

35

Saint Valentin, plus qe null Emperour,
Ad *parlement* et convocacion
Des toutz oiseals, qui vienont a son jour,
U la compaigne *prent* son compaignon
5 En droit amour; mais *par* *comparison*,
D'ascune *part* ne puiss avoir la moie.
Qui soul remaint ne poet avoir *grant* joie.

Com la fenix souleine est au sojour
En Arabie, celle *regioun*,
10 Ensi ma dame, en droit° de son° amour,
Souleine maint, ou, si jeo vuill ou *noun*,
N'ad cure de ma supplicacion,
Sique d'amour ne sai troever la voie.
Qui soul remaint ne poet avoir *grant* joie.

15 O com nature est pleine de favour
A ceos oiseals q'ont lour eleccion!
O si jeo fuisse, en droit° de mon atour,
En ceo soul cas de lour *condicioun*!
Plus poet nature qe ne poet *resoun*.
20 En mon estat *tresbien* le sente et voie.
Qui soul remaint ne poet avoir *grant* joie.

Chascun Tarcel gentil ad sa *falcoun*,
Mais j'ai faili de ceo q'avoir *voldroie*.
Ma dame, c'est le fin de mon *chançoun*.
25 Qui soul remaint ne poet avoir *grant* joie.

10, 17 en droit. See the note to 12.2.

10 MS deson

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°Saint Valentine, more° than any emperor,
holds a parliament° and convocation
of all the birds, who come on his feast day,
where° the female takes her partner
5 in true love;° but in comparison,
nowhere can I have mine.°
Whoever remains alone cannot have great joy.

°Just as the phoenix is alone° in its dwelling
in Arabia, that region,
10 so my lady, with regard to her love,
remains alone, where, whether I wish or not,
she has no regard for my supplication,
so that I cannot find the way° to love.
Whoever remains alone cannot have great joy.

15 O how Nature is full of favor
to those birds who have their choice!
O, if I were, with regard to my situation,
in this one respect in their condition!
Nature can do more than can reason.°
20 In my state I feel and see it well.
Whoever remains alone cannot have great joy.

°Every noble tercel° has its falcon,
but I have not attained what I wish to have.
My lady, this is the end of my song.
25 Whoever remains alone cannot have great joy.

35 takes the opposite tack from 34, decrying the lady's unwillingness to participate in the joys of the season rather than inviting her complicity, and contrasting the persona's hard luck to the natural joy and fulfillment of the birds, invoking, especially in stanza three, a similar fantasy of "naturatus amor [natured love]" (CA 1. vv. 1) (one that that might be troubling to Genius), not for its freedom from social constraint, however, but for the lack of such obstacles as are posed by the lady's rejection. As in 34, Gower includes more than a single bird image in the poem, evidently unconcerned that in its solitude the phoenix provides an exception to "toutz oiseals" who happily choose their mates in line 3. Also as in 34, its refrain has more than a single sense, depending on who is discussed in the stanza. In stanzas one and three it clearly refers to the persona's condition, but in stanza two, which is about the lady's solitude, and in

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the envoy, in which the persona addresses her directly for the first time, there is the suggestion that it might apply to her as well. But if so, it expresses the persona's wish in modest terms, and the comparison to the joy of the birds also transforms the more conventional complaint of the lover who believes that he deserves more into mere wishful thinking, born more of loneliness than of his claimed subjection to love.

- 1-7 In his "Songe Saint Valentin" (77), which is most likely derived from Chaucer's *PF*, Granson too makes a comparison between the ease with which the birds find their mates and the complications that ensue for humans (lines 329-66), but without reference to the particular situation of the persona.
- 1 *more*. One is tempted to translate "plus" as "greater," but the use of "plus" as an adjective is very rare. No examples are recorded in *DMF*, and the few citations in *AND* s.v. "plus," a[djective], provide no good analogy for the use in this line. I have found no use of "plus" as an adjective in *MO*.
- 2 *parliament*. It is difficult not to see a recollection of and perhaps a deliberate allusion to Chaucer's *PF*.
- 4 *where*. Since "u" might also be "when" (*DMF* s.v. "où," II.A.2), the antecedent might be "jour" rather than "convocacion." Or it might simply be both.
- 5 *true love*. On "droit amour" see the note to 41.3.
- 6 *mine*. That is, "my partner," in the feminine. *DMF* s.v. "mien" marks "moie" as "ancien ["former," or in this context "archaic"]," but it occurs commonly in Machaut, who provides the source for many of the *DMF*'s citations.
- 8-11 This is Gower's only reference to the phoenix. Compare *BD* 981-83: "Trewly she was, to myn yë, / The soleyn fenix of Arabye, / For ther livyth never but oon." On the source, see Yeager's note, who traces the location of the bird in Arabia to Isidore, *Etymologies* XII.vii.22. To the texts that he cites add the early fifteenth-century French bestiary cited in *DMF* s.v. "phenix," also placing the bird in Arabia.
- 8 *alone*. "Soulein(e)" appears eight other times in *50B* and some two dozen times in *MO*, but *DMF* s.v. "solain" provides only one citation, from *MO* 73, suggesting that the word may be exclusively Anglo-Norman. On its different possible senses see the note to 36.11.
- 13 *way*. Gower uses a similar metaphor in 16.8. Cf. also 48.15.
- 19 *Nature can do more than can reason*. Nature and Reason are traditionally cited as opposing impulses with regard to love. Much of Genius' lesson for Amans in *CA* is encapsulated in *50B* [51].1-2: "Amour de soi et bon en toute guise / Si resoun le governe et justifie [Love in itself is good in every guise if Reason governs and controls it]." The persona here evidently invokes "resoun" in a very different sense, however, not as the source of moral governance but as a way of distinguishing between the very different ways in which avian and human relations are conducted, employing "resoun" in the broader sense of "reasoning" (as in 39.23) to refer to the persona's far from successful efforts to persuade his lady, including his "supplicacion" in line 12. If that is so, we should perhaps put a colon or semicolon at the end of line 19 to clarify that it rather than the refrain is the "estat" that the persona refers to in line 20.
- 22 The final episode in Chaucer's *PF* is concerned with the contention among three tercel for the eagle on Nature's wrist, and the longest part of Granson's "Songe Saint Valentin" (77) is a tercel's account of his love for a particular falcon.
- noble tercel*. Chaucer refers to the "gentyf faucoun" (*PF* 337) and to a "royal tersel" (*PF* 415; cf. also 393-94). Birds of prey were clearly regarded as being of higher rank than other birds and in that sense "noble."

its falcon. A tercel is by definition male. The word "faucon" is normally masculine, and in using feminine "sa" as the possessive (which we might have translated as "his"), Gower again allows natural gender to take priority over grammatical gender as in 34.25.

- 24 *my song*. In both 40.22-23 and 43.7, the persona refers to singing, but this is the only instance in 50B, apart from the Latin colophon following [51], in which one of the ballades is referred to as a song. As in Modern French, the usual Middle French word for a bird's song is "chant" rather than "chanson," but "chanson" could so be used as well, as in Deschamps 476.7, "Mais d'oyssel nul n'oy chanson ne glay [but I didn't hear the song or cry of any bird]"; see *AND* s.v. "chançon," 2; and *DMF* s.v. "chanson," A.4, citing Christine de Pizan, "Le livre du dit du Poissy," 121-22 (*Oeuvres* 2:163), "ces haies / Ou rossignolz disoyent chançons gaies [these hedges in which nightingales sang their song]." Does the lover subtly adopt a bird-like persona here? Hopefully? Or instead to emphasize the contrast to the tercel in line 22?