AND* s.v. “flurir,” p.p. as s., 1, citing this line.