

47

Li corps se tient *par* manger et *par* boire,
Et fin amour le coer fait sustenir,
Mais plus d'assetz est digne la memoire
De vrai amour, qui le sciet maintenir.
5 Pourceo, ma dame, a vous me vuill tenir
De tiel amour qe ja ne falsera.
N'est pas oiceus sil qui bien amera.

Des tiels y ad qui sont d'amour en gloire,
Par quoi li coers se poet bien rejoïr;
10 Des tiels y ad qui sont en purgatoire,
Qe mieulx lour fuist assetz de mort morir.
Ascuns d'esper ont pris le vein desir,
Dont sanz exploit l'amant souhaidera.
N'est pas oiceus sil qui bien amera.

15 De fin amour qui voet savoir l'istoire,
Il falt qu'il° sache et bien et mal souffrir.
Plus est divers qe l'en ne porra croire.
Et nepourqant ne m'en puiss abstenir:
Ainz me covient amer, servir, cherir
20 La belle en qui moun coer sojournera.
N'est pas oiceus sil qui bien amera.

Demi parti de joie et de suspir,
Ceste balade a vous, ma dame, irra,
Q'en la santé d'amour m'estoet languir.
25 N'est pas oiceus sil qui bien amera.

16 *Mac q'il*

Balade 47

47

The body is sustained by eating and drinking,
and *fin amour* makes the heart endure,^o
but more worthy by far is the memory
of true love,^o for the one who can maintain it.
5 Therefore, my lady, I wish to adhere to you
with such a love that never will prove false.^o
He who will love well is not idle.

There are some who are in love's glory,
for which the heart can well rejoice;
10 there are some who are in purgatory
so that it would be much better for them to die.^o
Some have taken vain desire from hope,
whereby^o the lover will wish without success.
He who will love well is not idle.

15 Whoever wants to know the story of *fin amour*
must be able to endure both good and ill.
It is more diverse than one can believe.
And nonetheless, I can't abstain from it:
rather must I love, serve, cherish
20 the fair one in whom my heart will reside.
He who will love well is not idle.

Half in joy and half in sighs,
this ballade will go to you, my lady,
for I must languish in the health of love.^o
25 He who will love well is not idle.

47 is the last ballade in 50B in the voice of one who is in love. It professes a commitment to love, consistent with the three preceding ballades with which it is grouped, but it mixes the personal with the prescriptive, juxtaposing "fin amour" with "vrai amour" and "loving well," pulling together motifs that have run throughout 50B and preparing the way for the four ballades that make up the conclusion. "Fin amour," here as in 37.1, is used in its most literary sense, not just "pure love" (see the note to 7.1) but the particular sort of love that is represented in earlier poetry, the love that sustains the heart (lines 1-2) and that is characterized by the extremes of glory and purgatory, "bien" and "mal," "joie" and "suspir," and "languor" and "santé," all of the elements of a purely emotional experience as felt by one who has succumbed to a power quite beyond his or her control. "Vrai amour" (line 4) is not inconsistent with "fin

Balade 47

amour" nor is it a different kind of love; it is the commitment to truth, fidelity, and service that is added to "fin amour" and that serves to make it "plus digne [more worthy]" (3), as evidenced by the fact that the persona remains subject to one at the same time that he expresses his commitment to the other. And it requires work as well as commitment. To practice "vrai amour" is "bien amer," "to love well." The refrain expresses Gower's commentary on "fin amour" in the form of an allusion to the *Roman de la rose*, in which the porter who admits the lover to the garden in which all of his experiences take place is called "Oiseuse [Idleness]." We might not be unjustified in reading the refrain, especially in its final instance, with some added emphasis: "He who will love *well* is not idle."

The terms that Gower sets up here in 47 anticipate the more extended statement on love that he offers in 49-51. "Bien amer" anticipates the "amer bonement [to love in a good manner]" and "bon amour [good love]" of 49. Both "bon amour" and true, authentic love are distinguished from other kinds, and they are offered not only as the only kind of love that is worthy of commitment but also itself a source of virtue for those who practice it.

- 2 *makes the heart endure*. Macaulay, in his note to this line (1:469), gives "doth support," choosing the best attested meaning for "sustenir" but presuming a very unusual use of "fait." If "fait" has its most common function before an infinitive (as I have translated it), then "sustenir" must be intransitive, which is also unusual but for which there are some attested examples in French (*DMF* s.v. "soutenir," A.1.a ["Empl. intrans. ou pronom.], C ["Empl. abs.]) and Middle English (*MED* s.v. "sustēnen," 5c.(a)).
- 4 *true love*. Except when referring to a person, "vrai" means "true" in the sense of "authentic, genuine" or, with reference to statements, "truthful": see *AND* s.v. "verai"; *DMF* s.v. "vrai," esp. II. But with reference to persons, it can also mean "true" in the sense of "faithful, loyal": *AND*, loc.cit, 4; *DMF*, loc.cit, I.A.3. Middle English "true" is used similarly; see *MED* s.v. "treu(e)," 1a, 9. The latter sense was no doubt included by implication within the notion of a "genuine" or "authentic" love. Both senses seem to be implied in Gower's only other use of the phrase, in *Tr* 16.17. Cf. his use of "droit amour," 4¹.3.
- 6 *prove false*. "Falsera" answers to "vrai" in line 3, but the primary sense in this case has to do with infidelity rather than lack of authenticity. See *AND* s.v. "fauser," v.n., 2; *DMF* s.v. "fausser," I.A.3. See also *MED* s.v. "falsen," 1. In combination with "vrai," however, it is difficult not to hear as well the implication of a love that is not genuine.
for the one who can maintain it. Or "if one can maintain it" (Macaulay [1:469]: "If a man can preserve it"). For the construction, see the note to 26.9.
- 11 *to die*. More precisely, "to die in death." One might hope that instead of "de mort morir," Gower wrote "d'amour morir [to die of love]." When "mourir" and "mort" appear together, one expects to find a modifier, as in Deschamps' "je mourray de mort dure et amer [I will die a hard and bitter death]" (768.21).
- 13 *whereby*. Since "souhaiter" is not ordinarily followed by "de," "dont" cannot be the object of the verb in this line, but instead serves as a relative ("by which") or more loosely as a conjunction. For intransitive use of "souhaiter" see *AND* s.v. "suhaidier," *DMF* s.v. "souhaiter," A, "Empl. abs."
- 24 This a third variation on a very common collocation. Cf. 43.27 and 44.11-13.

Balade 47