

32

Cest aun novell Janus, q'ad double face,
L'yvern passer et l'estée voit venant.
Comparison de moi si j'ensi face,
Contraire a luy mes oills sont regardant:
5 Je voi l'ivern venir, froid et nuisant,^o
Et l'estée vait, ne sai sa revenue,
Q'amour me poingt et point ne me salue.

La cliere Estée, qui le solail embrace,
Devient obscure a moi, siq'au^o devant
10 L'yvern me tolt d'amour toute la *grace*,
Dont *par* dolour jeo sui mat et pesant.
Ne sai jeuer, ne sai chanter *par* tant.
Ainz sui covert dessoubtz la triste Nue,
Q'amour me poingt et point ne me salue.

15 Vo bealté croist, q'a null temps se defface.^o
Pourceo, ma dame, a vous est acordant
Qe vo bounté se monstre en toute place,
Mais jeo, pour quoi qe sui tout vo servant,
Ne puis veoir de *grace* ascun semblant.
20 C'est une dure et forte retenue,
Q'amour me poingt et point ne me salue.

5 MS nuisand
9 MS si siqau
15 Mac desface

32

- This new year, Janus,^o who has a double face,
sees the winter pass and the spring arrive.
If thus I make a comparison to myself,
my eyes look opposite to his:
- 5 I see the winter coming, cold and baleful,
and spring departs, nor know I its return,
for love pricks^o me and doesn't soothe^o me at all.
- The bright springtime, which embraces the sun,^o
becomes dark for me, just as previously
- 10 winter took from me all the grace of love,
so that out of sorrow I am downcast and depressed.
I cannot play, I cannot sing as a result.
Instead I am covered beneath a sad cloud,
for love pricks me and doesn't soothe me at all.
- 15 Your beauty, which never fades, increases.
Therefore, my lady, for you it is fitting
that your goodness be shown in every place,
but I, although I am fully your servant,
cannot see any semblance of grace.
- 20 It is a hard and painful service,^o
for love pricks me and doesn't soothe me at all.

32 is the first of six ballades in *50B* that are attached to particular times of the year and the first of two that are set on New Year's Day. New Year's poems are easily found among Gower's predecessors. Deschamps has nearly a dozen (**112**, **293**, **412**, **437**, **496**, **528**, **531**, **581**, **593**, **640**, **749**), and Granson four more, **8** (a rondeau), **13** (a ballade), **69**, "L'Estraine du jour de l'an," in couplets, and **70**, the "Complainte de l'an nouvel." Poirion, pp. 117-18, cites other examples from Garençières, from Christine de Pizan (which are all in the form of compliments to particular patrons), and from Charles d'Orléans. There are, however, none from Machaut, a lack that Poirion associates with the absence of topical allusion in "poèmes de pur amour courtois [poems of pure courtly love]" (p. 118).

As noted below, **33** is far more typical of this group. **32** uses the setting not as the occasion for gift-giving but only as the moment for anticipating the change of seasons with the arrival of spring, placing this ballade in the much larger group of poems in which the lover's moods are matched, or not, to the seasonal weather, as in **7.15-18** and Gower's two poems set in May, **36.1-14** and **37.22-23**. Gower develops the comparison in two different, perhaps not fully consistent ways, in the first two stanzas. Seeing spring depart in favor of winter, in a reversal of the

Balade 32

normal order of the seasons, in the first stanza, is not the same as seeing spring turn dark in the second stanza (an image Gower uses again in 40.26), which presumes that the cold effects of winter have already passed. The dark cloud that covers the persona anticipates some of our own ways of thinking about emotions in terms of weather and the overlap in meaning in words such as "gloomy" and "depression." The more captivating image, however, is that of the first stanza, and the most effective touch in the poem, not captured in the translation, is in the refrain, in the way in which the repetition of "poingt"/"point" (which are homonyms for Gower; he rhymes them in *MO* 11860-61) in the middle of the line embodies in verbal form the two faces of Janus, looking outward in opposite directions, in lines 1-2.

32 is also exceptional in being one of only two ballades in *50B* without an envoy. (The other is the unnumbered ballade with which the collection concludes, here labeled [51].) The omission might well be due to a scribal mishap during the copying of the poem, but the third stanza already serves much of the function of the envoy in Gower's other ballades. It abandons the metaphor of the seasons, and the persona turns to address the lady herself, of whom there has been no mention at all in the first two stanzas, with the request for the "grace" that will provide the persona's relief. Gower may simply have felt that an envoy would be redundant in this case.

The request in that stanza echoes the beauty-goodness-grace triad of the preceding ballade and of the closely related 39, not for the purpose of praising the lady, however, but for a bit of special pleading. "Grace" in this case is not the graciousness of the lady that complements her beauty and her goodness but rather the favor that she shows, or doesn't, to her admirer, the more common sense of the word in earlier lyrics. The presumption in 31 that the three qualities are linked becomes an argument that since the lady is beautiful, she owes it to the persona to be kind. In that respect, this poem is actually quite typical of a great many of its predecessors, and one wonders if Gower, obviously aware of the juxtaposition, was also conscious of the way in which the more generous 31 serves to mark the limits of the emotional range of 32.

- 1 *Janus*. Gower's ultimate source for his image of Janus, and perhaps his only source, is Ovid's *Fasti*, particularly 1.63-66:

Ecce tibi faustum, Germanice, nuntiat annum
inque meo primus carmine Ianus adest.
Iane biceps, anni tacite labentis origo,
solus de superis qui tua terga vides.

[“See Janus comes, Germanicus, the herald of a lucky year to thee, and in my song takes precedence. Two-headed Janus, opener of the softly gliding year, thou who alone of the celestials dost behold thy back.” Trans. James George Frazer. Loeb edition. 1931.]

Gower knowledge of Ovid's poem is not in doubt: Stockton identifies 61 lines in *VC* borrowed directly from the *Fasti* (p. 28). For a similar description of Janus' double vision upon the arrival of the new year see *CA* 7.1204-13.

- 7 *poingt/point*. Similar rhymes of "poi[g]nt" (from "poindre [to prick]"; cf. 36.6) and "point" (the negative particle) can be found in Machaut, *Lou*. 190.2, 9 (also playing on other senses of "point"), Motet 2.11-13, and Froissart, *Buisson* 2690-97, but in none of these are the two words placed in the same line. Froissart also plays with different senses of "point" in Bal. 27, but not including the negative particle.

soothe. The choice of verb is compelled by the rhyme and the translation ("heal" would also work) is compelled by the context, but "saluer" is much more commonly used to mean "to greet" rather than

Balade 32

in any of the senses associated with "to save." Gower uses the verb 10 times in *MO*, exclusively in the former sense. Throughout *MO*, and also in *50B* 17.2 and 22.26, the verb meaning "to save" is spelled with a consonant *v* rather than a vowel *u* (as confirmed by both meter and rhyme). *AND* (s.v. "saluer," "salver") does not recognize any overlap between the two; *DMF* s.v. "saluer," II, gives only a small number of citations for the use of "saluer" for "sauver." The noun "salu(t)" could also be used in both senses, and the distribution is somewhat more even. Gower uses it to mean "greeting" in 16.27, 26.1, 28.4, 39.27, and *MO* 2262 and 3958, but to mean "salvation" more than a dozen times in *MO* (e.g. in 323, 13546, 20003). See *AND* s.v. "salu"; *DMF* s.v. "salut."

- 8 *which embraces the sun*. "Which the sun embraces" might seem to make more sense, but while Gower can use "q(u)e" as the subject of a relative clause and "qui" as the object of a preposition,, he doesn't use "qui" as a direct object.
- 20 *service*. On the various senses of "retenue" see the note to 8.17.