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- Vailant, courtois, gentil, et renomée,
Loial, verrai, certain de vo promesse,
Vous m'avetz *vostre* corps et coer donné
Que jeo resçoive et *prens* a grant leesce.
5 Si jeo de Rome fuisse l'empresse,
Vostre ameisté refuserai jeo mie,
Q'au tiel ami jeo vuill bien estre amie.
- La halte fame qe l'en m'ad recontée
De vo valour et de vo grant *prouesse*
10 De joie m'ad l'oreille *trespercée*
Et conforté le coer, siq'en destresce
Ne puiss languir; ainz de vo gentilesce
Pour remembrer sui des toutz mals guarie,
Q'au tiel ami jeo vuil bien estre amie.
- 15 Et puisq'il est ensi de verité,
Que l'ameisté de vous vers moi se dresce,
Le coer de moi vers vous s'est adrescée
De bien amer *par* droite naturesce.
Tresdous amis, tenetz ma foi expresse.
20 Ceo point d'acord tendrai toute ma vie,
Q'au tiel ami jeo vuill bien estre amie.
- Par loialté, confort, chierté, tendresce,
Ceste ma *lettre*, quoique nulls en die,^o
Ove tout le coer envoie a vo noblesce,
25 Q'au tiel ami jeo vuill bien estre amie.

23 MS endie

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- Valiant, courteous, noble, and renowned,
loyal, true, firm° in your promise,
you have given me your body and your heart°
which I accept and take with great joy.
- 5 If I were the empress of Rome,°
I wouldn't at all refuse your affection,
for to such an *ami* I well wish to be the *amie*.°
- °The great fame that one has described to me
of your valor and of your great prowess
- 10 has pierced my ear with joy
and comforted my heart, so that in distress
I cannot languish; instead, in remembering your gentility,°
I am healed of every ill,
for to such an *ami* I well wish to be the *amie*.
- 15 And since it is truly so,
that your affection is directed to me,
my heart has turned towards you
to love well out of true kindness.°
Gentle *ami*, have here° my expressly stated pledge.°
- 20 I will hold to this agreement° all my life,
for to such an *ami* I well wish to be the *amie*.
- Out of loyalty, comfort, affection, tenderness,
this my letter, whatever anyone says,
with all my heart I send to your nobleness,°
- 25 for to such an *ami* I well wish to be the *amie*.

The four ballades on infidelity in love are followed abruptly by four versions of a faithful and committed love. The first is a woman's declaration of love for a man who sounds very much like the Hector who is cited for contrast to the man described in the immediately preceding ballade. Declarations of love make up the largest category of poems attributed to a woman persona among earlier 14th-century lyricists. In diction, Gower's is most like similar poems by Machaut. Three closely related of Machaut's ballades, *Lou.* 90, 198, and 220, among them provide all of the qualities that the woman praises—"valour," "courtoisie," "prouesse," "gentillesse," "renommée," "loiauté"—as well as the gift of the heart (line 3), the "confort" she receives (11), and her own promise of fidelity (19-20), all motifs that occur repeatedly throughout Machaut's collection. On the other hand, it is a ballade by Deschamps (497), in

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which a woman lists the qualities that she expects from the man she chooses as a lover, that provides the closest parallel to Gower's refrain, in its own refrain, "De tel ami doit amie estre amée [by such an *ami* should an *amie* be loved]" and in lines 13-14, "Un tel ami doit estre ami clamé, / Et je veuil bien sa dame estre clamée [such an *ami* ought to be called an *ami*, and I well wish to be called his lady]." (This is the same ballade cited for a different reason with regard to 41.8 above.)

44 also contains echoes of some of the earlier ballades in Gower's own collection. Perhaps the most significant of these are the passages that respond to the immediately preceding poems, praising the man for the reliability of his promises (line 2) rather than decrying his falsity, citing his "gentilesce" (line 4; cf. 42.15), proclaiming her joy (line 4; cf. 43.R), and asserting her health instead of languor (lines 11-13; cf. 43.27). (See also the notes to lines 2, 5, 8-10, 18, and 19, below). It is also a tissue of internal echoes: "vailant," "gentil," "loial," "verrai," "coer," and "ameisté," in the first stanza, are all repeated in some form in stanzas two and three, and the lover's "renomée" (line 1) is explained in greater length in lines 8-10.

- 2 *firm*. The male persona states that his lady is not "certeine" in 40.4. Cf. also 4².22. Yeager aptly translates "certain" with "unwavering."
- 3 *you have given me your body and your heart*. The lover gives his heart and body in 17.11 and 28.16. For other examples of the collocation of "coer" and "corps" see the note to 5.26.
- 5 *If I were empress of Rome*. As the model for this line, Fisher (p. 76) cites Deschamps 417.8, "Telle dame estre empereis de Romme [such a lady to be empress of Rome]," but the context is very different (Deschamps uses the expression in praise of his lady) and the similarity is very likely accidental. As noted in the Introduction, we ought to see this line instead as a variant of the formula that Gower also uses in 26.14. See the note to that line.
- 7 *ami, amie*. See the note to 4¹.7.
- 8-10 This passage echoes 6.1-5. On the metaphor of "piercing the ear," see the note to 6.5.
- 12 *gentility*. Gower ordinarily uses "gentilesce" as a quality of character, as in 13.9, rather than a mark of rank, though compare 23.26. It seems to mark character here, but see the note to line 24 below.
- 18 *kindliness*. Gower's only other use of "naturese" occurs in 28.1 (in which the male persona bewails its absence).
- 19 *have here*. As in 1.27, the verb might be indicative rather than imperative: "you have my pledge." *expressly stated pledge*. AND s.v. "expres." On "pledge" see the note to 1.27.
- 20 *agreement*. AND s.v. "point¹," "point d'accord."
- 24 *your nobleness*. The context suggests that "noblesce" is used here as an honorific rather than as a moral quality. Cf. the use of "noble" (line 1) and "gentilesce" (line 12), and see the note to 28.15.

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