

Poetry Series

Forrest Hainline
- poems -

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Forrest Hainline()

I am a trial lawyer living in San Francisco. As Jacques Maritain observed, poetry is the divination of the spiritual in the things of sense; for me, poetry is a place of calm, insight, and healing. I also find solace in my family and the martial art, Aikido. Thank you for reading my poems; I hope at least one of them touches you and helps you order your world.

A Thanksgiving Cinquain

Thank you
For helping me
Want to believe in You
For without Your help, without Grace
I can't

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Accept

Accept the future
In all its uncertainties
A gift to open

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Aging

Departure's silence.
Anonymity of age.
Beauty's magnet gone.

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Alison

In April, when spray begins to spring
Lilacs and daffodils can be found
Pulsing up from the dead ground
And birds long gone return to sing

All this juice and all this joy remind
Me of the sacredness in every thing
The holy flutter of petal and wing
Hints from heaven that God is kind

And God's kindness most impressed
Its grace upon me when first I held
My newborn daughter, as my heart swelled
Knowing how much I had been blest

And blessed I continue each day to be
A father forever to this child of mine
My daughter's love, a holy shrine
A bay of calm in a turbulent sea

So light on, light on Alison
Heaven bright, heaven sent
Touch my heart, make straight its bent
And know you are my beloved one.

(for my Daughter/2007)

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Almost Full

Almost a full moon
Just missing an edge at the
Bottom right corner

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Almost Winter Solstice

Almost

Winter solstice

A full cold moon fastens

Its grip while the nights become long

And dark

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Alzheimer's Silence

Silence

You don't know me

You've read the last pages

Of a forgotten book you used

To love

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Amazing Day

An amazing day.
One of many, if only
We open our eyes

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An Hegelian Cinquain

Some folks
Ain't happy but
They puttin others down
Step on my head if I can stomp
On them

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Ancient Pieta

You can hear sobbing
From the crumbled vine-covered
Ancient Pieta

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Anger

There's truth in anger
Speaker's truth - more than love words.
The sheathed knife stays sharp.

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Annoint

Annoint

Me with holy

Oil. Lay your sacred hands

Upon my head. Heal me with God's

Blessing

(2007)

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Answer Me

Answer me O Lord
Relieve me from my sorrows
Fill my heart with joy

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April

Each year I remember less
And am therefore more surprised.

Was the earth this black
Last April?

Were the hues of the budding trees
So many shades of green?

And the birds, everywhere.
Could I parse their calls as now?

Was I always so dazzled
By blossoms of cherry and pear?

Did daffodils fanfare like this
Trumpeting their colors vibrantly, violently?

The smell of warm rain
First thunder

Pollen stinging my eyes
And the sneezing

Were you always so wonderful
Fruitful, fecund, fertile?

Open my eyes to see
My soul to believe.

Imprint you, April.
Imprint you in my memory
And on my soul.

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Ash Wednesday 2008

Out of
Ashes and dust
You gave us life and light
As we return to dust keep our
Light lit

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Ashes

Ashes

We are ashes

But for God's breath of life

Sustain us as we journey dust

To dust

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Asses Of The Law

Asses of the law –
Judges who refuse to hear
Oral argument

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Awareness

Seek an awareness
That God desires to find you
Then you can find God

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Balaam

I was on the wrong road
And in the wrong road the Angel took her stand
To stand in my way and right my journey
I would not see her though she stood before me

My friends opened their eyes and saw
Saw her flaming sword
And flaming eyes
And terrible countenance
And said Friend do not go that way for the Angel of the Lord
Is there and will smite you
For the path you walk is the wrong path

I was angry with my friends
And berated them
And pushed them aside
Saw them foolish
Struck those who would not move from my path
Struck them as many as three times

Why do you strike us, they asked
Are we not your friends who love you
Who have guided you rightly
If your eyes are closed
Can we not be your eyes for you

In rage I lifted my arm to strike them again
To strike them down to dust
And trample them
Dust to dust

The Lord's Angel rose in fury
And shone before my eyes
So brightly that even my closed eyes burned with brightness
The Angel made a sound like a great wind
And the dust rose and cut my face
And filled my nose and parched my tongue

Then the wind stopped and my eyes opened

The Angel stood there still
Now without a sword
And opened her arms
Beckoned me to her bosom

I came to her and wept
Wept as she held me
Wept for my blindness
Wept for the blows laid on my friends
Wept for the wrong road and all the wrong roads
Wept for the wrong turns and all the wrong turns

Held in her bosom
I asked her to forgive
To forgive me my blows and blindness
She held me
No she said
Forgive yourself

Open your eyes
Signs are there to see
Open your heart
Signs are there to follow

Open your ears
For the Word that is before any word
For the Word that is after every word
For the Word that is within every word

For the silent Word heard over forty days and nights
In the desert
For the Word in the wind
For the Word before the wind and after the wind
For the sound of the Word spoken in silence
Before the beginning

(2007)

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Balance

Running in the dark
On uneven ground. Trying
To keep my balance

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Baptism 1

Welcome

God-fashioned child

You are called to remake

A world of wonder, beauty, love

And peace

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Baptism 2

Welcome human child
In God's image you are made
God is love loves you

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Baptism 3

Welcome blessed human child
Fashioned by God's hand
Your world's more full of wonder
Than you can understand

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Barbarous Beauty

Barbarous beauty
Of couple-colored autumn
Assaults our senses

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Barren

Before me nothing
But a barren field. Behind,
A richness squandered.

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Beautiful

You're as beautiful
As ever you were when we
Were young and reckless

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Beauty

Beauty frightens us.
Terrible beauty. We all
Quiver before it.

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Before Choice

Moment before choice
Possibilities suspend
Hope and fear and time

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Before Closing Argument

Today's
The conjunction
Of Apollo and Mars
Swing our swords and sing our song of
Battle

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Belief

Purge my unbelief
That I might believe in you
Graceful through your grace

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Between

The thought between thoughts.
The breath between breaths. The life
Between birth and death.

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Black Crow

Black crow
In a blue sky
Swoop, buckle and plunge to
Pick up some shiny thing from the
Brown ground

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Bless Me

Bless me
Keep me holy
Let me walk in your ways
Allow me to wear your righteous
Goodness

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Bluetooth

I guess you don't know
How stupid you look with that
Bluetooth in your ear

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Bread And Roses

Father in heaven
Give us our daily measure
Of bread and roses

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Bridge Span

Can't see the bridge span
In the heavy morning fog
The base a shadow

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Burn

Regret stays with me
Like a burn that will not heal
Not being there for you

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Closed And Opened

I had closed my heart
Walled off others from myself
Then you opened me

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Coherence

Coherence comfort
And community our need
For meaning in life

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Confiteor

I am a sinner
Dear God I am a sinner
Have mercy on me

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Contrition

Sorrow for my sins
Saturates my soul, drowning
My spirit in tears

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Creator Goddess

Patient

Never angry

Eyes with love upon you

Sees you even when she is not

Looking

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Creators

Boys girls together
In God's image created
To be creators

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Cry

A wilderness cry
Is mute with no one to hear
God's voice before time

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Cygnets

Six cygnets walking
Between their parents at
Palace of Fine Arts

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Daffodil Fanfare

Daffodil fanfare
Trumpets the reviving earth
Spring's sharp clarion

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Daffodil Wand

Spring's daffodil wand
Wakens the earth from winter's
Gray frozen slumber

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Daily Prayer

Dear God

Thank you for all our blessings

Open our eyes to see your signs

And open our hearts to follow them

Amen

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Dancing Clouds

Dappled dancing clouds
Partnering grounded shadows
In God's minuet

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Death Cannot Take

Death parts us, and as we deal with loss
We try to scrape together the bits and pieces
That bound us together in life's jetsam and floss
Things that touched us, the additions, the increases
The laughter, the wisdom, the passion, the love
That made even the darkest days brighter
That clarified and increased the quality of
Life and life's mysteries and we try to anchor
With firm memory what death tries to end
To make sense of the senseless, to order this chaos,
To preserve what we gained, to keep, to append
To push back against the overwhelming sense of loss
Death only hurts where love lives
Death cannot take what love's memory gives

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Death's Timing

Death owns its timing
Always it's arbitrary
And Always too soon

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Death's Renewal

Death brings us closer
Calls together the scattered
Death renews our bonds

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Dignity

He gave dignity
To the poor and grace he gave
To the graceless

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Discernment No.1

Always

God talks to us

In books nature and friends

How do I discern God's voice and

Listen

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Discernment No.2

Always

God talks to us

In books nature and friends

How do I hear God's voice in the

Whirlwind

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Dispersit Superbos

Fecit

Potentiam

Dispersit Superbos

Deposuit potentes de

Sede

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Divorce

Said to her one night
Do you? She said to me, no.
Ended it right then.

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Dreaming Nancy

When I dream of you
I hear your laugh, see your eyes
Light up with wonder

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Drunk With God

Drunk with
God's holiness
Drunk with love for my wife
Drunk with the cascading richness
Of life

(2007)

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Early Winter

Snow against my face
Stale, picked up, thrown against my face
My face bitten red
There is no shelter for the trees are dead
There is no shelter to November in

Hands chapped, lips cracked
I need you to December in

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Early Winter Sky-San Francisco

Early winter sky
Rain clouds muscle up against
Broad swatches of blue

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Earth's Resurrection

Morning run turns Eastward
Palace and skyline backlit
Earth's resurrection

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Easter

The Resurrection

Saves us. Death alone is no
Triumph. Only death.

No Resurrection

And Jesus' Passion leaves us
Empty and angry

If Good Friday were

The end of it, faith would be
Fear and love vengeance.

The Resurrected Christ

Led no mobs and planned no
Retaliation.

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Eisley - My First Grandchild

Gratitude, peace, joy
All this I felt with Eisley
First time holding her

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Emptiness

Emptiness binds us
Without the empty spaces
We are locked apart

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End Of Savings Time

In late October
Savings time ends, quickening
Each day's birth and death

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Endless Winter

Winter never ends.
The trees begrudge their budding
So few daffodils.

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Enemies

Enemies assail
Me from ev'ry direction
You, Lord, are my shield

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Epiphany

There in the cradle
The wise men saw blazing forth
The light of the star

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Fairness

You want a fair world?
Then have one without passion,
Love, lust or beauty

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Fall Assault

Pied leaves
Cover the ground
As dazzle and leaf mold
Mingle to assault sinus and
Senses

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False Hope

Blinding frigid sun
Teases the waking city
With false hope of warmth

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Father's Day

Two of my children
Did not call on Father's Day
Success. You hurt me

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Father's Day 2008

Best Father's Day gift
Leo Hainline eight years old
His first hole-in-one

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Fibonacci - Water (Variation 1)

Water

Weeds

Water forms

Weeds in water

Weeds in water form patterns

Patterns form of weeds in water over stones

Over stones and weeds water forms patterns reflecting
sunlight and soul of water

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Fibonacci - Water (Variation 2)

Weeds

Water

Form patterns

Water forms patterns

Weeds and sunlight over stones

Patterns of sunlight in water washing over stones

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Fibonacci For The Election

Words

Great

Great words

The best words

The best words ever

Words words words the best words ever

Words to make us great who knows how who cares the best words

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Fog On The Golden Gate

Fog so thick you can't
See the bridge - Just hear fog horns
Signaling danger

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For Father John Dunne

I know I will die.
What must I do to fulfill
My desire to live?

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For Claire And Harvey

Marriage

Lifts the spirit

A subtle work of art

That incarnates the human heart's

Desire

Comfort

One another

In sadness and trials

Be together in dreaming all

Your dreams

When you

Tell each other

I love you, let it mean

I'll let you see my secret heart

And dreams

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Forgive

Forgive

Me O my God

No, You say, I love you

Sin devours your heart - so forgive

Yourself

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Forgiveness Prayer

You give
Me the divine
Gift to forgive and forget
All evil against me despite
My hate

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Forsaken

Have you forsaken
Me in my hour of trouble
Hide from me no more

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Friends And Enemies

Be kind to your friends
Give your enemies their due
Leavened with justice

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General Prologue 01: Introduction - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

When that April with his shower's sweet
The drought of March has pierced to the root,
And bathed every vein in such liquor
Of which virtue engendered is the flower;
When Zephyrus too with his sweet breath
Inspired has in every holt and heath
The tender crops, and the young sun
Has in the Ram his half course run,
And small fowls making melody,
That sleep all the night with open eye
(So pricks them Nature in their courage) :
Then folk long to go on pilgrimage
And palmers for to seek strange strands,
To foreign hallways, known in sundry lands;
And specially, from every shire's end
Of England, to Canterbury they wend,
The holy blissful martyr for to seek
That them has helped, when that they were sick.

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General Prologue 02: Introduction To Cast Of Characters - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Befell that in that season on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Ready to wind on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with full devout courage,
At night was come into that hostelry
Well nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry folk, by adventure to fall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,
That toward Canterbury would ride.
The chambers and the stables were wide,
And well we were eased at best.
And shortly, when the sun was to rest,
So had I spoken with 'em everyone,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And made forward early for to rise,
To take our way, there as I you devise.

But nonetheless, while I have time and space,
Ere that I further in this tale pace,
Me thinks it according to reason,
To tell you all the condition
Of each of 'em, so as it seemed me,
And which they were, and of what degree,
And too in what array that they were in;
And at a knight then will I first begin.

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General Prologue 03: The Knight - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A knight there was, and that a worthy man
That from the time that he first began
To ride out, he loved chivalry,
Truth and honor, freedom and courtesy,
Full worthy was he in his lord's war,
and thereto had he ridden, no man as far,
As well in Christendom as heathenness,
And ever honored for his worthiness.
At Alexander he was, when it was won;
Full oft time he had the board begun
Above all nations in Prussia;
In Lithuania had he raised and in Russia,
No Christian man so oft of his degree;
In Grenada at the siege too had he be
Of Algezir, and ridden in Belmare;
At Lyas was he and at Attalie,
When they were won; and in the Great Sea
At many a noble army had he be.
At mortal battles had he been fifteen,
And fought for our faith at Tramissene
In lists thrice, and aye slain his foe.
This same worthy Knight had been also
Sometime with the lord of Paletay
Against another heathen in Turkey:
And evermore he had a sovereign prize.
And though that he were worthy, he was wise,
And of his port as meek as in a maid.
He never yet any villainy said
In all of his life, unto no manner wight.
He was a very perfect, gentle knight.
But for to tell you of his array,
His horse was good, but he was not gay.
Of fustian he wore a gipon
All besmattered with his habergeon;
For he was lately come from his voyage,
And went for to do his pilgrimage.

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General Prologue 04: The Squire - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

With him there was his son, a young Squire,
A lover, and a lusty bachelor,
With locks curly as they were laid in press,
Of twenty year of age he was, I guess.
Of his stature he was of even length,
And wonderly delivered, and of great strength.
And he had been sometime in calvary,
In Flanders, in Artois, and Piccardy,
And born him well, as of so little space,
In hope to stand in his lady's grace.
Embroidered he was, as it were a meadow
Full of fresh flowers, white and red.
Singing he was, or flirting, all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his gown, with sleeves long and wide.
Well could he sit on horse, and fair ride.
He could songs make and well endight,
Joust and dance, and well portray and write.
So hot he loved, that by night, they tale
He slept no more than doth a nightingale.
Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
And carved before his father at the table.

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General Prologue 05: The Yeoman - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A Yeoman had he, and servants no more
At that time, for he chose to ride so;
And he was clad in coat and hood of green;
A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen
Under his belt he bore full thriftily;
Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly:
His arrows drooped not with feathers low;
And in his hand he bore a mighty bow.
A knot-head had he, with a brown visage.
Of woodcraft well could he all the usage.
Upon his arm he bore a gay bracer,
And by his side a sword and a buckler,
And on that other side a gay dagger,
Harnessed well, and sharp as point of spear;
A Christopher on his breast of silver sheen;
A horn he bore, the baldrick was of green.
A forester he was, truly as I guess.

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General Prologue 06: The Prioress - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

There was also a Nun, a Prioress,
That of her smiling was full simple and coy.
Her greatest oath was but by Saint Loy;
And she was called Madame Eglantine.
Full well she sang the service divine,
Intoned in her nose full seemly;
And French she spoke full fair and fetisly,
After the school of Stratford at Bowe,
For French of Paris was to her unknown.
At meat well taught was she withal;
She let no morsel from her lips fall,
Nor wet her fingers in her sauce deep.
Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep,
That no dropp would fall upon her breast.
In courtesy was set full much her lest.
Her over-lip wiped she so clean
That in her cup was no farthing seen
Of grease, when she drunk had her draft.
Full seemly after her meat she raft,
And certainly she was of great disport,
And full pleasant, and amiable of port,
And pained her to counterfeit cheer
Of court, and be stately of manner
And to be held worthy of reverence.
But, for to speak of her conscience,
She was so charitable and so piteous
She would weep if that she saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
Of small hounds had she, that she fed
With roasted flesh, or milk and fine bread.
But sore wept she if one of them were dead,
Or if men smote them with a yard smart:
And all was conscience and tender heart.
Full seemly her wimple pinched was;
Her nose pretty; her eyes gray as glass;
Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red.
But certainly she had a fair forehead;

It was almost a span broad, I trow;
For hardily, she was not under grow.
Full fetis was her cloak, as I was ware.
Of small coral about her arm she bare
A pair of beads, gauded all with green,
And thereon hung a broach of gold full sheen,
On which there was first writ a crowned A,
And after, amor vincit omnia.

Another nun with her had she,
That was her chaplain, and priests three.

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General Prologue 07: The Monk - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A monk there was, a fair for the mastery,
An outrider, that loved venery,
A manly man, to be an abbot able.
Full many a dainty horse had he in stable,
And when he rode, men might his bridle hear
Jingling in a whistling wind all clear
And too as loud as doth the chapel bell
There as his lord was keeper of the cell.
The rule of Saint Maure or of Saint Benedict -
Because it was old and somewhat strict
This same monk let old things pace,
And held after the new world the space.
He gave not of that text a pulled hen,
That said that hunters be not holy men,
Nor that a monk, when he is reckless,
Is likened to a fish that is waterless -
This is to say, a monk out of his cloister.
But that text held he not worth an oyster;
And I said his opinion was good.
And should he study and make himself wood,
Upon a book in cloister always to pour,
Or work with his hands and labor,
As Austin bid? How shall the world be served?
Let Austin have his work to him reserved!
Therefore he was a prikasour aright:
Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl in flight;
Of tracking and of hunting the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost would he spare.
I saw his sleeves fur-lined at the hand
With gray, and that the finest of the land;
And for to fasten his hood under his chin,
He had of gold wrought a curious pin;
A love knot in the greater end there was.
His head was bald, that shone as any glass,
And too his face, as it had been anoint.
He was a lord full fat and in good point;
His eyes steep, and rolling in his head,

That seemed as a furnace of lead;
His boots supple, his horse in great estate.
Now certainly he was a fair prelate;
He was not pale as a forpyned ghost.
A fat swan he loved best of any roast.
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

□

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General Prologue 08: The Friar - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

[His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.]

¶ Friar there was, a wanton and a merry,
A lymytour, a full solemn man.
In all the orders four there is none that can
So much of dalliance and fair language.
He had made full many a marriage
Of young women at his own cost.
Unto his order he was a noble post.
And well beloved and familiar was he
With franklins over all in his country,
And too with worthy women of the town;
For he had power of confession,
And said himself, more than a curate,
For of his order he was licentiate.
Full sweetly heard he confession,
And pleasant was his absolution:
He was an easy man to give penance,
There as he wished to have a good pittance.
For unto a poor order for to give
Is sign that a man is well shrive;
For if he gave, he dared make avaunt,
He knew that a man was repentant;
For many a man so hard is of his heart,
He may not weep, although him sorely smart.
Therefore instead of weeping and prayers
Men must give silver to the poor friars.
His tippet was all stuffed full of knives
And pins, for to give young wives.
And certainly he had a merry note:
Well could he sing and play on a rote;
Of singing he bore outrightly the prize.
His neck white was as the flour-de-lys;
Thereto he strong was as a champion.
He knew the taverns well in every town
And every hosteler and tappester,
Better than a lazar or a beggester,

For unto such a worthy man as he
Accorded not, as by his faculty,
To have with sick lazars acquaintance.
It is not honest, it may not advance,
For to deal with no such poraille,
But all with rich and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, there as profit should arise,
Courteous he was and lowly of service;
There's no man nowhere so virtuous.
He was the best beggar in his house;
(And gave a certain fee for the grant ;))
None of his brethren came there in his haunt;
For though a widow had not a shoe,
So pleasant was his "In principio, "
Yet would he have a farthing, ere he went.
His purchase was well better than his rent.
And rage he could, as it were right a whelp.
In love days there could he much help,
For there he was not like a cloisterer
With a threadbare cope, as is a poor scholar,
But he was like a master or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semicope,
That rounded as a bell out of the press.
Somewhat he lisped, for his wantonness,
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
And in his harping, when that he had sung,
His eyes twinkled in his head aright
As do the stars in the frosty night.
This worthy lymytour was called Huberd.

[A Merchant was there with a forked beard,]

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General Prologue 09: The Merchant - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A Merchant was there with a forked beard,
In motley, and high on horse he sat;
Upon his head a Flanderish beaver hat,
His boots clasped fair and fetisly.
His reasons he spoke full solemnly,
Sowing always the increase of his winning.
He would the sea were kept for anything
Between Middleburgh and Orwell.
Well could he in exchange sheeldes sell.
This worthy man full well his wit beset;
There was no way that he was in debt,
So stately was he of his governance
With his bargains and with his chevisaunce.
For truth he was a worthy man withall,
But, truth to say, I know not how men him call.

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General Prologue 10: The Clerk - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A Clerk there was of Oxford also,
That unto logic had long ago.
As lean was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake,
But looked hollow, and thereto soberly,
Full threadbare was his outer courtepy,
For he had gotten him yet no benefice,
Nor was so worldly for to have office.
For he would rather have at his bed's head
Twenty books, clad in black or red,
Or Aristotle and his philosophy
Than robes rich, or fiddle, or gay psaltry.
But all be that he was a philosopher,
Yet had he but little gold in coffer;
But all that he might of his friends hente,
On books and on learning he it spent,
And busily go on for the soul's prayer
Of them that gave him werewith to scholar.
Of study took he most cure and most heed.
Not a word spoke he more than was need,
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short and quick and full of high sentence;
Sown in moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.

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General Prologue 11: The Sergeant Of The Law- Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

¶ Sergeant of the Law, aware and wise,
That often had been at the Parvise,
There was also, full rich of excellence.
Discreet he was and of great reverence –
He seemed such, his words were so wise.
Justice he was full often in assize,
By patent and by plain commission.
For his science and for his high renown,
Of fees and robes had he many a one.
So great a purchaser was nowhere none:
All was fee simple to him in effect;
His purchasing might not been infect.
Nowhere so busy a man as he there was,
And yet he seemed busier than he was.
In terms had he cases and dooms all
That from the time of King William were fall.
There he could write and make a thing,
There could no person pinch at his writing;
And every statute could he play by rote.
He rode but homely in a motley coat,
Girt with a belt of silk, with bars small;
Of his array shall I no longer tell.

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General Prologue 12: The Franklin - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

¶ Franklin was in his company.
White was his beard as is a daisy;
Of his complexion he was sanguine.
Well loved he by the morning a sup of wine;
To live in delight was ever his won,
For he was Epicurus' own son,
That held opinion that plain delight
Was very felicity parfit.
A householder, and that a great, was he;
Saint Julian was he in his country.
His bread, his ale, was always after one;
A better envied man was nowhere known.
Without baked meat was never his house,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous
It snowed in his house of meat and drink;
Of all dainties that men could think,
After the sundry seasons of the year,
So changed he his meat and his supper.
So many a fat partridge had he in mew,
And many a breem and many a luce in stew.
Woe was his cook but if his sauce were
Poignant and sharp, and ready all his gear.
His table dormant in his hall always
Stood ready covered all the long day.
At sessions there he was lord and sire;
Full oft time he was knight of the shire.
A dagger and a purse all of silk
Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk.
A sheriff had he been, an auditor.
Was nowhere such a worthy vavasour.

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General Prologue 13: The The Haberdasher, Carpenter, Arras-Maker, Dyer And Weaver- Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A Haberdasher and a Carpenter,
A Weaver, a Dyer, and a Tapestrer –
And they were clothed all in a livery
Of a solemn and a great fraternity.
Full fresh and new their gear apiked was;
Their knives were mounted not with brass
But all with silver, wrought full clean and fit,
Their girdles and their pouches every-bit.
Well seemed each of them a fair burgess
To sit in a guildhall on a dais.
Each one, for the wisdom that he ken,
Was shapely for to be an alderman.
For cattle had they enough and rent,
And too their wives would it well assent
And else certain were they to blame.
It is full fair to have been called “madame, ”
And go on vigils all before,
And have a mantle royally bore.

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General Prologue 14: The Cook - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Æ Cook they had with them for the nonce
To boil the chickens with the marrow bones,
And powdered marchant tart and galingale.
Well could he roast, and seethe, and broil, and fry,
Make mortrews, and well bake a pie.
But great harm was it, as it thought me,
That on his shin, an ulcer had he.
For blancmanger, that made he with the best.

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General Prologue 15: The Shipman - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

¶ Shipman was there, living far by west;
For aught I know, he was of Dartmouth.
He rode upon a rouncy, as he could,
In a gown of falding to the knee.
A dagger hanging on a lace had he
About his neck, under his arm, and down.
The hot summer had made his hue all brown;
And certainly he was a good fellow.
Full many a draft of wine had he draw.
From Bordeaux-ward, while that the chapman sleep.
Of nice conscience took he no keep.
If that he fought and had the higher hand,
By water he sent them home to every land.
But of his craft to reckon well his tides,
His steams, and his dangers him besides,
His harbor, and his moon, his pilotage,
There was none such from Hull to Carthage.
Hardy was he and wise to undertake;
With many a tempest had his beard been shake.
He knew all the havens, as they were,
From Gotland to the cape of Finisterre,
And every creek in Brittany and in Spain.
His barge was called the Madelene.

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General Prologue 16: The Doctor Of Physic - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

With us there was A Doctor of Physic;
In all this world was there none him like,
To speak of physic and of surgery,
For he was grounded in astronomy.
He kept his patient a full great deal
In hours, by his magic natural.
Well could he fortune the ascendant
Of his images for his patient.
He knew the cause of every malady,
Were it of hot, or cold, or moist, or dry,
And where they engendered, and of what humor.
He was a very perfect practitioner:
The cause he knew, and of his harm the root,
Anon he gave the sick man his boot.
Full ready had he his apothecaries
To send him drugs and electuaries,
For each of them made other for to win –
His friendship was not new to begin.
Well knew he the old Aesculapius,
And Dioscorides and too Rufus,
Old Hippocrates, Hali, and Galen,
Serapion, Rhazes, and Avicen,
Averroes, Damascene, and Constantine,
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertus.
Of his diet measurable was he,
For it was of no superfluity,
But of great nourishing and digestable.
His study was but little on the Bible.
In sanguine and in perse he clad was all,
Lined with taffeta and with sendal.
And yet he was but easy of dispense;
He kept that he won in pestilence.
For gold in physic is a cordial,
Therefore he loved gold in special.

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General Prologue 17: The Wife Of Bath - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A good Wife was there of beside Bath,
But she was somewhat deaf, and that was scathe.
Of cloth making she had such a haunt
She passed them of Ypres and of Ghent.
In all the parish wife was there none
That to the offering before her should go on;
And if they did, certain so wroth was she
That she was out of all charity.
Her coverchiefs full fine were of ground;
I do swear they weighed ten pound
That on a Sunday were upon her head.
Her hose were of fine scarlet red,
Full straight tied, and shoes full moist and new.
Bold was her face, and fair, and red of hew.
She was a worthy woman all her life:
Husbands at church door she had five,
Without them other company in youth -
But there's no need to speak right now.
And thrice had she been at Jerusalem;
She had passed many a strange stream;
At Rome she had been, and at Boulogne,
In Galicia at Saint Jame, and at Cologne.
She could much of wandering by the way.
Gap-toothed was she, truly for to say.
Upon an ambler easily she sat,
Wimpled well, and on her head a hat
As broad as is a buckler or a targe;
A foot-mantle about her hips large,
And on her feet a pair of spurs sharp.
In fellowship well could she laugh and carp.
Of remedies of love she knew per chance,
For she knew of that art the old dance.

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General Prologue 18: The Parson - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A good man was there of religion,
And was a poor Parson of a town,
But rich he was of holy thought and work.
He was also a learned man, a clerk,
That Christ's Gospel truly would preach;
His parishioners devoutly would he teach.
Benign he was and wonder diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
And such he was proved oft sithe.
Full loathe was he to curse for his tithes,
But rather would he give, out of doubt,
Unto his poor parishioners about
Of his offering and too of his substance.
He could in little things have sufficiency.
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he left none out, for rain nor thunder,
In sickness nor in mischief to visit
The farthest in his parish, much and light,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a stave.
This noble example to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
Out of the Gospel he those words caught,
And this figure he added also thereto,
That if gold rust, what shall iron do?
For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewd man to rust;
And shame it is if a priest take keep,
A shitten shepherd and a clean sheep.
Well ought a priest example for to give,
By his cleanness, how that his sheep should live.
He set not his benefice to hire
And let his sheep encumbered in the mire
And ran to London unto Saint Paul's
To seek him a chantry for souls,
Or with a brotherhood to be withhold;
But dwelt at home, and kept well his fold,
So that the wolf not make it miscarry;

He was a shepherd and not a mercenary.
And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was to sinful men not despitous,
Nor of his speech dangerous nor digne,
But in his teaching discreet and benign.
To draw folk to heaven by fairness,
By good example, that was his business.
But if were any person obstinate,
What so he were of high or low estate,
Him would he snib him sharply for the nonce.
A better priest I trust that nowhere none is.
He waited after no pomp and reverence,
Nor maked him a spiced conscience,
But Christ's lore and his apostles twelve
He taught; but first he followed it himself.

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General Prologue 19: The Plowman - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

With him there was a Plowman, was his brother,
That had hauled of dung full many a fother;
A true worker and a good was he,
Living in peace and perfect charity.
God loved he best with all his whole heart
At all times, though him gamed or smarte,
And then his neighbor right as himself.
He would thresh, and thereto dike and delve,
For Christ's sake, for every poor wight,
Without hire, if it lay in his might.
His tithes paid he full fair and well,
Both of his proper swynke and his catel.
In a tabard he road upon a mare.

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General Prologue 20: The Miller - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

There was also a Reeve and a Miller,
A Summoner and a Pardoner also,
A Manciple, and myself, - there were no more.

The Miller was a stout carl for the nonce;
Full big he was of brawn, and too of bones.
That proved well, for over all there he came,
At wrestling he would have always the ram.
He was short-shouldered, broad, a thick knarre;
There was no door that he could not heave off harre,
Or break it at a running with his head.
His beard as any sow or fox was red,
And thereto broad as it were a spade.
Upon the top right of his nose he had
A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs,
Red as the bristles of a sow's ears;
His nostrils black were and wide.
A sword and buckler bore he by his side.
His mouth as great was as a great furnace.
He was a jangler and a goliardies,
And that was most of sin and harlotries.
Well could he steal corn toll threes;
And yet he had a thumb of gold, pardie.
A white cope and a blue hood wore he.
A bagpipe well could he blow and sound,
And therewithal he brought us out of town.

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General Prologue 21: The Manciple - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A gentle Manciple was there of a temple,
Of which buyers might take example
For to be wise in buying of vittles;
For whether that he paid or took by tally,
Always he waited so in his achate,
That he was ever before and in good state.
Now is not that of God a full fair grace
That such a lewd man's wit shall pace
The wisdom of a heap of learned men?
Of masters had he more than thrice ten,
That were of law expert and curious,
Of which there were a dozen in that house
Worthy to be stewards of rent and land
Of any lord that is in England,
To make him live by his proper good
In honor debtless (but if he were wood) ,
Or live as scarcely as he might desire;
And able for to help all the shire
In any case that might fall or hap
And yet this Manciple set all their cap.

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General Prologue 22: The Reeve - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Reeve was a slender choleric man.
His beard was shaved as nigh as ever he can;
His hair was by his ears full roundly shorn;
His top was docked like a priest before.
Full long were his legs and full leen,
Like a staff; there was no calf to be seen.
Well could he keep a granary and bin;
There was no auditor could on him win.
Well knew he by the drought and by the rain
The yielding of his seed and of his grain.
His lord's sheep, his cattle, his dairy,
His swine, his horse, his steer, and his poultry
Was wholly in this Reeve's governage,
And by his covenant gave the reckonage,
Since that his lord was twenty year of age.
There could no man bring him in arrearage.
There's no bailiff, no herder, no other hine,
That he knew not his sleight and his covine;
They were adread of him as of the death.
His dwelling was full fair upon the heath,
With green trees shaded was his place.
He could better than his lord purchase.
Full rich he was provided secretly.
His lord well could he please subtly,
To give and lend him of his own good,
And have a thank, and yet a coat and hood.
In youth he had learned a good mister:
He was a well good wright, a carpenter.
This Reeve sat upon a full good stot
That was all pomely grey, and called Scot.
A long surcoat of pers upon him hade,
And by his side he bore a rusty blade.
Of Norfolk was this Reeve of which I tell,
Beside a town men call Baldeswell.
Tucked he was as is a friar about,
And ever he road the hindmost of our route.

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General Prologue 23: The Summoner - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

¶ Summoner was there with us in that place
That had a fire-red cherubin's face,
For sauseflemmed he was, with eyes narrow.
As hot he was and lecherous as a sparrow,
With scaled brows black, and piled beard.
Of his visage children were afeard.
There's no quick-silver, litharge, nor brimstone,
Borax, ceruse, nor oil of tarter none,
No ointment that would cleanse and bite,
That him might help of his whelks white,
Nor of the knobs sitting on his cheeks.
Well loved he garlick, onions, and also leeks,
And for to drink strong wine, red as blood;
Then would he speak and cry as he were wood.
And when that he well drunk had the wine,
Then would he speak no word but Latin.
A few terms had he, two or three,
That he had learned out of some decree –
No wonder is, he heard it all the day;
And too you know well how that a jay
Can call out "Walter" as well as can the pope.
But whoever could in other things him grope,
Then had he spent all his philosophy;
Ay "Questio quid juris" would he cry.
He was a gentle harlot and a kind;
A better fellow should men not find.
He would suffer for a quart of wine
A good fellow to have his concubine
A twelve month, and excuse him at full;
Full privily a finch too could he pull.
And if he found anywhere a good fellow,
He would teach him to have no awe,
In such case of the archdeacon's curse,
But if a man's soul were in his purse;
For in his purse he should punished be.
"Purse is the archdeacon's hell, " said he.
But well I know he lied right in dead;

Of cursing ought each guilty man him dread,
For curse will slay, right as absolving save it,
And also beware of a Significavit.
In danger had he at his own guise
The young girls of the diocese,
And knew their counsel, and was all their rede.
A garland had he set upon his head,
As great as it were for an ale-stake.
A buckler had he made him of a cake.

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General Prologue 24: The Pardoner - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

With him there rode a gentle Pardoner
Of Rouncivale, his friend and his compeer,
That straight was come from the court of Rome.
Full loud he sang "Come hither, love, to me!"
The Sommoner added to him a stiff burdoun;
Was never a trumpet of half so great a sound.
This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,
But smooth it hung as does a strike of flax;
By ounces hung his locks that he had,
And therewith he his shoulders overspread;
But thin it lay, by culpons on and on.
But hood, for jollity, wore he none,
For it was trussed up in his wallet.
He thought he rode all of the new jet;
Dishevelled, save his cap, he rode all bare.
Such glaring eye had he as a hare.
A Vernickle had he sowed upon his cap;
His wallet lay before him in his lap,
Brimfull of pardon come from Rome all hot.
A voice he had as small as has a goat.
No beard had he, no never should have;
As smooth it was as it were late shave.
I trow he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, from Berwick into Ware
Nor was there such another pardoner.
For in his mail he had a pillow-bier,
Which that he said was Our Lady's veil;
He said he had a gobbet of the sail
That Saint Peter had, when that he went
Upon the sea, 'til Jesus Christ him hent.
He had a cross of latten full of stones,
And in a glass he had pigs' bones,
But with these relics, when that he found
A poor person dwelling upon land
Upon a day he got him more money
Then that the person got in months two;
And thus, with feigned flattery and japes,

He made the person and the people his apes.
But truly to tell at last,
He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
Well could he read a lesson or a story,
But all-best he sang an offertory;
For well he knew, when that song was sung,
He must preach and well affile his tongue
To win silver, as he full well could;
Therefore he sang merrily and loud.

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General Prologue 25: The Proposal Of The Host - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
The estate, the array, the number, and too the cause
Why that assembled was this company
In Southwerk at this gentle hostelry
Called the Tabard, fast by the Belle.
But now is time to you for to tell
How that we behaved that very night,
When we were in that hostelry allright;
And after will I tell of our voyage
And all the remnant of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray you, of your courtesy,
That you not ascribe it to my villainy,
Though that I plainly speak in this matter,
To tell you their words and their cheer.
Nor thought I speak their words properly.
For this you know also well as I:
Whoso shall tell a tale after a man,
He must rehearse as ny as ever he can
Every word, if it be in his charge,
And speak he never so rudely or large,
Or else he must tell his tale untrue,
Or feign things, or find words new.
He may not spare, although he were his brother;
He might as well say one word as another.
Christ spoke himself full broad in holy writ,
And well you know no villainy is it.
So Plato said, whoso can him read,
The words must be cousin to the deed.
Also I pray you to forgive it me,
If I have not set folk in their degree
Here in this tale, as that they should stand.
My wit is short, you may well understand.

Great cheer made our Host us everyone,
And to the supper set he us anon.
He served us with vitaille at the best;

Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest.
A seemly man our host was withall
For he'd been a marshal in a hall.
A large man he was with even step -
A fairer burgess was there none in Chep -
Bold of his speech, and wise, and well taught,
And of manhood he lacked right nought.
And thereto he was right a merry man;
And after supper playing he began,
And spoke of mirth among other things,
When that we had made our reckonings,
And said this: "Now, lords, truly,
You've been to me right welcome, heartily;
For by my troth, if that I shall not lie,
I saw not this year so merry a company
At once in this herber as is now.
Fain would I do you mirth, knew I how.
And of a mirth I am right now bethought,
To do you ease, and it shall cost nought.

"You're going to Canterbury - God you speed,
The blissful martyr quit you your meed!
And well I know, as you go on by the way,
You'll shape you to tales and to play;
For truly, comfort nor mirth is known
To ride by the way dumb as a stone;
And therefore will I make you disport,
As I said erst, and do you some comfort.
And if you like all by one assent
For to stand at my judgment,
And for to work, as I shall say,
Tomorrow, when you ride by the way,
Now by my father's soul that is dead,
But you be merry, I will give you my head!
Hold up your hands, without more speech."

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General Prologue 26: The Rules Of The Game - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Our counsel was not long for to seek.
We thought it was not worth to make it wise,
And granted him without more advice,
And bade him say his verdict as he pleased.
"Lords, " quoth he, "now hearken for the best;
But take it not, I pray you, in disdain.
This is the point, to speak short and plain,
That each of you, to shorten our way,
In this voyage shall tell tales tway
To Canterbury-ward, I mean it so,
And homeward he shall tell another two,
Of adventures that awhile have befall.
And which of you that bears him best of all -
That is to say, that tells in this case
Tales of best sentence and most solace -
Shall have a supper at all our cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
When that we come again from Canterbury.
And for to make you the more merry,
I will myself goodly with you ride,
Right at my own cost, and be your guide;
And whoso will my judgment gainsay
Shall pay all that we spend by the way.
And if you vouchsafe that it be so,
Tell me anon, without words more,
And I will early shape me therefore."

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General Prologue 27: The Agreement - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

This thing was granted, and our oaths swore
With full glad heart, and prayed him also
That he would vouchsafe for to do so,
And that he would be our governor,
And our tales judge and reporter,
And set a supper at a certain price,
And we will ruled be at his devise
In high and low; and thus by one assent
We were accorded to his judgment.
And thereupon the wine was fetched anon;
We drank, and to rest went each one,
Without any longer tarrying.

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General Prologue 28: Drawing Of Lots - Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

At morning, when that day began to spring,
Up rose our Host, and was our all our cock,
And gathered us together all in a flock,
And forth we rode a little more than paas
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas;
And there our Host began his horse to rest
And said, "Lords, hearken if you lest,
You know your promise, and I it you record.
If even-song and morning-song accord,
Let's see now who shall tell the first tale.
As ever must I drink wine or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my judgment
Shall pay for all that by the way is spent.
Now draw cut, before we further twin;
He who has the shortest will begin.
"Sir Knight, " said he, "my master and my lord,
Now draw cut, for that is my accord.
"Come near, " said he, "my lady Prioress.
And you, sir Clerk, let be your shamefacedness,
Don't study it; lay hand to, every man! "
Anon to draw every one began,
And shortly for to tell it as it was,
Were it by adventure, or sort, or case,
The truth is this: the cut fell to the Knight,
Of which full blithe and glad was every wight,
And tell he must his tale, as was reason,
By promise and by composition,
As you have heard; what need words more?
And when this good man saw that it was so,
And that he that wise was and obedient
To keep his promise by his free assent,
He said, "Since I shall begin the game,
What, welcome be the cut, by God's name!
Now let us ride, and hearken what I say."
And with that word we rode on forth our way,
And he began with right a merry cheer
His tale anon, and said as you may hear.

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Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Clerk's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

'Sir Clerk of Oxford, ' our Host said,
'You ride as coy and still as does a maid
Were new spoused, sitting at the board;
This day not heard I of your tongue a word.
I trust you study about some sophime;
But Solomon says `everything has time.'

'For God's sake, as be of better cheer!
It is no time for to study here.
Tell us some merry tale, by your faith!
For what man that is entered in a play,
He needs must unto the play assent.
But preach not, as friars do in Lent,
To make us for our old sins weep,
Nay that thy tale make us not to sleep.
'Tell us some merry thing of adventures.
Your terms, your colors, and your figures,
Keep them in store til so be you indite
High style, as when that men to kings write.
Speak so plain at this time, we you pray,
That we may understand what you say.'
This worthy clerk benignly answered:
'Host, ' said he, 'I am under your yard;
You have of us now the governance,
And therefore will I do you obeisance,
As far as reason asks, hardily.
I will you tell a tale which that I
Learned at Padua of a worthy clerk,
As proved by his words and his work.
He is now dead and nailed in his chest;
I pray to God so give his soul rest.

'Francis Petrarch, the laureate poet,
Hight this clerk, whose rhetoric sweet
Illumined all Italy of poetry,
As Linian did of philosophy,
Or law, or other art particular;

But Death, that will not suffer us dwelling here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Them both have slain, and all shall we die.

'But forth to tell of this worthy man
That taught me this tale, as I began,
I say that first with high style he indites,
Ere he the body of his writes,
A proem, in the which describes he
Piedmont and of Saluces the country,
And speaks of Apennine, the hills high,
That be the bounds of West Lombardy,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where as the Po out of a well small
Takes his first springing and his source,
That eastward aye increases in his course
To Emelia, to Ferrara, and Venice,
The Which a long thing were to devise.
And truly, as to my judgment,
Me thinks it a thing impertinent,
Save that he will convene his matter;
But this his tale, which that you may hear.'

Here ends the Prologue of the Clerk of Oxford.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Clerk's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Clerk's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Here begins the Tale of the Clerk of Oxford

There is, at the west side of Itaille,
Down at the root of Vesulus the cold,
A lusty plain, abundant of vitaille,
Where many a tower and town thou may behold,
That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another delightful sight,
And Saluces this noble country hight.

A marquis once lord was of that land,
As were his worthy elders him before;
And obeisant, ay ready to his hand,
Were all his lieges, both less and more.
Thus in delight he lives, and has done yore,
Beloved and dread, through favor of Fortune,
Both of his lords and of his commune.

Therewith he was, to speak as of lineage,
The gentlest born of Lombardy,
A fair person, and strong, and young of age,
And full of honor and of courtesy;
Discreet enough his country for to guide,
Save in some things that he was to blame;
And Walter was this young lord's name.

I blame him thus: that he considered not
In time coming what might him betide,
But on his lust present was all his thought,
As for to hawk and hunt on every side.
Well-nigh all other cares let he slide,
And too he'd not - and that was worst of all -
Wed no wife, for naught that may befall.

Only that point his people bore so sore

That flockmel on a day they to him went,
And one of them, that wisest was of lore -
Or else that the lord best would assent
That he should tell him what his people meant,
Or else could he show well such matter -
He to the marquis said as you shall hear:

'O noble marquis, your humanity
Assures us and gives us hardiness,
As oft as time is of necessity,
That we to you may tell our heaviness.
Accept, lord, now of your gentleness
That we with piteous heart unto you plain
And let your ears not my voice disdain.

'Al have I naught to do in this matter
More than another man has in this place,
Yet for as much as you, my lord so dear,
Have always shown me favor and grace
I dare the better ask of you a space
Of audience to show our request,
And you, my lord, to do right as you lest.

'For certain, lord, so well us like you
And all your work, and ever have done, that we
Could not ourselves devise how
We might live in more felicity,
Save one thing, lord, if it your will be,
That for to be a wedded man you lest;
Then were your people in sovereign hearts' rest.

'Bow your neck under that blissful yoke
Of sovereignty, not of service,
Which that men call spousal or wedlock;
And think, lord, among your thoughts wise
How that our days pass in sundry ways,
For though we sleep, or wake, or roam, or ride,
Aye flees the time; it will no man abide.

'And though your green youth flowers as yet,
In creeps age always, as still as stone,
And death menaces every age, and smites

In each estate, for there escapes no one;
And all so certain as we know each one,
That we shall die, as uncertain we all
Be of that day when death shall on us fall.

'Accept then of us the true intent,
Who never yet refused your hest,
And we will, lord, if that you will assent,
Chose you a wife, in short time at the least,
Born of the gentlest and of the most
Of all this land, so that it ought seem
Honor to God and you, as we deem.

'Deliver us out of all this busy dread,
And take a wife, for high God's sake!
For if it so befell, as God forbid,
That through your death your line should slake,
And that a strange successor should take
Your heritage, O woe were us alive!
Wherefore we pray you hastily to wive."

Their meek prayer and their piteous cheer
Made the marquis's heart have pity.
'You will, ' said he, 'my own people dear,
To that I never erst thought constrain me.
I me rejoiced of my liberty,
That seldom is found in marriage;
There I was free, I must be in servitude.

'But nonetheless I see your true intent,
And trust upon your wit, and have done aye;
Wherefore of my free will I will assent
To wed, as soon as ever I may.
But there as you have proffered me to-day
To choose me a wife, I you release
That choice and pray you of that proffer cease.

'For God it knows, that children often be
Unlike their worthy elders them before;
Bounty comes all of God, not of the strain
Of which they be engendered and born.
I trust in God's bounty, and therefore

My marriage and my estate and ease
I him betake; he may do as he please.

'Let me alone in choosing of my wife -
That charge upon my back I will endure.
But I you pray, and charge upon your life,
What wife that I take, you me assure
To honor her, while that her life may endure,
In word and work, both here and everywhere,
As she an emperor's daughter were.

'And furthermore, this shall you swear: that you
Against my choice shall neither grouch nor strive;
For since I must forgo my liberty
your request, as ever must I thrive,
There as my heart is set, there will I wive;
And but you will assent in such manner,
I pray you, speak no more of this matter.'

With hearty will they swore and assent
To all this thing - there said no one nay -
Beseeching him of grace, ere that they went,
That he would grant them a certain day
Of his spousal, as soon as ever he may;
For yet always the people somewhat dread,
Lest that the marquis no wife would wed.

He granted them a day, such as he lest,
On which he would be wedded surely,
And said he did all this at their request.
And they, with humble intent, buxomly,
Kneeling upon their knees full reverently,
Him thanked all; and thus they have an end
Of their intent, and home again they wend.

And hereupon he to his officers
Commands for the feast to purvey,
And to his privy knights and squires
Such charge gave as he list on them lay;
And they to his commandment obey,
And each of them does all his diligence
To do unto the feast reverence.

Explicit prima pars.

Incipit secunda pars.

Not far from that palace honorable,
Whereas this marquis shaped his marriage,
There stood a throop, of site delightful,
In which that poor folk of that village
Had their beasts and their harborage,
And of their labor took their sustenance,
After that the earth gave them abundance.

Among these poor folk there dwelt a man
Which that was held poorest of them all;
But high God sometimes send can
His grace into a little ox's stall;
Janicula men of that throop him call.
A daughter had he, fair enough to sight,
And Griselda this young maiden hight.

But for to speak of virtuous beauty,
Then was she one the fairest under sun;
For poorly fostered up was she,
No lecherous lust was through her heart run.
Well often of the well than of the tun
She drank, and for she would virtue please,
She knew well labor but no idle ease.

But though this maid tender was of age,
Yet in the breast of her virginity
There was enclosed ripe and sad courage;
And in great reverence and charity
Her old poor father fostered she.
few sheep, spinning, on field she kept;
She would not be idle til she slept.

And when she homeward came, she would bring
Worts or other herbs times oft,
The which she shred and seethe for their living,
And made her bed full hard and nothing soft;

And aye she kept her father's life on-loft
With every obeisance and diligence
That child may do to father's reverence.

Upon Griselda, this poor creature,
Full oft times this marquis set his eye
As he on hunting rode peradventure;
And when it fell that he might her espy,
He not with wonton looking of folly
His eyes cast on her, but in sad wise
Upon her cheer he would often advise,

Commending in his heart her womanhead,
And too her virtue, passing any wight
Of so young age, as well in cheer as deed.
For though the people have no great insight
In virtue, he considered full right
Her bounty, and disposed that he would
Wed her only, if ever he wed should.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tell what woman that it should be;
For which marvel wondered many a man,
And said, when they were in privy,
'Will not our lord yet leave his vanity?
Will he not wed? Alas! Alas, the while!
Why will he thus himself and us beguile? '

But nonetheless this marquis has done make
Of gems, set in gold and in azure,
Brooches and rings, for Griselda's sake;
And of her clothing took he the measure
By a maid like to her stature,
And too of other ornaments all
That unto such a wedding should fall.

The time of undern of the same day
Approaches, that this wedding should be,
And all the palace put was in array,
Both hall and chambers, each in its degree;
Houses of office stuffed with plenty,
There may you see, of deinteous vittle

That may be found as far as last Italy.

This royal marquis, richly arrayed,
Lords and ladies in his company,
The which that to the feast were prayed,
And of his retinue the bachelry,
With many a sound of sundry melody,
Unto the village of the which I told
In this array the right way has held.

Griselda of this, God knows, full innocent,
That for her shaped was all this array,
To fetch water at a well is went,
And comes home as soon as ever she may;
For well she had heard said that same day
The marquis should wed, and if she might,
She would fain have seen some of that sight.

She thought, 'I will with other maidens stand,
That be my fellows, in our door and see
The marchioness, and therefore will I find
To do at home, as soon as it may be,
The labor which that longs unto me,
And then I may at leisure her behold,
If she this way unto the castle hold.'

And as she would over her threshold go,
The marquis came and gan her for to call;
And she set down her water pot anon,
Beside the threshold, in an ox's stall,
And down upon her knees she gan to fall,
And with sad countenance kneels still,
Til she had heard what was the lord's will.

This pensive marquis spoke unto this maid
Full soberly, and said in this manner:
'Where is your father, O Griselda?' he said.
And she with reverence, in humble cheer,
Answered, 'Lord, he is already here.'
And in she goes without longer lette,
And to the marquis she her father fette.

He by the hand then took this old man,
And said thus, when he him had aside:
'Janicula, I neither may nor can
Longer the pleasure of my heart hide.
that thou vouchsafe, what so betide,
Thy daughter will I take, ere that I wend,
As for my wife, until her life's end.

'Thou loves me, I know it well certain,
And art my faithful liege man born,
And all that liketh me, I dare well say
It liketh thee, and specially therefore
Tell me that point that I have stated before,
If that thou will unto that purpose draw,
To take me for thy son-in-law.'

This sudden case this man astounded so
That red he waxed; abashed and all quaking
He stood; hardly said he more words,
But only thus: 'Lord, ' said he, 'my willing
Is as you will, not against your liking
I will no thing, you be my lord so dear;
Right as you wish, govern this matter.'

'Yet wish I' said this marquis softly,
'That in thy chamber I and thou and she
Have a discussion, and know thou why?
For I will ask if it her will be
To be my wife and rule her after me.
And all this shall be done in thy presence;
I will not speak out of thy audience.'

And in the chamber, while they were about
Their treaties, which as you shall after hear,
The people came unto house without,
And wondered them in how honest manner
And attentively she kept her father dear.
But utterly Griselda wonder might,
For never erst saw she such a sight.

No wonder is though that she were astoned
To see so great a guest come in that place;

She never was to such guests woned,
For which she looked with full pale face.
But shortly forth this matter for to chase,
These are the words that the marquis said
To this benign, verrey, faithful maid:

'Griselda, ' he said, 'you shall well understand
It liketh to your father and to me
That I you wed, and too it may so stand,
As I suppose, you will that it so be.
But these demands ask I first, ' said he,
'That, since it shall be done in hasty wise,
Will you assent, or else you advise?

'I say this: be you ready with good heart
To all my lust, and that I freely may,
As me best think, do you laugh or smerte,
And never you to grouch it, night nor day?
And too when I say `yes, ' say not `nay, '
Neither by word nor frowning countenance?
Swear this, and here I swear our alliance.'

Wondering upon these words, quaking for dread,
She said, 'Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to that honor that you me bade,
But as you will yourself, right so will I.
And here I swear that never willingly,
In work nor thought, I'll you disobey,
For to be dead, though me were loath to die.'

'This is enough, Griselda mine, ' said he.
And forth he goes with a full sober cheer
Out of the door, and after that came she,
And to the people he said in this manner:
'This is my wife, ' said he, 'that stands here.
Honor her and love her, I pray,
Whoever me loves; there is no more to say.'

And for that nothing of her old gear
She should bring into his house, he bade
That women should disrobe her right there;
Of which these ladies were not right glad

To handle her clothes, wherein she was clad.
But nevertheless, this maid bright of hue
From foot to head they clothed have all new.

Her hair have they combed, that lay untressed
Full rudely, and with their fingers small
A crown on her head they have dressed,
And set her garments full of nouches great and small.
Of her array what should I make a tale?
Barely the people her knew for her fairness
When she translated was in such riches.

This marquis has her spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and then her set
Upon a horse, snow-white and well ambling,
And to his palace, before he longer let,
With joyful people that her led and met,
Conveyed her; and thus the day they spend
In revel, til the sun gan descend.

And shortly forth this tale for to chase,
I say that to this new marchioness
God has such favor sent her of his grace
That it seemed not by likeliness
That she was born and fed in rudeness,
As in a cote or in an ox-stall,
But nurtured in an emperor's hall.

To every one she waxen is so dear
And worshipful that folk there she was born,
And from her birth knew her year by year,
Barely trusted they - but dared have sworn -
That to Janicle, of which I spoke before,
She daughter was, for, by conjecture,
They thought she was another creature.

For though that ever virtuous was she,
She was increased in such excellence
Of thewes good, set in high bounty,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benign and so digne of reverence,
And could so the people's heart embrace,

That each her loved that looked on her face.

Not only of Saluces in the town
Published was the bounty of her name,
But too beside in many a region,
If one said well, another said the same;
So spread of her high bounty the fame
That men and women, as well young as old,
Go to Saluce upon her to behold.

Thus Walter lowly - nay, but royally -
Wedded with fortunate honesty,
In God's peace lives full easily
At home, and outward grace enough had he;
And for he saw that under low degree
Was oft virtue hid, the people him held
A prudent man, and that is seen full seld.

Not only this Griselda through her wit
Knew all the fet of wifely homeliness,
But too, when that the case required it,
The communal profit could she redress.
There's no discord, rancor, nor heaviness
In all that land that she could not appease,
And wisely bring them all in rest and ease.

Though that her husband absent were anon,
If gentle men or others of her country
Were wroth, she would bring them at-one;
So wise and ripe words had she,
And judgments of so great equity,
That she from heaven sent was, as men wend,
People to save and every wrong to amend.

Not long time after that this Griselda
Was wedded, she a daughter has bore,
All had her lief have born a knave child;
Glad was this marquis and the folk therefore,
For though a maid child came all before,
She may unto a male child attain
By likelihood, since she's not barren.

Explicit secundus pars.

Incipit tertia pars.

There fell, as it befalls times more,
When that this child had sucked but a throw,
This marquis in his heart longs so
To tempt his wife, her sadness for to know,
That he might not out of his heart throw
This marvelous desire his wife to assay;
Needless, God knows, he thought her for to affray.

He had assayed her enough before,
And found her ever good; what needed it
Her for to tempt, and always more and more,
Though some men praise it for a subtle wit?
But as for me, I say that evil it sit
To assay a wife when that it is no need,
And put her in anguish and in dread.

For which this marquis wrought in this manner:
He came alone at night, there as she lay,
With stern face and with full trouble cheer,
And said thus: 'Griselda, ' said he, 'that day
That I you took out of your poor array,
And put you in estate of high noblesse -
You have not that forgotten, as I guess?

'I say, Griselda, this present dignity,
In which I have put you, as I trow,
Makes you not forgetful for to be
That I you took in poor estate full low,
For any weal you must yourself know.
Take heed of every word that I you say;
There is no one that hears it but we two.

'You know yourself well how that you came here
Into this house, it is not long ago;
And though to me that you lief and dear,
Unto my gentles you be nothing so.
They say, to them it is great shame and woe
To be subjects and be in servage

To thee, that born art of a small village.

'And namely since thy daughter was born
These words have they spoken, doubtless.
But I desire, as I have done before,
To live my life with them in rest and peace.
I may not in this case be reckless;
I must do with thy daughter for the best,
Not as I would, but as my people lest.

'And yet, God knows, this is full loath to me;
But nonetheless without your witting
I will not do; but this will I, ' said he,
'That you to me assent as in this thing.
Show now your patience in your working,
That you me called and swore in your village
That day that maked was our marriage.'

When she had heard all this, she was not moved
Neither in word, or cheer, or countenance,
For, as it seemed, she was not aggrieved.
She said, 'Lord, all lies in your pleasance.
My child and I, with hearty obeisance,
Be yours all, and you may save or spill
Your own thing; work after your will.

'There may nothing, God so my soul save,
Liken to you that may displease me;
Nay I desire nothing for to have,
Nor dread for to lose, save only you.
This will is in my heart, and aye shall be;
No length of time or death may this deface,
Nor change my courage to another place.'

Glad was this marquis of her answering,
But yet he feigned as he were not so;
All dreary was his cheer and his looking,
When that he should out of the chamber go.
Soon after this, a furlong way or two,
He privately has told all his intent
Unto a man, and to his wife him sent.

A manner sergeant was this privy man,
The which that faithful oft he found had
In things great, and too such folk well can
Do execution in things bad.
The lord knew well that he him loved and dread;
And when this sergeant knew his lord's will,
Into the chamber he stalked him full still.

'Madame, ' he said, 'you must forgive it me,
Though I do thing to which I am constrained.
You be so wise that full well know ye
That lord's hest may not be feigned;
They may well be bewailed or complained,
But men must need unto their lust obey,
And so will I; there is no more to say.

'This child I am commanded for to take' -
And spoke no more, but out the child he hent
Despiteously, and gan a cheer make
As though he would have slain it ere he went.
Griselda must all suffer and all consent,
And as a lamb she sits meek and still,
And let this cruel sergeant do his will.

Suspicious was the defame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the time in which he this began.
Alas! Her daughter that she loved so,
She wend he would have slain it right tho.
But nonetheless she neither wept nor sighed,
Conforming her to that the marquis liked.

But at the last to speak she began,
And meekly she to the sergeant prayed,
So as he was a worthy gentle man,
That she might kiss her child ere that it died.
And in her barm this little child she laid
With full sad face, began the child to bless,
And lulled it, and after that it kiss.

And thus she said in her benign voice,
'Farewell my child! I shall thee never see.

But since I thee have marked with the cross
Of that Father - blessed may he be! -
That for us died upon a cross of tree,
Thy soul, little child, I him betake,
For this night shalt thou die for my sake.'

I trow that to a nurse in this case
It had been hard this ruth for to see;
Well might a mother then have cried 'alas! '
But nonetheless so sad steadfast was she
That she endured all adversity,
And to the sergeant meekly she said,
'Have here again your little young maid.

'Go now, ' said she, 'and do my lord's hest;
But one thing will I pray you of your grace,
That, but my lord forbad you, at the least
Bury this little body in some place
That beasts no nor birds it torace.'
But he no word will to that proposal say,
But took the child and went upon his way.

This sergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Griselda's words and her cheer
He told him point for point, in short and plain,
And him presents with his daughter dear.
Somewhat this lord had ruth in his manner,
But nonetheless his purpose held he still,
As lords do, when they will have their will;

And bade this sergeant that he privily
Should this child softly wind and wrap,
With all circumstances tenderly,
And carry it in a coffer or in a lap;
But, upon pain his head off for swap,
That no man should know of his intent,
Nor when he came, nor whither that he went;

But at Bologna to his sister dear,
That same time of Panik was countess,
He should it take and show her this matter,
Beseeching her to do her business

This child to foster in all gentleness;
And whose child that it was he bade her hide
From every wight, for ought that may betide.

The sergeant goes, and has fulfilled this thing;
But to this marquis now return we.
For now goes he full fast imagining
If by his wife's cheer he might see,
Or by her word perceive, that she
Were changed; but he never her could find
But ever in one alike sad and kind.

As glad, as humble, as busy in service,
And too in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to him in every manner wise;
Nor of her daughter naught a word spoke she.
No accident, for no adversity,
Was seen in her, nor never her daughter's name
Nor mentioned she, in earnest nor in game.

Explicit tercia pars.

Sequitur pars quarta.

In this estate there passed be four years
Ere she with child was, but, as God would,
A knave child she bore by this Walter,
Full gracious and fair for to behold.
And when that folk it to his father told,
Not only he but all his country merry
Was for this child, and God they thank and herie.

When it was two years old, and from the breast
Departed of his nurse, on a day
This marquis caught yet another lest
To tempt his wife yet after, if he may.
O needless was she tempted in assay!
But wedded men know no measure,
When that they find a patient creature.

'Wife, ' said this marquis, 'you have heard ere this
My people sickly bare our marriage;

And namely since my son born is,
Now is it worse than ever in all our age.
The murmur slays my heart and my courage,
For to my ears comes the voice so smart
That it well-nigh destroyed has my heart.

'Now say they thus: `When Walter is gone,
Then shall the blood of Janicle succeed
And be our lord, for other have we none.'
Such words say my people, out of dread.
Well ought I of such murmur take heed,
For certainly I dread such sentence,
Though they not plain speak in my audience.

'I would live in peace, if that I might;
Wherefore I am disposed utterly,
As I his sister served by night,
Right so think I to serve him privily.
This warn I you, that you not suddenly
Out of yourself for no woe outrage;
Be patient, and thereof I you pray.'

'I have, ' said she, 'said thus, and ever shall:
I will nothing, nor I'll nothing, certain,
But as you list. Naught grieves me at all,
Though that my daughter and my son be slain -
At your commandment, this is to say.
I have not had no part of children twain
But first sickness, and after, woe and pain.

'You be our lord; do with your own thing
Right as you list; ask no rede at me.
For as I left at home all my clothing,
When I first came to you, right so, ' said she,
'Left I my will and all my liberty,
And took your clothing; wherefore I you pray,
Do your pleasure; I will your lust obey.

'And certain, if I had prescience
To know your will, ere you your lust me told,
I would it do without negligence;
But now I know your lust, and what you would,

All your pleasure firm and stable I hold;
For knew I that my death would do you ease,
Right gladly would I die, you to please.

'Death may not make no comparison
Unto your love.' And when this marquis saw
The constancy of his wife, he cast down
His eyes two, and wondered that she may
In patience suffer all this array;
And forth he goes with dreary countenance,
But to his heart it was full great pleasance.

This ugly sergeant, in the same manner
That he her daughter caught, right so he -
Or worse, if men worse can devise -
Has hent her son, that full was of beauty.
And ever in one so patient was she
That she no cheer made of heaviness,
But kissed her son, and after gan it bless;

Save this, she prayed him that, if he might,
Her little son he would in earth grave
His tender limbs, delicate to sight,
From fowls and from beasts for to save.
But she no answer of him might have.
He went his way, as he nothing rought,
But to Bologna he tenderly it brought.

This marquis wondered, ever longer the more,
Upon her patience, and if that he
Had not truly known there before
That she perfectly her children loved she,
He would have thought that of some subtlety,
And out of malice, or for cruel courage,
That she had suffered this with sad visage.

But well he knew that next to himself, certain,
She loved her children best in every wise.
But now I would like to ask fain
If these assays might not suffice?
What could a sturdy husband more devise
To prove her wifhood and her steadfastness,

And he continuing ever in sturdiness?

But there be folk of such condition
That when they have a certain purpose take,
They cannot stint of their intention,
But, right as they were bound to that stake,
They will not of that first purpose slake.
Right so this marquis fully has purposed
To test his wife as he was first disposed.

He watches if by word or countenance
That she to him was changed of courage,
But never could he find variance.
She was aye one in heart and in visage,
And aye the farther that she was in age,
The more true, if it were possible,
She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it seemed thus: that of them two
There was but one will, for as Walter lest,
The same lust was her pleasance also.
And, God be thanked, all fell for the best.
She proved good; for no worldly unrest
A wife, as of herself, nothing should
Will in effect, but as her husband would.

The slander of Walter oft and wide spread,
That of a cruel heart he wickedly,
For he a poor woman wedded had,
Has murdered both his children privily.
Such murmur was among them commonly.
No wonder is, for to the people's ear
There came no word but that they murdered were.

For which, whereas his people there before
Had loved him well, the slander of his defame
Made them that they him hated therefore.
To be a murderer is a hateful name;
But nonetheless, for earnest nor for game,
He of his cruel purpose would not stint;
To tempt his wife was set all his intent.

When that his daughter was twelve years of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtle wise
Informed of his wife, sent his message
Commanding them such bulls to devise
As to his cruel purpose may suffice -
How the pope, as for his people's rest,
Bade him to wed another, if he lest.

I say, he bade they should counterfeit
The pope's bulls, making mention
That he has leave his first wife to let,
As by the pope's dispensation,
To stint rancor and dissension
Betwixt his people and him; thus said the bull,
The which they have published at full.

The rude people, as it no wonder is,
Wended full well that it had been right so;
But when these tidings came to Griseldis,
I deem that her heart was full woe.
But she, alike sad for evermore,
Disposed was, this humble creature,
To adversity of Fortune all to endure,

Abiding ever his lust and his pleasance,
To whom that she was given, heart and all,
As to her very worldly sufficiency.
But shortly if this story I tell shall,
This marquis written has in special
A letter, in which he shows his intent,
And secretly he to Bologna it sent.

To the Earl of Panyk, which that had though
Wedded his sister, prayed he specially
To bring home again his two children
In honorable estate all openly.
But one thing he him prayed utterly,
That he to no one, though men would inquire,
Should not tell whose children they were,

But say the maiden should wedded be
Unto the Marquis of Saluce anon.

And as this earl was prayed, so did he;
For at day set he on his way is gone
Toward Saluce, and lords many a one
In rich array, this maiden to guide,
Her young brother riding her beside.

Arrayed was toward her marriage
This fresh maid, full of gems clear;
Her brother, which that seven years was of age,
Adorned too full fresh in his manner.
And thus in great noblesse and with glad cheer,
Toward Saluce shaping their journey,
From day to day they ride in their way.

Explicit quarta pars.

Sequitur pars quinta.

Among all this, after his wicked usage,
This marquis, yet his wife to tempt more
To the outermost proof of her courage,
Fully to have experience and lore
If that she were as steadfast as before,
He on a day in open audience
Full boisterously has said her this sentence:

'Certainly, Griselda, I had enough pleasure
To have you to my wife for your goodness,
As for your truth and for your obedience
Not for your lineage, nor for your riches;
But now know I in very soothfastness
That in great lordship, if I well advise,
There is great servitude in sundry ways.

'I may not do as every plowman may.
My people me constrain for to take
Another wife, and cry out day by day;
And too the pope, rancor for to slake,
Consents it - that dare I undertake -
And truly thus much I will you say:
My new wife is coming by the way.

'Be strong of heart, and void anon her place;
And that dowry that you brought me,
Take it again; I grant it of my grace.
Return to your father's house, ' said he;
'No man may always have prosperity.
With even heart I rede you to endure
The stroke of Fortune or of adventure.'

And she again answered in patience:
'My lord, ' said she, 'I know, and knew always,
How between your magnificence
And my poverty no one can nor may
Make comparison; it is no nay.
I held me never worthy in no manner
To be your wife, no, nor your chamberer.

'And in this house, there you me lady made-
The high God take I for my witness,
And also wisely he my soul gladden -
I never held me lady or mistress,
But humble servant to your worthiness,
And ever shall, while that my life may endure,
Above every worldly creature.

'That you so long of your benignity
Have held me in honor and nobility,
Whereas I was not worthy for to be,
For thank I God and you, to whom I pray
Foryelde it you; there is no more to say.
Unto my father gladly will I wend,
And with him dwell unto my life's end.

'There I was fostered of a child full small,
Til I be dead my life there will I lead,
A widow clean in body, heart, and all.
For since I gave to you my maidenhead,
And am your true wife, there is no dread,
God shield such a lord's wife to take
Another man to husband or to make!

'And of your new wife God of his grace
So grant you weal and prosperity!

For I will gladly yield her my place,
In which that I was blissful want to be.
For since it pleases you, my lord, ' said she,
'That whilom were all my heart's rest,
That I shall go, I will go when you lest.

'But there as you me proffer such dower
As I first brought, it is well in my mind
It was my wretched clothing, nothing fair,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O good God! How gentle and how kind
You seemed by your speech and your visage
The day that maked was our marriage!

'But sooth is said - always I find it true,
For in fact it proved is on me -
Love is not old as when that it is new.
But certain, lord, for no adversity,
To die in the case, it shall not be
That ever in word or work I shall repent
That I you gave my heart whole entente.

'My lord, you know that in my father's place
You did me strip out of my poor wede,
And richly me clad, of your grace.
To you I brought naught else, out of dread,
But faith, and nakedness, and maidenhead;
And here again your clothing I restore,
And too your wedding ring, for evermore.

'The remnant of your jewels ready be
Inwith your chamber, dare I safely say.
Naked out of my father's house, ' said she,
'I came, and naked must I turn again.
All your pleasure will I follow fain;
But yet I hope it be not your intent
That I smockless out of your palace went.

'You could not do so dishonest a thing,
That same womb in which your children lay
Should before the people, in my walking,
Be seen all bare; wherefore I you pray,

Let me not like a worm go by the way.
Remember you, my own lord so dear,
I was your wife, though I unworthy were.

'Wherefore, in guerdon of my maidenhead,
Which that I brought, and not again I bear,
As vouchsafe to give me, to my meed,
Only such a smock as I was want to wear,
That I therewith may wry the womb of her
That was your wife. And here take I my leave
Of you, my own lord, lest I you grieve.'

The smock, ' said he, 'that thou hast on thy back,
Let it be still, and bear it forth with thee.'
But well uneth that word he spoke,
But went his way, for ruth and for pity.
Before the folk herself strips she,
And in her smock, with head and foot all bare,
Toward her father's house forth is she fare.

The folk here follow, weeping in their way,
And Fortune aye they curse as they go;
But she from weeping kept her eyes dry,
Nor in this time word spoke she none.
Her father, that this tiding heard anon,
Curses the day and time that Nature
Shaped him to be a live creature.

For out of doubt this old poor man
Was ever in suspect of her marriage;
For ever he deemed, since that it began,
That when the lord fulfilled had his courage,
He would think it was a disparage
To his estate so low for to alight,
And void of her as soon as ever he might.

Against his daughter hastily goes he,
For he by noise of folk knew her coming,
And with her old coat, as it might be
He covered her, full sorrowfully weeping.
But on her body might he it not bring,
For rude was the cloth, and more of age

By days fele than at her marriage.

Thus with her father for a certain space
Dwells this flower of wifely patience,
That neither by her words nor her face,
Before the folk, nor too in their absence,
Nor showed she that her was done offence;
Nor of her high estate no remembrance
Nor had she, as by her countenance.

No wonder is, for in her great estate
Her ghost was ever in plain humility;
No tender mouth, no heart delicate,
No pomp, no semblance of royalty,
But full of patient benignity,
Discreet and prideless, aye honorable,
And to her husband ever meek and stable.

Men speak of Job, and most for his humbleness,
As clerks, when they want, can well endite,
Namely of men, but as in truthfulness,
Though clerks praise women but a lit,
There can no man in humbleness him acquit
As woman can, nor can be half so true
As women be, but it be fall of new.

[Part VI]

From Bologna is this Earl of Panyk come,
Of which the news up sprang to more and less,
And to the people's ears, all and some,
Was known too that a new marchioness
He with him brought, in such pomp and riches
That never was there seen with man's eye
So noble array in all West Lombardy.

The marquis, which that shaped and knew all this,
Ere that this earl was come, sent his message
For that silly poor Griselda;
And she with humble heart and glad visage,
Not with no swollen thought in her courage,

Came at his hest, and on her knees her set,
And reverently and wisely she him greet.

'Griselda, ' said he, 'my will is utterly
This maiden, that shall wedded be to me,
Received be tomorrow as royally
As it possible is in my house to be,
And too that every wight in his degree
Have his estate, in seating and service
And high pleasure, as I can best devise.

'I have no women capable, certain,
The chambers for to array in ordinance
After my lust, and therefore would I fain
That thine were all such manner governance.
Thou knowest also of old all my pleasance;
Though thy array be bad and evil besee,
Do thou thy duty at the least way.'

'Not only, lord, that I am glad, ' said she,
'To do your lust, but I desire also
You for to serve and please in my degree
Without feinting, and shall evermore;
Nor never, for any wele nor no woe,
Nor shall the ghost within my heart stint
To love you best with all my true intent.'

And with that word she gan the house to dight,
And tables for to set, and beds make;
And pained her to do all that she might,
Praying the chambers, for God's sake,
To hasten them, and fast sweep and shake;
And she, the most serviceable of all,
Has every chamber arrayed and his hall.

About undern gan this earl alight,
That with him brought these noble children two,
For which the people ran to see the sight
Of their array, so richly besee;
And then at first among them they say
That Walter was no fool, though that he lest
To change his wife, for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they deem all,
Than is Griselda, and more tender of age,
And fairer fruit between them should fall,
And more pleasant, for her high lineage.
Her brother too so fair was of visage
That them to see the people had caught pleasure in seeing them,
Commending now the marquis's governance.

'O stormy people! Unsad and ever untrue!
Aye indiscreet and changing as a vane!
Delighting ever in rumble that is new,
For like the moon aye wax you and wane!
Aye full of clapping, dear enough a jane!
Your doom is false, your constancy evil preves;
A full great fool is he that on you believes.'

Thus said sad folk in that city,
When that the people gazed up and down,
For they were glad, right for the novelty,
To have a new lady of their town.
No more of this make I now mention,
But to Griselda again will I me dress,
And tell her constancy and her business.

Full busy was Griselda in everything
That to the feast was appurtenant.
Right naught was she abashed of her clothing,
Though it were rude and somedeal too torent;
But with glad cheer to the gate is went
With other folk to greet the marchioness,
And after that do forth her business.

With so glad cheer his guests she receives,
And so cunningly, each in his degree,
no default no man perceives,
But aye they wonder what she might be
That in so poor array was for to see,
And knew such honor and reverence,
And worthily they praise her prudence.

In all this meanwhile she not stint

This maid and too her brother to commend
With all her heart, in full benign intent,
So well that no man could her praise amend.
But at the last, when that these lords went
To sit down to meat, he gan to call
Griselda, as she was busy in his hall.

'Griselda, ' said he, as it were in his play,
'How like thee my wife and her beauty? '
'Right well, ' said she, 'my lord; for, in good faith,
I fairer saw I never none than she.
I pray to God give her prosperity;
And so hope I that he will to you send
Pleasure enough unto your lives' end.

'One thing beseech I you, and warn also,
That you not prick with no tormenting
This tender maiden, as you have more;
For she is fostered in her nourishing
More tenderly, and, to my supposing,
She could not adversity endure
As could a poor fostered creature.'

And when this Walter saw her patience,
Her glad cheer, and no malice at all,
And he so oft had done to her offence,
And she aye sad and constant as a wall,
Continuing ever her innocence overall,
This stern marquis gan his heart dress
To rue upon her wifely steadfastness.

'This is enough, Griselda mine, ' said he;
'Be now no more aghast nor evil apaid.
I have thy faith and thy benignity,
As well as ever woman was, assayed,
In great estate and poverty arrayed.
Now know I, dear wife, thy steadfastness' -
And her in arms took and gan her kiss.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;
She heard not what thing he to her said;
She fared as she had start out of a sleep,

Til she of her mazedness abraid.
'Griselda, ' said he, 'by God, that for us died,
Thou art my wife, no none other I have,
Nor never had, as God my soul save!

'This is thy daughter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wife; that other faithfully
Shall be my heir, as I have aye disposed;
Thou bore him in thy body truly.
At Bologna have I kept them privily;
Take them again, for now mayst thou not say
That thou hast lorn none of thy children two.

'And folk that otherwise have said of me,
I warn them well that I have done this deed
For no malice, nor for no cruelty,
But for to assay in thee thy womanhood,
And not to slay my children - God forbid! -
But for to keep them privily and still,
Til I thy purpose knew and all thy will.'

When she this heard, a swoon down she falls
For piteous joy, and after her swooning
She both her young children to her calls,
And in her arms, piteously weeping,
Embraces them, and tenderly kissing
Full like a mother, with her salt tears
She bathed both their visage and their hair.

O which a piteous thing it was to see
Her swooning, and her humble voice to hear!
'Grant mercy, lord, God thank it you, ' said she,
'That you have saved me my children dear!
Now reck I never to be dead right here;
Since I stand in your love and in your grace,
No force of death, nor when my spirit pace!

'O tender, o dear, o young children mine!
Your woeful mother weened steadfastly
That cruel hounds or some foul vermin
Had eaten you; but God of his mercy
And your benign father tenderly

Has done you kept' - and in that same stound
All suddenly she swept down to the ground.

And in her swoon so sadly holds she
Her children two, when she gan them to embrace,
That with great sleight and great difficulty
The children from her arm they gone arace.
O many a tear on many a piteous face
Down ran of them that stood her beside;
Uneath about her might they abide.

Walter her gladdens and her sorrow slakes;
She rises up, abased, from her trance,
And everyone her joy and feast makes
Til she has caught again her countenance.
Walter her does so faithfully pleasance
That it was dainty for to see the cheer
Between them two, now they be met ifere.

These ladies, when that they their time say,
Have taken her and into chamber go,
And strip her out of her rude array,
And in a cloth of gold that brightly shone,
With a crown of many a rich stone
Upon her head, they into hall her brought,
And there she was honored as her ought.

Thus has this piteous day a blissful end,
For every man and woman does his might
This day in mirth and revel to dispend
Til on the welkin shone the stars' light.
For more solemn in every man's sight
This feast was, and greater of costage,
Than was the revel of their marriage.

Full many a year in high prosperity
Live these two in concord and in rest,
And richly his daughter married he
Unto a lord, one of the worthiest
Of all Italy; and then in peace and rest
His wife's father in his court he keeps,
Til that the soul out of his body creeps.

His son succeeds in his heritage
In rest and peace, after his father's day,
And fortunate was too in marriage,
All put he not his wife in great assay.
This world is not so strong, it is no nay,
As it has been in old times yore,
And hearken what this author says therefore.

This story is said not so that wives should
Follow Griselda as in humility,
For it were impossible, though they would,
But so that everyone, in his degree,
Should be constant in adversity
As was Griselda; therefore Petrarch writes
This story, which with high style he endites.

For since a woman was so patient
Unto a mortal man, well more us ought
Receive all in gree that God us sent;
For great skill is he proof that he wrought.
But he not temps no man that he bought,
As says Saint James, if you his pistle read;
He proves folk all day, it is no drede,

And suffers us, as for our exercise
With sharp scourges of adversity
Full oft to be beat in sundry wise;
Not for to know our will, for certain he,
Ere we were born, knew all our frailty;
And for our best is all his governance.
Let us then live in virtuous sufferance.

But a word, lords, hearken ere I go:
It were full hard to find now-a-days
In all a town Griseldas three or two;
For if that they were put to such assays,
The gold of them has now so bad allays
With brass, that though the coin be fair at ye,
It would rather burst a-two than plie.

For which here, for the Wife's love of Bath -

Whose life and all her sect God maintain
In high mastery, and else were it scathe -
I will with lusty heart, fresh and green,
Say you a song to glad you, I wene;
And let us stint of earnestful matter.
Hearken my song that says in this manner:

Lenvoy de Chaucer.
Chaucer's envoy.

Griselda is dead, and too her patience,
And both at ones buried in Italy;
For which I cry in open audience
No wedded man so hardy be to assail
His wife's patience in trust to find
Griselda, for in certain he shall fail.

O noble wives, full of high prudence,
Let no humility your tongue nail,
Nor let no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of you a story of such marvel
As of Griselda patient and kind,
Lest Chichevache you swallow in her entrails!

Follow Echo, who holds no silence,
But ever answers at the countretaille.
Be not bedaffed for your innocence,
But sharply take on you the governance.
Imprint well this lesson in your mind,
For common profit since it may avail.

You arch-wives, stand at defense,
Since you be strong as is a great camel;
Nor suffer not that men you do offense.
And slender wives, feeble as in battle,
Be eager as is a tiger yond in India;
Aye clap as a mill, I you counsel.

Nor dread them not; do them no reverence,
For though thy husband armed be in mail,
The arrows of thy crabbed eloquence
Shall pierce his breast and too his aventail.

In jealousy I rede too thou him bind,
And thou shalt make him couch as does a quail.

If thou be fair, where folk be in presence,
Show thou thy visage and thy apparel;
If thou be foul, be free of thy dispense;
To get thee friends aye do thy travail;
Be aye of cheer as light as leaf on lind,
And let him care, and weep, and wring, and wail!

[Behold the merry words of the Host

This worthy Clerk, when ended was his tale,
Our Host said, and swore, 'By God's bones,
Me were lever than a barrel ale
My wife at home had heard this legend once!
This is a gentle tale for the nones,
For my purpose, wist you my will;
But thing that will not be, let it be still.']

Here ends the Tale of the Clerk of Oxford.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Cook's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Cook of London, while the Reeve spak,
For joy he thought he clawed him on the back.
'Ha! ha! ' said he, 'For Christ's passion,
This miller had a sharp conclusion
Upon his argument of harborage!
Well said Salomon in his language,
'Ne bring not every man into thy house, '
For harborage by night is perilous.
Well ought a man avised for to be
Whom that he brought into his privitee.
I pray to God, so give me sorrow and care
If ever, since I hight Hogge of Ware,
Heard I a miller better set at work.
He had a jape of malice in the dark.
But God forbid that we stint here;
And therefore, if you vouchsafe to hear
A tale of me, that am a poor man,
I will you tell, as well as ever I can,
A little jape that fell in our city.'

Our Host answered and said, 'I grant it thee.
Now tell on, Roger; look that it be good,
For of many a pastry hast thou leten blood,
And many a Jack of Dover hast thou sold
That has been twice hot and twice cold.
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christ's curse,
For of thy parsley yet they fare the worse,
That they have eaten with thy subbed goose,
For in thy shop is many a fly loose.
Now tell on, gentle Roger by thy name.
But yet I pray thee, be not wroth for game;
A man may say full sooth in game and play.'

'Thou sayest full sooth, ' said Roger, 'by my faith!
But 'true play, bad play, ' as the Fleming says.
And therefore, Harry Bailly, by thy faith,
Be thou not wroth, ere we depart here,

Thought that my tale be of an hostiler.
But nonetheless I will not tell it yet;
But ere we part, iwis, thou shalt be quit.'
And therewithal he laughed and made cheer,
And said his tale, as you shall after hear.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Cook's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

A prentice once dwelt in our city,
And of a craft of victualers was he.
Galliard he was as goldfinch in the grove,
Brown as a berry, a proper short fellow,
With locks black, combed full fetisly.
Dance he could so well and jollily
That he was called Perkin Reveler.
He was as full of love and paramour
As is the hive full of honey sweet;
Well was the wench with him might meet.
At every bridale would sing and hop;
He loved best the tavern than the shop.
For when there any riding was in Cheap,
Out of the shop thither would he leap -
Til that he had all the sight seen,
And danced well, he would not come again -
And gathered him a meine of his sort
To hop and sing and make such disport;
And there they set steven for to meet,
To play at the dice in such a street.
For in the town was there no apprentice
That fairer could cast a pair of dice
Than Perkin could, and thereto he was free
Of his expense, in place of privacy.
That found his master well in his chaffer,
For often times he found his box full bare.
For certainly a prentice reveler
That haunted dice, riot, or paramour,
His master shall it in his shop aby,
All have he no part of the minstrelsy.
For theft and riot, they be convertible,
All can he play on gittern or fiddle.
Revel and truth, as in a low degree,
They be full wroth all day, as men may see.
This jolly prentice with his master bade,
Til he were nye out of his prenticehood,
All were he snubbed both early and late,

And sometimes led with revel to Newgate.
But at the last his master him bethought,
Upon a day, when he his paper sought,
Of a proverb that says this same word:
'Well best is rotten apple out of hoard
Than that it rot al the remnant.'
So fares it by a riotous servant;
It is full less harm to let him pace,
Than he shend all the servants in the place.
Therefore his master gave him acquittance,
And bade him go, with sorrow and with mischance!
And thus this jolly prentice had his leave.
Now let him riot all the night or leave.
And for there is no thief without a louke,
That helps him to waste and to suck
Of that he bribe can or borrow may,
Anon he sent his bed and his array
Unto a compeer of his own sort,
That loved dice, and revel, and disport,
And had a wife that he held for appearance
A shop, and swived for her sustenance.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Friar's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

This worthy limiter, this noble Friar
He made always a manner lowering chiere
Upon the Summoner, but for honesty
No villain's word as yet to him spoke he.
But at the last he said unto the wife,
'My lady, ' said he, 'God give you right good life!
You have here touched, also must I thee,
In school matters great difficulty.
You have said much things right well, I say;
But, dame, here as we ride by the way,
Us need not to speak but of game,
And leave authoritative, on God's name,
To preaching and to schools of clergy.
But if it like to this company,
I will you of a summoner tell a game.
Pardie, you may well know by the name
That of a summoner may no good be said;
I pray that none of you be evil apaid.
A summoner is a runner up and down
With mandements for fornication,
And is beaten at every town's end.'

Our Host then spoke, 'Ah, sir, you should be hend
And courteous, as a man of your estate;
In company we will have no debate.
Tell your tale, and let the Summoner be.'

'Nay, ' said the Summoner, 'let him say to me
What so he please; when it comes to my lot,
By God, I shall him quit every grot.
I shall him tell which a great honor
It is to be a flattering limiter,
And of many another manner crime
Which need not rehearse at this time;
And his office I shall him tell, iwis.'

Our Host answered, 'Peace, no more of this! '

And after this he said unto the Friar,
'Tell forth your tale, lief master dear.'

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Friar's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Here begins the Friar's Tale

Once there was dwelling in my country
An archdeacon, a man of high degree,
That boldly did execution
In punishing of fornication,
Of witchcraft, and too of bawdery,
Of defamation, and adultery,
Of church reeves, and of testaments,
Of contracts and of lack of sacraments,
Of usury, and of simony also.
But certain, lechers did he greatest woe;
They should sing if that they were hent;
And small tithers were foully shamed,
If any person would upon them plain.
There might escape him no pecuniary pain.
For small tithes and for small offering
He made the people piteously to sing,
For ere the bishop caught them with his hook,
They were in the archdeacon's book.
Then had he, through his jurisdiction,
Power to do on them correction.
He had a summoner ready to his hand;
A slyer boy was no one in England;
For subtly he had his spies,
That taught him well where that he might availle.
He could spare of lechers one or two,
To teach them to four and twenty more.
For though this Summoner wood were as a hare,
To tell his harlotry I will not spare;
For we are out of his correction.
They have of us no jurisdiction,
Nor never shall, term of all their lives.

'Peter! so be women of the styves, '
Said the Summoner, 'put out of our cure! '

'Quiet! with mischance and with misadventure! '
Thus said our Host, 'and let him tell his tale.
Now tell forth, though that the Summoner gale;
And spare not, my own master dear.'

This false thief, this summoner, said the Friar,
Had always bawds ready to his hand,
As any hawk to lure in England,
That told him all the secrets that they knew,
For their acquaintance was not come of new.
They were his approvers privily.
He got himself a great profit thereby;
His master knew not always what he won.
Without mandement a lewd man
He could summon, on pain of Christ's curse,
And they were glad for to fill his purse
And make him great feasts at the ale.
And right as Judas had purses small,
And was a thief, right such a thief was he;
His master had but half his duty.
He was, if I shall give him his laud,
A thief, and too a summoner, and a bawd.
He had too wenches at his retinue,
That, whether that sir Robert or sir Hue,
Or Jack, or Rauf, or whoso that it were
That lay by them, they told it in his ear.
Thus was the wench and he of one assent,
And he would fetch a feigned mandement,
And summon them to chapter both two,
And pile the man, and let the wench go.
Then would he say, 'Friend, I shall for thy sake
Do strike her out of our letters black;
Thee there nomore as in this casse travail.
I am thy friend, there I thee may avail.'
Certain he knew of briberies more
Than possible is to tell in years two.
For in this world is no dog for the bow
That can a hurt deer from a whole know
Bet than this summoner knew a sly lecher,
Or an adulterer, or a paramour.
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therefore on it he set all his intent.

And it befell that once on a day
This summoner, ever waiting on his prey,
Rode to summon an old widow, a ribibe,
Feigning a cause, for he would bribe.
And it happed that he saw before him ride
A gay yeoman, under a forest side.
A bow he bore, and arrows bright and keen;
He had upon him a courtepy of green,
A hat upon his head with fringes black.

'Sir, ' said this summoner, 'hail, and well attack! '

'Welcome, ' said he, 'and every good fellow!
Where ridest thou, under this green wood shade? '
Said this yeoman, 'Wilt thou far today? '

This summoner him answered and said, 'Nay;
Here fast by, ' said he, 'is my intent
To ride, for to raise up a rent
That longs to my lord's duty.'

'Art thou then a bailiff? ' 'Yes, ' said he.
He dared not, for very filth and shame
Say that he was a summoner, for the name.

'Depardieux, ' said this yeoman, 'dear brother,
Thou art a bailiff, and I am another.
I am unknown as in this country;
Of thine acquaintance I would pray thee,
And too of brotherhood, if that you lest.
I have gold and silver in my chest;
If that thee happen to come in our shire,
All shall be thine, just as thou wilt desire.'

'Grant mercy, ' said this summoner, 'by my faith! '
Each in other's hand his troth lie,
For to be sworn brothers til they die.
In dalliance they ride forth and play.

This summoner, which that was as full of jangles
As full of venom be these wariangles

And ever inquiring upon every thing,
'Brother, ' said he, 'where is now your dwelling
Another day if that I should you seek? '
This yeoman him answered in soft speech,

'Brother, ' said he, 'far in the north country,
Whereas I hope some time I shall thee see.
Ere we depart, I shall thee so well wisse
That of my house shall thou never miss.'

'Now, brother, ' said this summoner, 'I you pray,
Teach me, while we ride by the way,
Since that you be a bailiff as am I,
Some subtlety, and tell me faithfully
In my office how that I may most win;
And spare not for conscience nor sin,
But as my brother tells me, how do ye.'

'Now, by my troth, brother dear, ' said he,
'As I shall tell thee a faithful tale,
My wages be full strait and full small.
My lord is hard to me and dangerous,
And my office is full laborious,
And therefore by extortions I live.
For sooth, I take all that men will me give.
Al-gates, by sleight or by violence,
From year to year I win all my dispense.
I can no better tell, faithfully.'

'Now certain, ' said this Summoner, 'so fare I.
I spare not to take, God it wot,
But if it be too heavy or too hot.
What I may get in counsel privily,
No manner conscience of that have I.
Not for my extortion, I might not live,
Nor of such japes will I not be shrive.
Stomach nor conscience know I none;
I shrew these shrift-fathers every one.
Well be we met, by God and by Saint Jame!
But, lief brother, tell me then thy name, '
Said this summoner. In this mean while
This yeoman gan a little for to smile.

'Brother, ' said he, 'wilt thou that I thee tell?
I am a fiend; my dwelling is in hell,
And here I ride about my purchasing,
To wit where men will give me any thing.
My purchase is the effect of all my rent.
Look how thou ridest for the same intent,
To win good, thou reckon never how;
Right so fare I, for ride would I now
Unto the world's end for a prey.'

'Ah! ' said this summoner, 'benedicite! What say you?
I thought you were a yeoman truly.
You have a man's shape as well as I;
Have you a figure then determined
In hell, there you be in your estate? "

'Nay, certainly, ' said he, 'there have we none;
But when we like we can take us one,
Or else make you seem we be shape:
Sometimes like a man, or like an ape,
Or like an angel can I ride or go.
It is no wonder thing though it be so;
A lousy juggler can deceive thee,
And pardie, yet know I more craft than he.'

'Why, ' said this summoner, 'ride you then or go on
In sundry shapes, and not always in one? '

'For we, ' said he, 'will us such forms make
As most able is our prey for to take.'

'What makes you to have all this labor? '

'Full many a cause, lief sir summoner, '
Said this fiend, 'but all things have time.
The day is short, and it is past prime,
And yet won I nothing in this day.
I will intend to winning, if I may,
And not attend our wits to declare.
For, brother mine, thy wit is all too bare
To understand, although I told them thee.

But, for thou asked why labor we -
For sometimes we be God's instruments
And means to do his commandments,
When that he wish, upon his creatures,
In divers art and in divers figures.
Without him we have no might, certain,
If that he wish to stand there again.
And sometimes, at our prayer, have we leave
Only the body and not the soul grieve;
Witness on Job, whom that we did woe.
And sometimes have we might of both two -
This is to say, of soul and body eek.
And sometimes be we suffered for to seek
Upon a man and do his soul unrest
And not his body, and all is for the best.
When he withstands our temptation,
It is a cause of his salvation,
Al be it that it was not our intent
He should be saved, but that we would him hent.
And sometimes be we servants unto man,
As to the archbishop Saint Dunstan,
And to the apostles servant eek was I.'

'Yet tell me, ' said the summoner, 'faithfully,
Make you your new bodies thus always
Of elements? ' The fiend answered, 'Nay.
Sometime we feign, and sometimes we arise
With dead bodies, in full sundry wise,
And speak as renably fair and well
As to the Phitonissa did Samuel.
(And yet will some men say it was not he;
I do no force of your divinity.)
But one thing warn I thee, I will not jape:
Thou wilt algates wit how we be shaped;
Thou shalt hereafter, my brother dear,
Come there thee need not of me to learn,
For thou shalt, by thine own experience,
Can in a chair read of this sentence
Better than Virgil, while he was alive,
Or Dante also. Now let us ride blive,
For I will hold company with thee
Til it be so that thou forsake me.'

'Nay, ' said this summoner, 'that shall not betide!
I am a yeoman, known is full wide;
My troth will I hold, as in this case.
For though thou were the devil Satan,
My troth will I hold to my brother,
As I am sworn, and each of us to the other,
To be true brother in this case;
And both we go about our purchase.
Take thou thy part, what that men will thee give,
And I shall mine; thus may we both live.
And if that one of us have more than the other,
Let him be true and part it with his brother.'

'I grant, ' said the devil, 'by my faith.'
And with that word they ride forth their way.
And right at the entrance of the town's end,
To which this summoner planned him for to wend,
They saw a cart that charged was with hay,
Which that a carter drove forth in his way.
Deep was the way, for which the cart stood.
The carter smote and cried as he were wood,
'Hat, Brok! Hayt, Scot! What spare you for the stones?
The fiend, ' said he, 'you fetch, body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever were you foled,
So much woe as I have with you tholed!
The devil have all, both horse and cart and hay! '

This summoner said, 'Here shall we have a play.'
And nearer the fiend he drew, as not there were,
Full privily, and rounded in his ear:
'Hearken, my brother, hearken, by thy faith!
Hearest thou not how that the carter says?
Hent it anon, for he hath given it thee,
Both hay and cart, and too his caples three.'

'Nay, ' said the devil, 'God knows, never a deel!
It is not his intent, trust me well.
Ask him thyself, if thou not trowest me;
Or else stop a while, and thou shalt see.'

This carter thwacked his horse upon the croup,

And they began to draw and to stoop.
'Heyt! Now, ' said he, 'there Jesus Christ you bless,
And all his handiwork, both more and less!
That was well twight, my own liard boy.
I pray God save thee, and Saint Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee! '

'Lo, brother, ' said the fiend, 'what told I thee?
Here may you see, my own dear brother,
The churl spoke one thing, but he thought another.
Let us go forth about on our voyage;
Here win I nothing upon carriage.'

When that they came somewhat out of town,
This summoner to his brother began to roun:
'Brother, ' said he, 'here woned an old rebekke
Who had almost as lief to lose her neck
As for to give a penny of her good.
I will have twelve pence, though that she be wood,
Or I will summon her unto our office;
And yet, God knows, of her know I no vice.
But for thou can not, as in this country,
Win thy cost, take here example of me.'

This summoner claps at the widow's gate.
'Come out, ' said he, 'thou old viritrate!
I trow thou hast some friar or priest with thee.'

'Who claps? ' said this wife, 'benedicitee!
God save you, sir, what is your sweet will? '

'I have, ' said he, 'of summons here a bill;
Upon pain of cursing, look that thou be
Tomorn before the archdeacon's knee
To answer to the court of certain things.'

'Now, Lord, ' said she, 'Christ Jesus, king of kings,
So wisely help me, as I not may.
I have been sick, and that full many a day.
I may not go so far, ' said she, 'nor ride,
But I be dead, so pricketh it in my side.
May I not ask a libel, sir summoner,

And answer there by my procurator
To such things as men will oppose me? '

'Yes, ' said this summoner, 'pay anon - let's see -
Twelve pence to me, and I will thee acquit.
I shall no profit have thereby but lit;
My master has the profit and not I.
Come of, and let me ride hastily;
Give me twelve pence, I may no longer tarry.'

'Twelve pence! ' said she, 'Now, lady Saint Marie
So wisely help me out of care and sin,
This wide world though that I should win,
Not have I twelve pence within my hold.
You know well that I am poor and old;
Kith your alms on me, poor wretch.'

'Nay then, ' said he, 'the foul fiend me fetch
If I thee excuse, though thou should be spilt! '

'Alas! ' said she, 'God knows, I have no guilt.'

'Pay me, ' said he, 'or by the sweet Saint Anne,
As I will bear away thy new pan
For debt which thou owest me of old.
When thou made thy husband cuckold,
I paid at home for thy correction.'

'Thou lie! ' said she, 'by my salvation,
Nor was I ever ere now, widow or wife,
Summoned unto your court in all my life;
Nor never I was but of my body true!
Unto the devil black and rough of hue
Give I thy body and my pan also! '

And when the devil heard her curse so
Upon her knees, he said in this manner,
'Now, Mabely, my own mother dear,
Is this your will in earnest that you say? '

'The devil, ' said she, 'so fetch him ere he die,
And pan and all, but he will repent! '

'Nay, old stot, that is not my intent, '
Said this summoner, 'for to repent me
For any thing that I have had of thee.
I would I had thy smock and every cloth! '

'Now, brother, ' said the devil, 'be not wroth;
Thy body and this pan be mine by right.
Thou shalt with me to hell yet tonight,
Where thou shalt know of our privity
More than a Master of Divinity.'
And with that word this foul fiend him hent;
Body and soul he with the devil went
Where as that summoners have their heritage.
And God, that made after his image
Mankind, save and guide us, all and some,
And leave these summoners good men become!

Lords, I could have told you, said this Friar,
Had I had leisure for this Summoner here,
After the text of Christ, Paul, and John,
And of our other doctors many a one,
Such pains that your hearts might agrise,
Albeit so no tongue may it devise,
Though that I might a thousand winters tell
The pains of that cursed house of hell.
But for to keep us from that cursed place,
Wake and pray Jesus for his grace
So keep us from the tempter Satanas.
Hearken this word! Beware, as in this case:
'The lion sits in his await alway
To slay the innocent, if that he may.'
Dispose ay your hearts to withstand
The fiend, that you would make thrall and bond.
He may not tempt you over your might,
For Christ will be your champion and knight.
And pray that these summoners them repent
Of their misdeeds, ere that the fiend them hent!

Heere endeth the Freres Tale

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Introduction To The Man Of Law's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Our Host saw well that the bright sun
The arc of his artificial day has run
The fourth part, and half an hour and more,
And though he was not deep expert in lore,
He knew it was the eighteenth day
Of April, that is messenger to May;
And saw well that the shadow of every tree
Was in length the same quantity
As was the erect body that caused it.
And therefore by the shadow he took his wit
That Phoebus, which that shone so clear and bright,
Degrees was five and forty climbed on height,
And for that day, in that latitude,
It was ten of the clock, he did conclude,
And suddenly he pulled his horse about.

'Lordings' said he, 'I warn you, all this route,
One fourth part of this day is gone.
Now for the love of God and of Saint John,
Lose no time, as far forth as you may.
Lordings, the time wastes night and day,
And steals from us, what privily sleeping,
And what through negligence in our waking,
As does the stream that turneth never again,
Descending from the mountain into plain.
Well can Seneca and many a philosopher
Bewail time more than gold in coffer;
For 'Loss of catel may recovered be,
But loss of time shends us, ' said he.
It will not come again, without dread,
No more than will Malkin's maidenhead,
When she has lost it in her wantonness.
Let us not molden thus in idleness.

'Sir Man of Law, ' said he, 'so have you bliss,
Tell us a tale anon, as forward is.
You've been submitted, through your free assent,

To stand in this case at my judgment.
Acquiteth you now of your behest;
Then have you done your duty at least.'

'Host, ' said he, 'depardieux, I assent;
To break forward is not my intent.
Behest is debt, and I will hold fain
All my behest, I can no better say.
For such law as a man gives another wight,
He should himself use it, by right;
Thus will our text. But nonetheless, certain,
I can right now no thrifty tale say
That Chaucer, though he kan but lewdly
On meters and on riming craftily,
Has said them in such English as he kan
Of old time, as knows many a man;
And if he has not said them, leeve brother,
In one book, he has said them in another.
For he has told of lovers up and down
More than Ovid made of mention
In his Epistles, that be full old.
Why should I tell them, since they have been told?

'In youth he made of Ceyx and Alcion,
And since than has he spoken of every one,
These noble wives and these lovers eek.
Whoever that will his large volume seek,
Called the Saints' Legend of Cupid,
There may he see the large wounds wide
Of Lucretia, and Babylon Thisbe;
The sword of Dido for the false Anea;
The tree of Phyllis for her Demophon;
The plaint of Dianira of Hermione,
Of Ariadne, and of Isiphile -
The barren isle standing in the sea -
The drowned Leander for his Hero;
The tears of Helen, and too the woe
Of Briseis, and of thee, Laodamia;
The cruelty of thee, queen Medea,
Thy little children hanging by the hals,
For thy Jason, that was of love so false!
O Hypermnestra, Penelope, Alcest,

Your wifehood he commends with the best!

'But certainly no word writes he
Of that wicked example of Canace,
That loved her own brother sinfully -
Of such cursed stories I say fie! -
Or else of Tyro Apollonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Bereft his daughter of her maidenhead,
That is so horrible a tale for to read,
When he threw her upon the pavement.
And therefore he, of full avisement
Would never write in none of his sermons
Of such unkind abominations,
Nor I will none rehearse, if that I may.

'But of my tale shall I do this day?
Mr were loath be likened, doubtless,
To Muses that men call Pierides -
Metamorphoses knows what I mean;
But nonetheless, I reck not a bean
Though I come after him with haws bake.
I speak in prose, and let him make rhymes.'
And with that word he, with a sober cheer,
Began his tale, as you shall after hear.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Knight's Tale, Part I - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

THE KNIGHT'S TALE, PART I

Here beginneth the Knight's Tale

A while ago, as old stories tell us;
There was a duke called Theseus;
Of Athens he was lord and governor,
And in his time such a conqueror
That greater was there none under the sun.
Full many a rich country had he won;
What with his wisdom and his chivalry,
He conquered all the reign of Feminy,
That once was called Scythia,
And wedded the queen Hippolyta,
And brought her home with him to his country
With much glory and great solemnity,
And so too her young sister Emily.
And thus with victory and with melody
Let I this noble duke to Athens ride,
And all his host in arms beside.

And certain, if it weren't too long to hear,
I would have told you fully the manner
How won was the reign of Feminy
By Theseus and by his chivalry;
And of the great battle for the nones,
Between Athenians and Amazons;
And how besieged was Hippolyta,
The fair, hardy queen of Scythia;
And the feast that was at her wedding,
And of the tempest at her home-coming;
But all those things I must as now forbear.
I have, God wit, a large field to air,
And weak be the oxen in my plough.
The remnant of the tale is long enough.
I will impede none of this route;
Let every fellow tell his tale about,

And let's see now who shall the supper win;
And where I left, I will again begin.

This duke, of whom I make mention,
When he was come almost unto the town,
In all his wealth and in his great pride,
He was aware, as he cast his eye aside,
Where there kneeled in the highway
A company of ladies, tway and tway,
Each after another clad in clothes black;
But such a cry and such a woe they make
That in this world not a creature living
That heard such another lamenting;
And of this cry they would never cease
Til they the reins of his bridle seized.

"What folk be you, that at my homecoming
Perturb so my feast with crying? "
Said Theseus. "Have you so great envy
Of my honor, that you thus complain and cry?
Or who have you misboden or offended?
And tell me if it may be amended,
And why that you be clothed thus in black."

The eldest lady of them all spake,
When she had swooned with a deadly cheer,
That it was ruth for to see and hear;
And said, "Lord, to whom Fortune has given
Victory, and as a conqueror to live,
Not grieves us your glory and your honor,
But we beseech mercy and succor.
Have mercy on our woe and our distress!
Some drop of pity through thy gentleness,
Upon us wretched women let thou fall,
For, certain, lord, there is none of us all
That she hasn't been a duchess or a queen.
Now be we wretches, as it is well seen,
Thanks to Fortune and his false wheel,
That no one's estate is assured to be well.
And certain, lord, to abide in your presence,
Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence
We have been waiting all this fortnight.

Now help us, Lord, since it is in thy might.

I, wretch, who that weep and wail thus,
Was once wife to King Cappaneus,
Who starved at Thebes - cursed be that day! -
And all we that be in this array
And make all this lamentation,
We lost all our husbands at that town,
While that the siege thereabout lay.
And yet now the old Creon - wail-away! -
That lord is now of Thebes the city,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquity,
He, for spite and for his tyranny,
To do the dead bodies villainy
And all our lords who had been slain,
Had all the bodies on a heap lain,
And will not suffer them, by no assent,
Neither to be buried nor burnt,
But makes hounds eat them in spite."

And with that word, without more respite,
They fell on their face and cried piteously,
"Have on us wretched women some mercy,
And let our sorrow sink in thine heart."

This gentle duke down from his courser start
With heart piteous, when he heard them speak.
He thought that his heart would break,
When he saw them so pitiful and so meek,
Who once were of so great estate;
And comforted them in full good intent,
And swore his oath, as he was a true knight,
He would do so fervently his might
Upon the tyrant Creon him to wreak
That all the people of Greece should speak
How Creon was of Theseus served
As he that had his death full well deserved.
And right anon, without more abood,
His banner he displayed, and forth he rode
Towards Thebes, and all his host beside.
No near Athens would he walk or ride,
And take his ease fully half a day,

But onward on his way that night he lay,
And sent anon Hippolyta the queen,
And Emily, her young sister sheen,
Unto the town of Athens to dwell,
And forth he rode, there is no more to tell.

The red statute of Mars, with his spear and targe,
So shined in his white banner large
That all the fields glitter up and down
And by his banner born is his pennon
Of gold full rich, in which there was beat
The Minotaur, which that he slew in Crete.
Thus rode this duke, thus rode this conqueror,
And in his host of chivalry the flower,
Til he came to Thebes and alight
Fair in a field, there as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speak of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes the king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plain battle, and put the folk to flight;
And by assault he won the city after,
And rent down both wall and spar and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bones of their friends that were slain,
To do obsequies, as was then the guise,
But it were all too long for to devise
The great clamor and the lamenting
That the ladies made at the burning
Of the bodies, and the great honor
That Theseus, the noble conqueror,
Did to the ladies, when they from him went;
But shortly for to tell is my intent.

When that this worthy duke, this Theseus,
Had Creon slain and won Thebes thus,
Still in that field he took all night his rest,
And did with all the country as he leste.

To ransack in the heap of bodies dead,
Them for to strip of harness and of weed,
The pillagers did business and cure
After the battle and discomfiture.

And so befell that in the heap they found,
Through-girt with many a grievous bloody wound,
Two young knights lying by and by,
Both in one arms, wrought full richly,
Of those two, Arcite called was one,
And the other knight called Palamon.
Not fully quick, nor fully dead they were,
But by their coat of arms and by their gear
The heralds knew them best in special
As they who were of the blood royal
Of Thebes, and of two sisters born.
Out of the pile the pillagers had them torn,
And had them carried soft into the tent
To Athens, to dwell in prison
Perpetually - not for them any ransom.
And when this worthy duke has thus done,
He took his host, and home he rode anon
With laurel crowned as a conqueror;
And there he lived in joy and in honor
For the term of his life, what needs words more?
And in a tower, in anguish and in woe,
Dwelled this Palamon and also Arcite
For evermore; there no gold may them quit.

This passed year by year and day by day,
Til it fell once, on a morn of May,
That Emily, that fairer to be seen
Than is the lily upon his stalk green,
And fresher than the May with flowers new -
For with the rose color strove her hue,
I know not which was the fairer of the two -
Ere it were day, as was her want to do,
She was arisen and all ready dight,
For May will have no sluggishness at night.
The season pricks every gentle heart,
And makes him out of his sleep to start,
And says, "Arise, and do thy observance."
This made Emily have remembrance
To do honor to May, and for to rise.
Clothed was she fresh, for to devise:
Her yellow hair was braided in a tress
Behind her back, a yard long, I guess.

And in the garden, at the sunrise,
She walked up and down, and as she pleased
She gathered flowers, partly white and red,
To make a subtle garland for her head;
And as an angel heavenly her song.
The great tower, that was so thick and strong,
Which of the castle was the chief dungeon
(There as the knights were in prison
Of which I told you and tell I shall) ,
Was even joined to the garden wall
There as this Emily had her playing.
Bright was the sun and clear the morning,
And Palamon, this woeful prisoner,
As was his want, by leave of his jailor,
Was risen and roamed in a chamber on high,
In which he all the noble city saw,
And too the garden, full of branches green,
There as this fresh Emily the sheen
Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.
This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon,
Goes in the chamber roaming to and fro
And to himself complaining of his woe.
That he was born, often he said, "alas! "
And so befell, by adventure or chance,
That through a window, thick with many a bar
Of iron great and square as any spar,
He cast his eye upon Emily,
And therewithal he blanched and cried, "Ah! "
As though he were stung unto the heart.
And with that cry Arcite at once up start
And said, "Cousin mine, what ails thee,
That art so pale and deadly on to see?
Why criest thou? Who has thee done offense?
For God's love, take all in patience
Our prison, for it may none other be.
Fortune has given us this adversity.
Some wicked aspect or disposition
Of Saturn, by some constellation,
Has given us this, although we had it sworn;
So stood the heaven when that we were born.
We must endure it; this is the short and plain."

This Palamon answered and said again,
"Cousin, for truth, of this opinion
Thou hast a vain imagination.
This prison caused me not for to cry,
But I was hurt right now through my eye
Into my heart, that will my bane be.
The fairness of that lady whom I see
Yond in the garden roaming to and fro
Is cause of all my crying and my woe.
I know not whether she be woman or goddess,
But Venus is it truly, as I guess."
And with that on knees down he fell,
And said, "Venus, if it be thy will
You in this garden thus to transfigure
Before me, sorrowful, wretched creature,
Out of this prison help that we may escape.
And if my destiny be so shaped
By eternal word to die in prison,
Of our lineage have some compassion,
That is so low brought by tyranny."
And with that word Arcite went to spy
Where this lady roamed to and fro,
And with that sight her beauty hurt him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as much as he, or more.
And with a sigh he said piteously,
"The fresh beauty slayed me suddenly
Of her who roams in yonder place;
And but I have her mercy and her grace,
That I may see her at least a way,
I am but dead; there is no more to say."

This Palamon, when he those words heard
Pitilessly he looked and answered,
"Whether sayeth thou this in earnest or in play? "

"No, " said Arcite, "in earnest, by my faith!
God help me so, I've no care to play."

This Palamon then knit his brows two.
"It were, " he said, "to thee no great honor
For to be false, nor to be traitor

To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother
Sworn full deep, and each of us to the other,
That never, for to die in the pain,
Til that the death depart shall us twain,
Neither of us in love to hinder the other,
Nor in any other case, my dear brother,
But that thou should truly further me
In every case, as I shall further thee -
This was thy oath, and mine also, certain;
I know right well, thou dare it not withstand.
Thus are thou of my counsel, out of doubt,
And now thou would falsely be about
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shall til that my heart starve.
No, certainly, false Arcite, thou shall not so.
I loved her first, and told thee my woe
As to my counsel and my brother sworn
To further me, as I have told before.
For which thou are bound as a knight
To help me, if it lay in thy might,
Or else art thou false, I dare well say."

This Arcite full proudly spoke again:
"Thou shall, " said he, "be rather false than I;
But thou art false, I tell thee utterly,
For paramour I loved her first before thou.
What will thou say? Thou know not yet now
Whether she be a woman or goddess!
Thine is affection of holiness,
And mine is love for a creature;
For which I told thee my adventure
As to my cousin and my brother sworn.
I'll suppose that thou loved her before;
Know thee not well the old clerk's saw,
That 'who shall give a lover any law? '
Love is a greater law, by my pan,
Than may be given to any earthly man;
And therefore positive law and such decree
Is broken all day for love in each degree.
A man must need love, in spite of his head;
He may not flee it, though he should be dead,
And be she maid, or widow, or a wife.

And too it is not likely all thy life
To stand in her grace; no more shall I;
For well thou knows thyself, verily,
That thou and I be damned to prison
Perpetually; we gain no ransom.
We strive as did the hounds for the bone;
They fought all day, and yet their part was none;
There came a kite, while they were so wroth,
And bore away the bone between them both.
And therefore, at the king's court, my brother,
Each man for himself, there is no other.
Love, if thee please, for I love and always shall;
And truly, dear brother, this is all.
Here in this prison must we endure,
And each of us take his adventure."

Great and long was the strife between those two,
If that I had leisure to tell you;
But to the effect; it happened on a day,
To tell you as shortly as I may,
A worthy duke called Perotheus,
That friend was unto Duke Theseus
Since the days they were children lit
Was come to Athens his fellow to visit,
And to play as he was want to do;
For in this world he loved no man so,
And he loved him as tenderly again.
So well they loved, as old books say,
That when that one was dead, truly to tell
His friend went and sought him down in hell -
But of that story I choose not to write.
Duke Perotheus loved well Arcite,
And knew him at Thebes year by year,
And finally by request and prayer
Of Perotheus, without any ransom,
Duke Theseus let him out of prison
Freely to go where he chose over all,
In such a guise as tell you I shall.

This was the promise, plainly to endite,
Between Theseus and Arcite:
That if so that Arcite were found

Ever in his life, by day or night, or ground
In any country of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a sword he should lose his head.
There was no other remedy nor rede;
But taking his leave, and homeward he sped.
Let him beware! His neck lies to wedde.

How great a sorrow suffers now Arcite!
The death he feels through his heart smite;
He weeps, wails, cries piteously;
To slay himself he waits privately.
He said, "Alas that day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than before;
Now I'm destined eternally to dwell
Not in purgatory, but in hell.
Alas, that ever I knew Perotheus!
For else had I dwelled with Theseus,
Fettered in his prison evermore.
Then had I been in bliss and not in woe.
Only the sight of her whom that I serve,
Though I never her grace may deserve,
Would have sufficed right enough for me.
Oh dear cousin Palamon, " said he,
"Thine is the victory of this adventure.
Full blissfully in prison must thou endure -
In prison? Certain not, but in paradise!
Well has Fortune turned thee the dice,
That has the sight of her, and I the absence.
For it's possible, since thou have her presence,
And are a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by some case, since Fortune is changeable,
Thou may to thy desire sometime attain.
But I, who am exiled and barren
Of all grace, and so great despair
That there's not earth, water, fire, nor air,
Nor creature that of them made is,
That may help me or do comfort in this,
Well ought I starve in hopeless distress.
Farewell my life, my light, and my gladness!

"Alas, why complain folk so in common

On the providence of God, or of Fortune,
That gives them often in many a guise
Well better than they can themselves devise?
One man desires to have riches,
That causes his death or great sickness;
And one man would out of his prison feign,
That in his house is for his money slain.
Infinite harms be in this matter.
We know not what things we pray for.
We fare as well as he who's drunk as a mouse.
A drunk man knows well he has a house,
But he knows not which is the right way thither
And to a drunk man the way is slider.
And certain, in this world, so fare we;
We seek fast after felicity,
But we go wrong full often, truly.
Thus may we say all, and namely I,
That went and had a great opinion
That if I might escape from prison,
Then had I been in joy and perfect health,
There now I am exiled from my wealth.
Since that I may not see you, Emily,
I'm but dead; there's no remedy.

Upon that other side Palamon,
When he knew that Arcite was gone,
Such sorrow he made that the great tower
Resounded with his yelling and clamor.
The pure fetters on his shins great
Were with his bitter salt tears wet.
"Alas, " said he, "Arcite, cousin mine,
Of all our strife, God knows, the fruit is thine.
Thou walk now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my woe thou give little charge.
Thou may, since thou hast wisdom and manhood,
Assemble all the folk of our kindred,
And make a war so sharp on this city
That by some adventure or some treaty
Thou may have her to lady and to wife
For whom I must needs lose my life.
For, as by way of possibility,
Since thou art at large, of prison free,

And art a great lord, great is thy advantage
More than is mine, who starves here in a cage.
For I must weep and wail, while I live,
With all the woe that prison may give,
And too with pain that love gives me also,
That doubles all my torment and my woe."
Therewith the fire of jealousy up start
Within his breast, and held him by the heart
So madly that he was like to behold
The boxtree or the ashes dead and cold.

Then said he, "O cruel gods that govern
This world with binding of your word eternal
And write on the table of adamant
Your parliament and your eternal grant
What is mankind more unto you hold
Than is the sheep that rucks in the fold?
For slain is man right as another beast,
And dwells too in prison and arrest,
And has sickness and great adversity,
And oft times guiltless, indeed.

"What governance is in this prescience,
That guiltless torments innocence?
And yet this increases all my penance,
That man is bound to his observance,
For God's sake, to lessen his will,
There while a beast may all his lust fulfill.
And when a beast is dead he has no pain;
Though in this world he have care and woe.
Without doubt it may stand so.
The answer to this let I to devise,
But well I know that in this world great pain is.
Alas, I see a serpent or a thief,
That many a true man has done mischief,
Gone at his large, and where he likes may turn.
But I must be in prison through Saturn,
And too through Juno, jealous and mad,
Who has destroyed well nye all the blood
Of Thebes with this waste of walls wide;
And Venus slays me on the other side
For jealousy and fear of Arcite."

Now will I stay of Palamon a lite,
And let him in his prison still dwell,
And of Arcite forth I will you tell.

The summer passed, and the nights long
Increasing double wise the pains strong
Both of the lover and the prisoner.
I know not which has the woefuller master.
For, shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetually is damned to prison,
In chains and fetters until dead;
And Arcite is exiled upon his head
For evermore, as out of that country,
Nor never more shall his lady see.

You lovers ask I now this question:
Who has the worst, Arcite or Palamon?
That one may see his lady day by day,
But in prison he must dwell always;
That other where he likes to ride or go,
But see his lady shall he never more.
Now judge as you like, you that can,
For I will tell forth as I began.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*, Part II - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Sequitur pars secunda

When that Arcite to Thebes come was,
Full often each day he felt faint and said, "Alas!"
For see his lady shall he never more.
And shortly to conclude all his woe,
So much sorrow had never a creature
That is, or shall, while that the world may endure.
His sleep, his meat, his drink, is him bereft;
That lean he waxed and dry as is a shaft;
His eyes hollow and grisly to behold,
His hue fallow and pale as ashes cold,
And solitary he was and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his moan;
And if he heard song or instrument,
Then would he weep, he might not be stent.
So feeble too were his spirits, and so low,
And changed so, that no man could know
His speech or his voice, though men it heard.
And in his gear for all the world he feared
Not only like the lovers' malady
Of Heroes, but rather like many,
Engendered of humor melancholic
Before, in his cell fantastic.
And shortly, turned was all so up and down
Both habit and also disposition
Of him, this woeful lover dan Arcite.

What should I all day of his woe write?
When he endured had a year or two
This cruel torment and this pain and woe,
At Thebes, in his country, as I said,
Upon a night in sleep as he him laid,
He thought how that the winged god Mercury
Before him stood and bade him to be merry.
His sleeping rod in hand he bore upright;
A hat he wore upon his hairs bright.

Arrayed was this god, as he took keep,
As he was when that Argus took his sleep;
And said him thus: "To Athens shall thou wend,
There is the shape of thy woe an end."
And with that word Arcite woke and start.
"Now truly, however sore that me smart, "
Said he, "to Athens right now will I fare,
Not for the dread of death shall I not spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve.
In her presence I care not to starve."

And with that word he caught a great mirror,
And saw that changed was all his color,
And saw his visage in another kind.
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That since his face was so disfigured
Of malady the which he had endured,
He might well, if that he bore him low,
Live in Athens evermore unknown,
And see his lady well nye day by day.
And right anon he changed his array,
And clad him as a poor laborer,
And all alone, save only a squire
That knew his privity and all his case,
Which was disguised poorly as he was,
To Athens is he gone the next way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffered his service
To drudge and draw, what so men will devise.
And shortly of this matter for to say,
He fell in office with a chamberlain
The which that dwelling was with Emily,
For he was wise and could soon espy,
Of every servant, which that served her.
Well could he hew wood, and water bear,
For he was young and might for the nones,
And thereto he was long and big of bones
To do that anyone can him devise.
A year or two he was in this service,
Page of the chamber of Emily the bright,
And Philostrate he said that he was hight.
But half so well beloved a man as he

Was there never in court of his degree;
He was so gentle of condition
That throughout all the court was his renown.
They said that it was a charity
That Theseus would enhance his degree,
And put him in worshipful service,
There as he might his virtue exercise.
And thus within a while his name is sprung,
Both of his deeds and his good tongue,
That Theseus has taken him so near
That of his chamber he made him a squire,
And gave him gold to maintain his degree.
And too men brought him out of his country,
From year to year, full privately his rent;
But honestly and slyly he it spent,
That no man wondered how that he it had.
And three years in this wise his life he lead,
And bore him so, in peace and too in war,
That there was no man that Theseus held dearer.
And in this bliss leave I now Arcite,
And speak I will of Palamon a lite.

In darkness and horrible and strong prison
These seven years has sat Palamon
Forpined, what for woe and for distress.
Who feels double sore and heaviness
But Palamon, that love distrains so
That would out of his wit he goes for woe?
And too thereto he is a prisoner
Perpetually, not only for a year.

Who could rime in English properly
His martyrdom? For truly it is not I;
Therefore I pass as lightly as I may.

It fell that in the seventh year, of May
The third night (as old books say) ,
That all this story tell more plain) ,
Were it by adventure or destiny -
As, when a thing is shapen, it shall be -
That soon after the midnight Palamon,
By helping of a friend, broke his prison

And fled the city fast as he may go.
For he had give his jailor drink so
Of a claree made of a certain wine,
With narcotics and opium of Thebes fine,
That all that night, though that men would him shake,
The jailor slept, and might not awake.
And thus he flew as fast as ever he may.
The night was short and fast by the day
That needs cost he must himself hide,
And to a grove fast there beside
With dreadful foot then stalked Palamon.
For, shortly, this was his opinion:
That in that grove he would him hide all day,
And in the night then would he take his way
To Thebes-ward, his friends for to pray
On Theseus to help him to war;
And shortly, either he would lose his life
Or win Emily unto his wife.
This is the effect and his intent plain.

Now will I turn to Arcite again,
That little knew how near that was his care,
Til that Fortune had brought him in the snare.

The busy lark, messenger of day,
Salutes in his song the morning gray,
And fiery Phoebus rises up so bright
That all the orient laughs of the light,
And with his streams drieth in the greves
The silver drops hanging on the leaves.
And Arcite, that in the court royal
With Theseus is squire principal,
Is risen and looks out on the merry day.
And for to do his observance of May,
Remembering on the point of his desire,
He on a courser, startling as the fire,
Is ridden into the fields him to play,
Out of the court, were it a mile or tway.
And to the grove of which that I thou told
By adventure his way he began to hold
To make him a garland of the greves,
Were it of woodbine or hawthorn leaves,

And loud he sang against the sun shine:
"May, with all thy flowers and thy green,
Welcome be thou, fair fresh May,
In hope that I some green get may."
And from his courser, with a lusty heart,
Into the grove full hastily he start,
And in a path he roamed up and down,
There as by adventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him see,
For sore afraid of his death was he.
Nothing he knew he that it was Arcite:
God knows he would have known it full lite.
But truth is said, gone since many years,
That "field has eyes and the wood has ears."
It is full fair a man to bear him even,
For all day met men at unset steven.
Full little knew Arcite of his fellow,
That was so nye to hearken all he said,
For in the bush he sits now full still.

□

When that Arcite had roamed all his fill,
And sang all the roundels lustily,
Into a study he fell all suddenly,
As do these lovers in their quaint desires,
Now in the crop, now down in the briars,
Now up, now down, as a bucket in a well.
Right as the Friday, truly for to tell,
Now it shines, now it rains fast,
Right so can fickle Venus overcast
The hearts of her folk; right as her day
Is changeful, right so changes her array.
Seldom is the Friday all the week alike.
When that Arcite had sung, he began to sigh,
And set him down without any more;
"Alas, " said he, "that day that I was born!
How long, Juno, through thy cruelty,
Will thou war on Thebes the City?
Alas, brought is to confusion
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphion, -
Of Cadmus, which that was the first man
That Thebes built, or first the town began,

And of the city first was crowned king
Of his lineage am I, and his offspring,
By true line, as of the stock royal,
And now I am so caitiff and so thrall
That he that is my mortal enemy
I serve him as his squire poorly.
And yet does Juno me well more shame,
For I dare not know my own name,
But thereas I was once called Arcite,
Now called am I Philostrate, not worth a mite.
Alas, thou fell Mars! alas, Juno!
Thus has your ire our lineage all fordone,
Save only me, and wretched Palamon
That Theseus martyrs in prison.
And over all this, to slay me utterly,
Love has his fiery dart so burningly
Struck through my true careful heart,
That shaped was my death before my shroud.
Thou slay me with your eyes, Emily!
You've been the cause wherefore that I die.
Of all the remnant of my other care
Nor set I not the extent of a tare,
So that I could do ought to your pleasure.'
And with that word he fell down in a trance
A long time, and after he up start.

This Palamon, who thought that through his heart
He felt a cold sword suddenly glide,
For ire he quaked; no longer would he bide.
And when that he had heard Arcite's tale,
As he were mad, with face dead and pale,
He started him up out of the bushes thick,
And said, 'Arcite, false traitor wicked!
Now art thou held who loves my lady so,
For whom that I have all this pain and woe,
And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn,
As I full oft have said thee herebefore,
And have deceived here Duke Theseus,
And falsely changed has thy name thus.
I will be dead, or else thou shalt die;
Thou shall not love my lady Emily,
But I will love her only, and no more;

For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe!
And though that I no weapon have in this place,
But out of prison am escaped by grace,
I dread not that either thou shalt die,
Or thou shall not love Emily.
Choose which thou will, for thou shall not escape! "

This Arcite, with full despiteful heart,
When he him knew, and had his tale heard,
As fierce as a lion pulled out his sword,
And said this: 'By God that sits above,
Were it not that thou art sick and mad for love,
And too that thou no weapon have in this place,
Thou should never out of this grove pace,
That thou should die of my hand.
For I defy the surety and the bond
Which that thou say that I have made to thee.
What! Very fool, think well that love is free,
And I will love her despite all thy might!
But for as much as thou art a worthy knight
And willest to darrain her by battle,
Have here my truth, tomorrow I will not fail,
Without the witting of any other wight,
That here I will be found as a knight,
And bring armor right enough for thee;
And choose the best, and leave the worst for me.
And meat and drink this night will I bring
Enough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
And if it be so that thou my lady win,
And slay me in this wood that I am in,
Thou may well have thy lady as for me."

This Palamon answered, 'I grant it thee.'
And thus they departed till the morrow,
When each of them had laid his faith to borrow.

Oh Cupid, out of all charity!
Oh reign, that will no fellow have with thee!
Full truth it's said that love's lordship
Will not, his thanks, have fellowship.
Well found that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is ridden at once into the town,

And in the morning, before it was daylight,
Full privily two harness had he dight,
Both sufficient and mete to darrain
The battle in the field between them twain;
And on his horse, alone as he was born,
He carried all the harness him before.
And in the grove, at the time and place set,
This Arcite and this Palamon were met.
To change began the color in their face;
Right as the hunters in the reign of Thrace,
That stood at the gap with a spear,
When hunted is the lion or the bear,
And hear him come rushing in the greves,
And breaks both boughs and the leaves,
And thinks, "Here comes my mortal enemy!
Without fail, he must be dead, or I,
For else I must slay him at the gap,
Or he must slay me, if that be my mishap.";
So far were they in changing their hue,
As far as each of them the other knew.

There was no good day, and no saluting,
But straight, without word or rehearsing,
Each of them helped arm the other
As friendly as if he were his own brother;
And after that, with sharp spears strong
They foin at each other wonder long.
Thou mightest ween that this Palamon
In his fighting were a mad lion,
And as a cruel tiger was Arcite;
As wild boars go they to smite,
That froth white as foam for ire wood.
Up to their ankles fought they in their blood.
And in this wise I leave them fighting dwell,
And forth I will of Theseus you tell.

The destiny, minister general,
Who administers the world over all
The purveyance that God has seen before,
So strong it is that, though the world had sworn
The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
Yet sometime it shall fall on a day

That falls not again within a thousand years.
For certainly, our appetites here,
Be it for war, or peace, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by foresight above.

This mean I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunt is so desirous,
And namely at the great hart in May,
That in his bed their dawneth him no day
That he not be clad and ready for to ride
With hunt and horn and hounds him beside.
For in his hunting had he such delight
That it is all his joy and appetite
To be himself the great hart's bane,
For after Mars he serves now Diane.
Clear was the day, as I have told ere this
And Theseus, with all joy and bliss,
With his Hippolyta, the fair queen,
And Emily, clothed all in green,
On hunting be they ridden royally,
And to the grove, that stood full fast by,
In which there was a hart, as men him told,
Duke Theseus the straight way had hold,
And to the lawn he rode him full right,
For there the hart won't have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his way,
This Duke will have a course at him, or tway
With hounds such as that he liked to command.

And when this duke was come on to the land,
Into the sun he looked, and anon
He was aware of Arcite and Palamon,
That fought breme as if they were boars two.
The bright swords went to and fro
So hideously that with the least stroke
It seemed as it would fell an oak.
But what they were, he knew not what.
This duke his courser with his spurs smote,
And at a start, he was between them two,
And pulled out a sword and cried, "Hoo!
No more, on pain of losing your head!
By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead

That smiteth any stroke that I may see.
But tell me what mystery men you be,
That be so hardy for to fight here
Without judge or other officer,
As it were in a list royally."

This Palamon answered hastily
And said, "Sire, what needs words more?
We have the death deserved both two.
Two woeful wretches be we, two caitiffs,
That be encumbered of our own lives;
And as thou art a rightful lord and judge,
No, give us neither mercy nor refuge,
But slay me first, for saint charity!
But slay my fellow too as well as me;
Or slay him first, for though thou know it lite,
This is my mortal foe, this is Arcite,
That from thy land is banished on his head,
For which he has deserved to be dead.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And said that he was called Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee full many a year,
And thou hast made him thy chief squire;
And this is he that loves Emily.
For since the day is come that I shall die,
I make plainly my confession
That I am the like woeful Palamon
That hath thy prison broken wickedly.
I am thy mortal foe, and it am I
That loves so hot Emily the bright
That I will die present in her sight.
Wherefore I ask death and my justice;
But slay my fellow in the same wise,
For both have we deserved to be slain."

This worthy duke answered anon again,
And said, "this is a short conclusion.
Your own mouth, by your confession,
Has damned you, and I will it record;
It needeth not to pain you with the cord.
You shall be dead, by mighty Mars the red! "

The queen anon, very womanly,
Went to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
Great pity was it, as it thought them all,
That ever such a chance should fall,
For gentlemen they were of great estate,
And nothing but for love was this debate;
And saw their bloody wounds wide and sore,
And all cried, both less and more,
"Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all! "
And on their bare knees down they fall
And would have kissed his feet there as he stood;
Til at the last aslaked was his mood,
For pity runs soon in gentle heart,
And though he first for ire quaked and start,
He had considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespass of them both, and too the cause,
And although that his ire their guilt accused,
Yet in his reason he them both excused,
As thus: he thought well that every man
Will help himself in love, if that he can,
And so deliver himself out of prison.
And too his heart had compassion
For women, for they weep ever as one,
And in his gentle heart he thought anon,
And soft unto himself he said, "Fie
Upon a lord who will have no mercy,
But be a lion, both in word and deed,
To them that be in repentance and dread,
As well as to a proud spiteful man
Who will maintain that he first began.
That lord has little discretion,
Who in such case makes no distinction
But weighs pride and humbleness as one."
And shortly, when his ire is thus gone,
He went to look up with eyes light
And spoke these same words all on height:

"The god of love, a benedicite!
How mighty and how great a lord is he!
Against his might there gaineth no obstacles.
He may be called a god for his miracles,

For he can make, at his own guise,
Of every heart, as please him to devise.
Lo here this Arcite and this Palamon,
Who quietly were out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes royally,
And knowing I am their mortal enemy,
And that their death lies in my might also,
And yet has love, despite their eyes two,
Brought them hither both for to die.
Now looketh, is not that a high folly?
Who may be a fool but if he love?
Behold, for God's sake that sits above,
See how they bleed! Be they not well arrayed?
Thus hath their lord, the god love, paid
Their wages and their fees for their service!
And yet they think for to be full wise
That serve love, for ought that may befall.
And this is yet the best game of all,
That she for whom they have this jollity
Can them therefore as much thank as me.
She knows no more of all this hot fare,
By God, than knows a cuckoo or a hare!
But all must be assayed, hot and cold;
A man must be a fool, or young or old -
I know it by myself full yore ago,
For in my time a servant was I one.
And therefore, since I know of love's pain
And know how sore it can a man distraint,
As he that has been caught oft in his laas
I you forgive all wholly this trespass,
At request of the queen, who kneels here,
And too of Emily, my sister dear.
And you shall both at once to me swear
That never more you shall my country dere,
Nor make war upon me night or day,
But be my friends in all that you may
I you forgive this trespass, every detail."
And they him swore his asking, fair and well,
And him of lordship and of mercy prayed,
And he them granted grace, and thus he said:

"To speak of royal lineage and riches,

Though that she were a queen or a princess,
Each of you both is worthy, doubtless,
To wed when the time is; but nonetheless -
I speak as for my sister Emily,
For whom you have this strife and jealousy -
You know yourself she may not wed two
At once, though you fight evermore,
That one of you, all be he loath or lief,
He must go pipe in an ivy leaf;
This is to say, she may not now have both,
All be you never so jealous nor so wroth.
And forth to you I put in this degree,
That each of you shall have his destiny
As his is shaped, and hearken in what wise;
Lo, hear your end of what I shall devise.

My will is this, for flat conclusion,
Without any replication -
If that you like, take if for the best
That each of you shall go where he lest,
Freely, without ransom or danger,
And this day fifty weeks, far or near,
Each of you shall bring a hundred knights
Armed for lists upon all rights,
All ready to darrain her by battle.
And this behoove I you without fail,
Upon my troth, and as I am a knight,
That whichever of you both who has might -
That is to say, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I speak of now,
Slay his contrary, or out of lists drive,
Then shall I give Emily to wive
To whom that Fortune gives so fair a grace.
The lists shall I make in this place,
And God so wisely on my soul rue
As I shall even judge be and true.
You shall no other end with me maken,
That one of you shall be dead or taken.
And if you think this is well said,
Say your advice and hold you paid.
This is your end and your conclusion.

Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joy but Arcite?
Who could tell, or who could it endite,
The joy that is made in the place
When Theseus had done so fair a grace?
But down on their knees went every manner wight,
And thanked him with all their heart and might,
And namely the Thebans often sighed.
And thus with good hope and with hearts blithe
They take their leave, and homeward go they ride
To Thebes with its old walls wide.

Explicit secunda pars

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Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Knight's Tale, Part Iii- (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Sequitur pars tercia

I think men will deem it negligence
If I forget to tell the dispense
Of Theseus, who goes so busily
To make up the lists royally,
That such a noble theater as it was
I dare well say in this world never was.
The circuit a mile was about,
Walled with stone, and ditched all without.
Round was the shape, in manner of compass,
Full of degrees, the height of sixty paces,
That when a man was set on a degree,
He let not his fellow for to see.

Eastward there stood a gate of marble white,
Westward right such another in the opposite.
And shortly to conclude, such a place
Was none on earth, as in so little space;
For in the land there was no crafty man
Who geometry or arithmetic can,
Nor painter, nor carver of images,
That Theseus not give him meat and wages
The theater for to make and devise.
And for to do his rite and sacrifice,
He eastward had upon the gate above,
In worship of Venus, goddess of love,
Did make an altar and an oratory;
And on the gate westward, in memory
Of Mars, he had made right such another,
That cost largely of gold a fother.
And northward, in a turret on the wall,
Of alabaster white and red coral,
An oratory, rich for to see,
In worship of Dianne, of chastity,
Has Theseus done wrought in noble wise.

But yet had I forgotten to devise
The noble carving and the portraitures
The shape, the countenance, and the figures,
That were in these oratories there.

First in the temple of Venus may you see
Wrought on the wall, full piteous to behold,
The broken sleeps and the sighs cold,
The sacred tears and the lamenting,
The fiery strokes, and the desiring
That love's servants in this life endure;
The oaths that her covenants assure;
Pleasure and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness,
Beauty and Youth, Bawdiness, Riches,
Charms and Force, Lies, Flattery,
Expense, Business, and Jealousy
That wore of yellow gold a garland
And a cuckoo sitting on her hand;
Feasts, instruments, carols, dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstances
Of love, which that I reckoned, and reckon shall,
By order were painted on the wall,
And more than I can make of mention,
For truly, all the mount of Citheron,
There Venus has her principal dwelling,
Was shown on the wall in portraying,
With all the garden and the lustiness.
Not was forgotten the Porter Idleness,
Nor Narcissus the fair, of yore ago,
Nor yet the folly of King Solomon,
And too the great strength of Hercules,
The enchantments of Medea and Circe,
Nor of Turnus, with the hardy fierce courage,
The rich Croesus, captive in his age;
Thus may you see, that wisdom nor riches,
Beauty nor sleight, strength nor hardiness,
Not may with Venus hold authority,
For as she likes, the world then may she guide.
Lo, all these folk so caught were in her lash,
Til they for woe full oft said 'alas! '
Sufficient here examples one or two -
And, though, I could reckon a thousand more.

The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked, floating in the large sea,
And from the navel down all covered was
With waves green, and bright as any glass.
A citole in her right hand had she,
And on her head, full seemly for to see,
A rose garland, fresh and well smelling,
Above her head her doves flickering.
Before her stood her son, Cupido,
Upon his shoulders wings had he two,
And blind he was, as it was often seen.
A bow he bore, and arrows bright and keen.

Why should I not as well too tell you all
The portraiture, that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the red?
All painted was the wall in length and breadth
Like the inside of the grisly place
Called the great temple of Mars in Thrace,
In that cold frosty region
There as Mars has his sovereign mansion.

First on the wall was painted a forest
In which there dwelled neither man nor beast,
With knotty gnarled barren trees old,
Of stubs sharp and hideous to behold,
In which there ran a rumble and a sough
As though a storm should burst every bough.
And downward from a hill, under a bent,
There stood the temple of Mars Armypotent,
Wrought all of burned steel, of which the entry
Was long and straight, and ghastly for to see,
And thereout came a rage and such a veze,
That it made all the gate for to raise.
The northern light in at the doors shone,
For windows on the wall nor was there none,
Through which men might any light discern.
The door was all of adamant etern,
Clenched crosswise and end-long
With iron tough, and for to make it strong
Every pillar, the temple to sustain,

Was ton-great, of iron bright and sheen.

There saw I first the dark imagining
Of felony, and all the compassing,
The cruel ire, red as any gleed,
The pick-purse, and too the pale dread,
The smiler with the knife under the cloak,
The stable burning with the black smoke,
The treason of the murder in the bed,
The open war, with wounds all be bled;
Contest, with bloody knife and sharp menace;
And full of creaking was that sorry place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there -
His heart-blood has bathed all his hair -
The nail driven in the shode at night;
The cold death, with mouth gaping upright.
Amidst the temple sat Mischance.
With discomfort and sorry countenance.
Yet say I Madness, laughing in his rage,
Armed Complaint, outcry, and fierce outrage;
The carrion in the bush, with throat carved;
A thousand slain, and not of qualm starved;
The tyrant, with the prey by force bereft
The town destroyed, there was nothing left.
Yet saw I burnt the ships like dancers;
The hunter killed by the wild bears;
The sow eating the child right in the cradle;
The cook scalded, for all his long ladle.
Naught was forgotten by the misfortune of Mars.
The carter overridden with his cart -
Under the wheel full low he lay adown.
There were also, of Mars' division,
The barber, and the butcher, and the smith,
Who forges sharp swords on his stith.
And all above, painted in a tower,
Saw I Conquest, sitting in great honor.
With the sharp sword over his head
Hanging by a subtle twine's thread.
Depainted was the slaughter of Julius,
Of great Nero, and of Antonius;
Albeit that at this time they were unborn,
Yet was their death depainted there before

By menacing of Mars, right by figure;
So was it showed in that portraiture.
As is depainted in the stars above
Who shall be slain or else dead for love.
Suffices one example in stories old;
I may not reckon them all though I would.

The statue of Mars upon a cart stood
Armed, and looked grim as he were wood;
And over his head there shined two figures
Of stars, that been called in scriptures,
That one Puella, that other Rubeus -
This god of arms was arrayed thus.
A wolf there stood before him at his feet
With eyes red, and of a man he eat;
With subtle pencil was depainted this story
In recording of Mars and of his glory.

Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I will me haste,
To tell you all the description.
Depainted were the walls up and down
Of hunting and of modest chastity.
There saw I, how woeful Calistopee
When that Diane aggrieved was with her
Was turned from a woman to a bear,
And after was she made the lodestar.
Thus was it painted, I can see you no far-
Her son is too a star, as men may see.
There saw I Dane, turned to a tree,
I mean not the goddess Diane,
But Penneus' daughter, who was named Dane.
There saw I Attheon made into a hart,
For vengeance that he saw Diane all naked.
I saw how that his hounds have him caught
And eaten him, for that they knew him not.
Yet painted was a little furthermore
How Atthalante hunted the wild boar,
And Meleagree, and many another more,
For which Diane wrought him care and woe.
There saw I many another wondrous story,
To which I cannot draw to memory.

This goddess on a hart full high seat,
With small hounds all about her feet;
And underneath her feet she had the moon,
Waxing it was, and should wane soon.
In gaudy green her statue clothed was,
With bow in hand, and arrows in a case.
Her eyes cast she full low down,
There Pluto has his dark region.
A woman travailing was her before;
But for her child so long was unborn
Full piteously Lucyna did she call,
And said, 'Help, for thou mayest best of all! '
Well could he paint lifely, that it wrought,
With many a florin he the hues bought.

Now be these lists made, and Theseus,
That at his great cost arrayed thus
The temples, and the theatre every detail,
When it was done, he liked wonder well.-
But stop I will of Theseus a lite,
And speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approached of their returning,
That each should a hundred knights bring
The battle to decide, as I you told.
And to Athens, their covenants for to hold,
Hath each of them brought a hundred knights,
Well armed for the war at all rights.
And certainly, there thought many a man,
That never since that the world began,
As for to speak of knighthood of their hand,
As far as God had made sea or land,
Never so few, so noble a company.
For everyone that loved chivalry,
And would, his thanks, have a passant name,
Hath prayed that he might be of that game;
And well was him that thereto chosen was.
For if they fall tomorrow such a case
Ye know well, that every lusty knight
That loves paramours, and has his might,
Were it in England or elsewhere,

They would, his thanks, will to be there,
To fight for a lady, benedicitee!
It were a lusty sight for to see.

And right so fared they with Palamon,
With him there went knights many on.
Some went armed in an habergeon,
In a breastplate, and in a light gypon,
And some would have paired plates large,
And some would have a Pruce shield, or a targe,
Some would be armed on their legs as well,
And have an ax, and some a mace of steel.
There is no new guise, that was not of old;
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Each after his opinion.

There may thou see coming with Palamon
Lycurgus himself, the great king of Thrace.
Black was his beard, and manly was his face,
The circles of his eyes in his head,
They glowed between yellow and red,
And like a griffon looked he about,
With unkempt hairs on his brows stout,
His limbs large, his brawns hard and strong,
His shoulders broad, his arms round and long;
And as the guise was in his country,
Full high upon a chariot of gold stood he,
With four white bulls in the traces.
Instead of a coat of arms over his harness,
With nails yellow and bright as any gold
He had a bear's skin, coal black, for-old;
His long hair was combed behind his back,
As any raven's feathers it shone for-black.
A wreath of gold arm-great, of huge weight,
Upon his head, set full of stones bright,
Of fine rubies and of diamonds.
About his chariot there went white hounds,
Twenty and more, as great as any steer,
To hunt at the lion or the deer,
And followed him, with muzzles fast bound,
Colored of gold, and turrets filed round.
A hundred lords had he in his route,

Armed full well, with hearts stern and stout.

With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The great Emetreus, the king of India,
Upon a steed bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in cloth of gold diapered well,
Came riding like the god of arms, Mars.
His cote of armor was of cloth of Tars,
Couched with pearls, white and round and great.
His saddle was of brand gold new ybete;
A mantel upon his shoulder hanging
Brimful of rubies red, as fire sparkling;
His curly hair like rings was run,
And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun.
His nose was high, his eyes bright citrine,
His lips round, his colour was sanguine;
A few freckles in his face were sprend,
Between yellow and some black were mynd,
And as a lion he his looking cast.
Of five and twenty years his age I guess;
His beard was well begun for to spring,
His voice was as a trumpet thundering.
Upon his head he wore of laurel green
A garland, fresh and lusty for to seen.
Upon his hand he bore for his delight
An eagle tame, as any lily white.
A hundred lords had he with him there,
All armed, save their heads, in all their gear,
Full richly in all manner things.
For trust well, that dukes, earls, kings,
Were gathered in this noble company,
For love, and for increase of chivalry.
About this king there ran on every part
Full many a tame lion and leopard,
And in this wise these lords all and some
Were on the Sunday to the city come,
About prime, and in the town alight.

This Theseus, this duke, this worthy knight,
When he had brought them into his city,
And inned them, each one at his degree,
He feasted them, and did so great labor

To entertain and do them al honor,
That yet men know that no man's wit
Of none estate could amend it.

The minstrelsy, the service at the feast,
The great gifts to the most and least,
The rich array of Theseus' palace,
Who sat first who last upon the dais,
What ladies fairest be, or best dancing,
Or which of them can dance best and sing,
Or who most feelingly speak of love,
What hawks sit on the perch above,
What hounds lying in the floor adown-
Of all this make I now no mention;
But all the effect that thinks me the best,
Now comes the point, and hearken if you leste.

The Sunday night, er day began to spring,
When Palamon the lark heard sing,
Although it were not day by hours two,
Yet sang the lark, and Palamon also.
With holy heart and with a high courage
He rose, to go on his pilgrimage,
Unto the blissful Citherea benign,
I mean Venus, honorable and digne.
And in her hour he walked forth a pas
Unto the lists, where her temple was,
And down he knelt, with full humble cheer,
And heart sore, and said in this manner.

'Fairest of fair, O lady mine, Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou maker of the Mount of Citheron,
For that love thou had to Adonis,
Have pity of my bitter tears smart,
And take my humble prayer at thine heart.
Alas, I have no language to tell
The effects, nor the torments of my hell!
My heart may my harms not bewray,
I am so confused that I cannot say.
But mercy, lady bright! that knows well
My thought, and sees what harms that I feel.

Consider all this, and rue upon my sore,
As wisely, as I shall for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy true servant be,
And hold war always with chastity.
That make I my vow, so you me help.
I care not of arms for to yelp,
Nor do I ask tomorrow to have victory,
Nor renown in this case, nor vain glory
Of prize of arms blown up and down,
But I would have fully possession
Of Emily, and die in thy service.
Find thou the manner how, and in what way-
I reach not, but it may better be
To have victory of them, or they of me-
So that I have my lady in my arms.
For though so be, that Mars is god of arms,
Your virtue is so great in heaven above
That if you list, I shall well have my love.
Thy temple will I worship ever more,
And on thy alter, where I ride or go,
I will do sacrifice and fires beat.
And if you will not so, my lady sweet,
Then pray I thee, tomorrow with a spear
That Arcita me through the heart bear.
Then reck not, when I have lost my life,
Though that Arcita win her to his wife.
This is the effect and end prayer,
Give me my love, thou blissful lady dear! '

When the prayer was done of Palamon,
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full piously with all circumstance;
Although tell I not now his observance.
But at last, the statue of Venus shook,
And made a sign whereby that he took
That his prayer accepted was that day.
For though the sign showed a delay,
Yet knew he well that granted was his boon,
And with glad heart he went him home full soon.

The third hour inequal, that Palamon
Began to Venus' temple for to go,

Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily,
And to the temple of Diane did hie.
Her maidens that she thither with her led,
Full readily with them the fire they had,
The incense, the clothes, and the remnant all
That to the sacrifice belonged all.
The horns full of mead, as was the guise,
There lacked not to do her sacrifice,
Smoking the temple, full of clothes fair.
This Emily, with heart debonair,
Her body washed with water of a well-
But how she did her rite I dare not tell,
But it be anything in general;
And yet it were a game to hear all,
To him that meaneth well it were no charge,
But it is good a man be at his large.-
Her bright hair was combed untressed all,
A crown of a green oak cerrial
Upon her head was set, full fair and meet.
Two fires on the altar did she beet,
And did her things as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes, and these books old.
When kindled was the fire, with pious cheer
Unto Diane she spoke as you may hear.

'O chaste goddess of the woods green,
To whom both heaven and earth and sea is seen,
Queen of the reign of Pluto dark and low,
Goddess of maidens, that my heart has know
Full many a year, and know what I desire,
As keep me from thy vengeance and thy ire,
That Acteon bought cruelly.
Chaste goddess, well know that I
Desire to be a maiden all my life,
No never will I be a lover or wife.
I am, thou knows, yet of thy company,
A maid, and love hunting and venery,
And for to walk in the woods wild,
And not to be a wife, and be with child.
Nor will I know the company of man;
Now help me, lady, since you may and can,
For though three forms that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hath such love to me,
And also Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I pray thee, without more,
As send love and peace between them two,
And from me turn away their hearts so,
That all their hot love and their desire,
And all their busy torment and their fire,
Be quenched, or turned in another place.
And if so be thou will do me no grace,
And if my destiny be shaped so
That I shall need have one of them two,
As send me him that most desires me.
Behold, goddess, of clean chastity,
The bitter tears that on my cheeks fall.
Since thou art maid and keeper us all,
My maidenhead thou keep and well conserve,
And while I live a maid, I will thee serve.'

The fires burned upon the altar clear,
While Emily was thus in her prayer;
But suddenly she saw a sight quaint,
For right away one of the fires quenched,
And quicked again, and after that anon
That other fire was quenched and all gone.
And as it quenched, it made a whistling
As do these wet brands in their burning;
And at the brands end out ran anon
As it were bloody drops many of 'em;
For which so sore aghast was Emily
That she was well night mad, and began to cry;
For she knew not what it signified.
But only for the fear thus hath she cried,
And weep that it was pity for to hear;
And therewithal Diane did appear,
With bow in hand, right as a huntress,
And said, 'Daughter, stint thy heaviness.
Among the goddess high it is affirmed,
And by eternal word written and confirmed,
Thou shall be wedded unto one of those
That have for thee so much care and woe.
But unto which of them I may not tell,
Farewell, for I may no longer dwell.

The fires which that on my altar burn
Shall thee declare, ere that thou go hence,
Thy adventure of love, as in this case.'
And with that word, the arrows in the case
Of the goddess clattered fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emily astonished was,
And said, 'What amounteth this, alas!
I put me in thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition! '
And home she goes anon the next way.
This is the effect, there is no more to say.

'O strong god, that in the reigns cold
Of Thrace honored are and lord held,
And has in every reign and every land
Of arms all brindled in thy hand,
And to them fortune as thee so devise,
Accept of me my pious sacrifice.
If so be that my youth may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhead, that I may be one of thine,
Then pray I thee to rue upon my pain.
For that pain, and that hot fire,
In which thou once burned for desire
When that thou used the great beauty
Of fair young fresh Venus free,
And had her in arms at thy will-
Although thee once on a time missfill
When Vulcan had caught thee in his las,
And found thee lying by his wife, alas! -
For such sorrow that was in thy heart
Have rued as well, upon my pains smerte!
I am young and unknowing as thou knows,
And, as I trow, with love offended most
That ever was any live creature;
For she that does me all this woe endure,
Reckons never whether I sink or flee.
And well I know, ere she me mercy heed,
I must with strength win her in the place.
And well I know, without help or grace
Of thee, may my strength not avail.

Then help me, lord, tomorrow in my battle
For that fire that once burned thee,
As well as that fire now burns me!
And do that I tomorrow have victory,
Mine be the travail, and thine be the glory.
Thy sovereign temple will I most honor
Of any place, and always most labor
In thy pleasure, and in thy crafts strong,
And in thy temple I will my banner hang,
And all the arms of my company;
And ever more, unto that day I die,
Eternal fire I will before thee find.
And so to this vow I will me bind;
My beard, my hair, that hangs long down,
That never yet felt offense
Of razor, nor of shears, I will thee give,
And be thy true servant while I live.
Now lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore;
Give me the victory, I ask thee no more! '

The prayer stopped of Arcita the strong;
The rings on the temple door that hung,
And too the doors clatter full fast,
Of which Arcita somewhat him aghast.
The fires burned upon the alter bright,
That began all the temple for to light,
A sweet smell the ground anon gave up,
And Arcita anon his hand raised up,
And more incense into the fire he cast,
With other rights more, and at last
The statue of Mars began his hauberk ring,
And with that sound he heard a murmuring,
Full low and dim, and said thus, 'Victory! '
For which he gave to Mars honor and glory;
And thus with joy and hope well to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inn is fare,
As fain as fowl is of the bright sun.

And right anon such strife there is begun
For that granting in the heaven above
Between Venus, the Goddess of Love,
And Mars the stern God armypotente,

That Jupiter was busy it to stente;
Til that the pale Saturn the cold,
That knew so many of adventures old,
Found in his old experience an art
That he full soon hath pleased every part.
As truth is said, age hath great advantage;
In age is both wisdom and usage;
Men may the old atrenne, but not atrede.
Saturn anon, to stop strife and dread,
Albeit that it is against his kind,
Of all this strife he did remedy find.

'My dear daughter Venus, ' quoth Saturn,
'My course, that has so wide for to turn,
Has more power than knows any man.
Mine is the drenching in the sea so wan,
Mine is the prison in the dark cote,
Mine is the strangling and hanging by the throat,
The murmur, and the churls rebelling,
The groaning, and the privee poisoning.
I do vengeance and plain correction,
While I dwell in the sign of the lion.
Mine is the ruin of the high halls,
The falling of the towers and of the walls
Upon the minor, or the carpenter.
I slew Sampson shaking the pillar,
And mine be the maladies cold,
The dark treasons, and the casts old;
My looking is the father of pestilence.
Now weep no more, I shall do diligence
That Palamon, that is thine own knight,
Shall have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shall help his knight, yet nonetheless
Between you there must be sometime peace,
Albe you not of a complexion -
That causes all day such division.
I am thine aiel, ready at thy will,
Weep now no more, I will thy lust fulfill.'

Now will I stop of the goddess above,
Of Mars and of Venus, goddess of Love,
And tell you, as plainly as I can,

The great effect for which that I began.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Knight's Tale, Part Iv - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Knight's Tale, Part 4

Sequitur pars quarta

Great was the feast in Athens that day,
And too the lusty season of that May
Made every wight to be in such pleasance
That all that Monday joust they and dance,
And spend it in Venus' high service.
But because that they should rise
Early for to see the great fight,
Unto their rest went they at night.
And on the morrow, when that day did spring,
Of horse and harness, noise and clattering
There was in hostelries all about.
And to the palace rode there many a route
Of lords, upon steeds and palfreys.
There may thou see devising of harness
So uncouth and so rich, and wrought so well,
Of goldsmithry, of embroidery, and of steel;
The shields bright, testers, and trappers;
Gold-hewn helms, coats of mail, coat of armors;
Lords in adornment on their corsairs,
Knights with retinues and also squires,
Nailing the spears, and helm buckling,
Fitting of shields, with lanyards lacing.
There as need is, they were nothing idle.
The foamy steeds on the golden bridle
Gnawing, and fast the armorers also
With file and hammer pricking to and fro;
Yeomen on foot and commons many a one,
With short staves thick as they may go on,
Pipes, trumpets, nakers, clarions,
That in the battle blow bloody sounds;
The palace full of people up and down,
Here three, there ten, holding their question,
Divining of these Theban knights two.

Some said thus, some said "it shall be so, "
Some held with him with the black beard,
Some with the bald, some with the thick-haired,
Some said he looked grim, and he would fight,
"He hath a sparth of twenty pound of weight, ",
Thus was the hall full of divining
Long after that the sun began to spring.

The great Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstrelsy and noise that was maked,
Held yet the chamber of his palace rich,
Til that the Theban knights, both aliche
Honored, were into the palace fetched.
Duke Theseus was at a window set,
Arrayed, right as he were a god on throne.
The people pressed thitherward full soon,
Him for to see and do high reverence.
And too to hear his heste and his sentence.
An herald on a scaffold made an 'Oo! '
Til all the noise of people was do,
And when he saw the people of noise all still,
Then showed he the mighty duke's will.

The lord has of his high discretion
Considered that it were destruction
To gentle blood to fight in the guise
Of mortal battle now in this emprise.
Wherefore, to shape that they shall not die,
He will his first purpose modify.
No man therefore, on pain of loss of life,
No manner shot, nor poleaxe, nor short knife
Into the lists send or thither bring;
Nor short sword, for to stoke with point biting,
No man neither draw, nor bear it by his side.
And no man shall unto his fellow ride
But one course with a sharp ground spear;
Foin, if he wish, on foot, himself to ward.
And he that is at mischief shall be take
And not slain, but be brought unto the stake
That shall be ordained on either side;
But thither he shall by force, and there abide.
And if it fall the chieftain be take

On either side, or else slain his make,
No longer shall the tourney last.
God speed you! Go forth and lay on fast!
With long sword and with mace fight your fill.
Go now your way; this is the lord's will.'

The voice of people touched the heaven,
So loudly cried they with merry stevene,
'God save such a lord, that is so good
He wills no destruction of blood! '
Up go the trumpets and the melody,
And to the lists ride the company,
By ordinance, throughout the city large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.

Full like a lord this noble duke did ride,
These two Thebans upon either side,
And after rode the queen and Emily,
And after that another company
Of one and other, after their degree.
And thus they pass throughout the city,
And to the lists come they by time.
It was not of the day yet fully prime
When set was Theseus full rich and high,
Hippolyta the queen, and Emily,
And other ladies in degrees about.
Unto the seats press all the rout.
And westward, through the gates under Mars,
Arcite, and too the hundred of his party,
With banner red is entered right anon;
And in that self moment Palamon
Is under Venus, eastward in the place,
With banner white and hardy cheer and face.
In all the world, to seek up and down,
So even, without variation,
There were not such companies tway,
For there was no one so wise that could say
That anyone had of other advantage
Of worthiness, nor of estate, nor age,
So even were they chosen, for to guess.
And in two ranks fair they them dress.
When that their names read were everyone,

So that in their total number guile were there none,
Though were the gates shut, and cried was loud:
'Do now your devoir, young knights proud! '

The heralds left their pricking up and down;
Now ring trumpets loud and clarion.
There is no more to say, but west and east
In go the spears full sadly in arrest;
In goes the sharp spur into the side.
There see men who can joust and who can ride;
There shivered shafts upon shields thick;
He feels through the heart-bone the prick.
Up spring spears twenty foot on high;
Out go the swords as the silver bright;
The helms they hew and shred;
Out burst the blood in stern streams red;
With mighty maces the bones they brest.
He through the thickest of the throng did thest;
There stumbled steeds strong, and down go all,
He rolls under foot as does a ball;
He foins on his feet with his truncheon,
And he him hurtles with his horse down;
He through the body is hurt and then take,
Despite his heed, and brought unto the stake;
As forward was, right there he must abide.
Another lad is on that other side.
And some time does them Theseus to rest,
Them to refresh and drink, if they lest.
Full oft a day have these Thebans two
Together met, and wrought his fellow woe;
Unhorsed has each other of them tway.
There was not any tiger in the vale of Gargaphiay,
When that her whelp is stolen when it is lite,
So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite
For jealous heart upon this Palamon.
Nor in Belmarye there is not so fell a lion,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Nor of his prey desires so the blood,
As Palamon to slay his foe Arcite.
The jealous strokes on their helms bite;
Out runs blood on both their sides red.

Some time an end there is of every deed.
For ere the sun unto its rest went,
The strong king Emetreus did hente
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite,
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyielded, and drawn to the stake.
And in the rescue of this Palamon
The strong king Lycurgus is born down,
And king Emetreus, for all his strength,
Is born out of his saddle a sword's length,
So hit him Palamon ere he was take.
But all for naught; he was brought to the stake.
His hardy heart might him help not:
He must abide, when that he was caught,
By force and too by composition.

Who sorrows now but woeful Palamon,
That must no more go again to fight?
And when that Theseus had seen this sight,
Unto the folk that fought thus each one
He cried, 'Hoo! No more, for it is done!
I will be true judge, and no party.
Arcite of Thebes shall have Emily,
Who by his fortune has her fairly won.'
Anon there is a noise of people begun
For joy of this, so loud and high withall
It seemed that the lists should fall.

What can now fair Venus do above?
What says she now? What does this queen of love,
But weeps so, for wanting of her will,
Til that her tears in the lists fell?
She said, 'I am ashamed, doubtless.'

Saturn said, 'Daughter, hold thy peace!
Mars has his will, his knight has all his boon,
And, by my head, thou shalt be eased soon.'

The trumpeters, with the loud minstrelsy,
The heralds, that full loudly yell and cry,
Be in their weal for joy of Don Arcite.

But hearken me, and stint noise a lite,
Which a miracle there befell anon.

This fierce Arcite had of his helm undone,
And on a war horse, for to show his face,
He pricks along the large place
Looking upward upon this Emily;
And she against him cast a friendly eye
(For women, as to speak in common,
They follow all the favor of Fortune)
And was all his cheer, as in his heart.

Out of the ground a fury infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent at request of Saturn,
For which his horse for fear began to turn,
And leaped aside, and foundered as he leaped;
And ere that Arcite may take keep,
He hit him on the pommel of his head,
That in the place he lay as he were dead,
His breast broken with his saddlebow.
As black he lay as any coal or crow,
So was the blood running in his face.
Anon he was born out of the place,
With heart sore, to Theseus' palace.
Then was he carved out of his harness
And in a bed brought full fair and blive,
For he was yet in memory and alive,
And always crying after Emily.

Duke Theseus, with all his company,
Is come home to Athens, his city,
With all bliss and great solemnity.
Albeit that this adventure was fall,
He would not discomfort them all.
Men said too that Arcite shall not die;
He shall be healed of his malady.
And of another thing they were as fain,
That of them all there was no one slain,
Although they sore hurt, and namely one,
That with a spear was thirled his breast bone.
To other wounds and to broken arms
Some had salves, and some had charms;

Pharmacies of herbs and also salve
They drank, for they would their limbs have.
For which this noble duke, as he well can
Comforts and honors every man,
And made revel all the long night
Unto the strange lords, as was right.
Nor there was holden no discomfort
But as a joust or a tournament;
For truly there was no discomfiture.
For falling is not but an adventure,
Nor to be led by force unto the stake
Unyielden, and with twenty knights take,
One person alone, without more,
And harried forth by arm, foot, and toe,
And too his steed driven forth with staves
By footmen, both yeomen and also knaves -
It has arretted him no villainy;
There may no man call it cowardly.
For which anon duke Theseus let cry,
To stop all rancor and envy,
The great as well of one side as of other,
And either side alike as the other's brother;
And gave them gifts after their degree,
And fully held a feast days three,
And conveyed the kings worthily
Out of his town a journey largely.
And home went every man the right way.
There was no more but 'Fare well, have good day! '
Of this battle I will no more endite,
But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelled the breast of Arcite, and the sore
Increases at his heart more and more.
The clotted blood, for any leechcraft,
Corrupts, and is in his body left,
That neither vein-blood nor letting,
Nor drink of herbs may be his helping.
The virtue expulsive, or animal,
From that virtue called natural
Nor may the venom void or expel.
The pipes of his lungs began to swell,
And every muscle in his breast down

Is shent with venom and corruption.
He gains neither, for to get his life,
Vomit upward, nor downward laxative.
All is broken in that region;
Nature has now no dominion.
And certainly, where Nature will not work,
Fare well physic! Go bear the man to church!
This all and sum, that Arcite must die;
For which he sends after Emily,
And Palamon, that was his cousin dear.
Then said he thus, as you shall after hear:
'Naught may the woeful spirit in my heart
Declare one point of all my sorrows smart
To you, my lady, that I love most,
But I bequeath the service of my ghost
To you above every creature,
Since that my life may no longer endure.
Alas, the woe! Alas, the pains strong,
That I for you have suffered, and so long!
Alas, the death! Alas, my Emily!
Alas, departing of our company!
Alas, my heart's queen! Alas, my wife,
My heart's lady, ender of my life!
What is this world? What ask men to have?
Now with his love, now in his cold grave
Alone, without any company.
Farewell, my sweet foe, my Emily!
And softly take me in your arms tway,
For love of God, and hearken what I say.

'I have here with my cousin Palamon
Had strife and rancor many a day gone
For love of you, and for my jealousy.
And Jupiter so wise my soul guide,
To speak of a servant properly,
With all circumstances truly -
That is to say, truth, honor, knighthood,
Wisdom, humbleness, estate, and high kindred,
Freedom, and all that longeth to that art -
So Jupiter have of my soul part,
As in this world right now know I none
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,

That serves you, and will do so all his life.
And if that ever you shall be a wife,
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man.'
And with that word his speech fail began,
For from his feet up to his breast was come
The cold of death, that had him overcome,
And yet moreover, for in his arms two
The vital strength is lost and all ago.
Only the intellect, without more,
That dwelled in his heart sick and sore,
Began to fail when the heart felt death.
Dusked his eyes two, and failed breath,
But on his lady yet cast he his eye;
His last word was, 'Mercy, Emily! '
His spirit changed house and went there,
As I came never, I cannot tell where.
Therefore I stop; I am no diviner;
Of souls find I naught in this register,
Nor me list such opinions to tell
Of them, though that they write where they dwell.
Arcite is cold, there Mars his soul guide!
Now will I speak forth of Emily.

Shrieked Emily, and howled Palamon,
And Theseus his sister took anon
Swooning, and bore her from the corpse away.
What helps it to tarry forth the day
To tell how she wept both eve and morrow?
For in such case women have such sorrow,
When that their husbands be from them go,
That for the most part they sorrow so,
Or else fall in such malady
That at the last certainly they die.

Infinite be the sorrows and the tears
Of old folk and folk of tender years
In all the town for death of this Theban.
For him there wept both child and man;
So great weeping was there none, certain,
When Hector was brought, all freshly slain,
To Troy. Alas, the pity that was there,
Scratching of cheeks, renting too of hair.

'Why wouldst thou be dead, ' these women cry,
'And haddest gold enough, and Emily? '

No man might gladden Theseus,
Saving his old father Egeus,
That knew this world's transmutation,
As he had seen it change both up and down,
Joy after woe, and woe after gladness,
And showed them examples and likeness.

'Right as there died never a man, ' said he,
'That he not lived in earth in some degree,
Right so there lived never man, ' he said,
'In all this world, that some time he not died.
This world's not but a thoroughfare full of woe,
And we be pilgrims, passing to and fro.
Death is an end of every worldly sore.'
And over all this yet said he much more
To this effect, full wisely to exhort
The people that they should themselves comfort.

Duke Theseus, with all his busy cure,
Cast now where that the sepulcher
Of good Arcite may best made be,
And too most honorable in his degree.
And at the last he took conclusion
That there as first Arcite and Palamon
Had for love the battle them between,
That in that same grove, sweet and green,
There as he had his amorous desires,
His complaint, and for love his hot fires,
He would make a fire in which the office
Funeral he might all accomplice.
And let command anon to hack and hew
The oaks old, and lay them on a row
In colpons well arrayed for to burn.
His officers with swift feet they run
And ride anon at his commandment.
And after this, Theseus has sent
After a bier, and it all overspread
With cloth of gold, the richest that he had.
And of the same suit he clad Arcite;

Upon his hands had he gloves white,
And on his head a crown of laurel green,
And in his hand a sword full bright and keen.
He laid him, bare the visage, on the bier;
Therewith he wept that pity was to hear.
And for the people should see him all,
When it was day, he brought him to the hall,
That roared of the crying and the sound.

Though came this woeful Theban Palamon,
With floatery beard and raggy, ashy hair,
In clothes black, dropped all with tears;
And, passing others of weeping, Emily,
The ruefullest of all the company.
Inasmuch as the service should be
The more noble and rich in his degree,
Duke Theseus let forth three steeds bring,
That trapped were in steel all glittering,
And covered with the arms of Don Arcite.
Upon these steeds, that were great and white,
There sat folk, of which one bore his shield,
Another his spear up on his hands held,
The third bore with him his bow Turkish
(Of pure gold was the case and also the harness):
And rode forth a pace with sorrowful cheer
Toward the grove, as you shall after hear.
The noblest of the Greeks that there were
Upon their shoulders carried the bier,
With slack pace and eyes red and wet,
Throughout the city by the master street,
That spread was all with black, and wonder high
Right of the same is the street covered by.
Upon the right hand went old Egeus,
And on that other side duke Theseus,
With vessels in their hand of gold full fine,
All full of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;
Also Palamon, with full great company;
And after that came woeful Emily,
With fire in hand, as was that time the guise,
To do the ritual of funeral service.

High labor and full great appareling

Was at the service and the fire-making,
That with his green top the heaven reached;
And twenty fathom of breadth the arms stretched -
This is to say, the boughs were so broad.
Of straw first there was laid full many a load.
But how the fire was made upon high,
Nor also the names that the trees hight,
As oak, fir, birch, aspen, alder, holm, poplar,
Willow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestnut, linden, laurel,
Maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew, whippeltree -
How they were felled shall not be told for me;
Nor how the gods ran up and down,
Disinherited of their habitation,
In which they dwelt in rest and peace,
Nymphs, fawns and amadrides;
Nor how the beasts and the birds all
Fled for fear, when the wood was cut fall;
Nor how the ground aghast was of the light,
Which was not wont to see the sun bright;
Nor how the fire was couched first with straw,
And then with dry sticks cloven by three,
And then with green wood and spicery,
And then with cloth of gold and with perrie,
And garlands, hanging with full many a flower;
The myrrh, the incense, with all so great odor;
Nor how Arcite lay among all this,
Nor what richness about his body is;
Nor how that Emily, as was the guise,
Put in the fire of funeral service;
Nor how she swooned when men made the fire,
Nor what she spoke, nor what was her desire;
Nor what jewels men in the fire cast,
When that the fire was great and burned fast;
Nor how some case their shields, and some their spears,
And of their vestments, which that they wore,
And cups full of wine, and milk, and blood,
Into the fire, that burned as it were wood;
Nor how the Greeks, with a huge rout,
Thrice rode all the fire about
Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting,
And thrice with their spears clattering;
And thrice how the ladies gone cry;

And how that led was homeward Emily;
Nor how Arcite is burned to ashes cold;
Nor how that liche-wake was held
All the same night; nor how the Greeks play
The wake-plays; no, care I not to say
Who wrestles best, naked with oil anoint,
Nor who that bore him best, in no disjoint.
I will not tell also how that they go on
Home to Athens, when the play is done;
But shortly to the point then will I wend
And make of my long tale an end.

By process and by length of certain years,
All stopped is the mourning and the tears
Of Greeks, by one general assent.
Then seemed me there was a parliament
At Athens, upon certain points and cases;
Among the which points spoken was,
To have with certain countries alliance,
And have fully of Thebans obeisance.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let sent after gentle Palamon,
Unknown of him what was the cause and why,
But in his black clothes sorrowfully
He came at his command in hie.
Then sent Theseus for Emily.
When they were set, and hushed was all the place,
And Theseus abiden had a space
Ere any word came from his wise breast,
He eyes set he there as was his lest.
And with a sad visage he sighed still,
And after that right thus he said his will:

'The First Mover of the cause above,
When he first made the fair chain of love,
Great was the effect, and high was his intent.
Well knew he why, and what thereof he meant,
For with that fair chain of love he bound
The fire, the air, the water, and the land
In certain bounds, that they may not flee.
That same Prince and that Mover, ' said he,
'Has established in this wretched world adown

Certain days and duration
To all that is engendered in this place,
Over the which day they cannot pace,
Although they yet those days well abridge.
There needeth not no authority to allege,
For it is proved by experience,
But that me list declare my sentence.
Then may men by this order well discern
That that same Mover stable is and eterne.
Well may men know, but it be a fool,
That every part derives from his whole,
For nature has not taken his beginning
Of no part or portion of a thing,
But of a thing that perfect is complete and stable,
Descending so til it be corruptible.
And therefore, of his wise providence,
He has so well beset his ordinance
That species of things and progressions
Shall endure by successions,
And not eternal, without any lie.
This may you understand and see at yea.

'Lo the oak, that has so long a nourishing
From the time that it first begins to spring,
And has so long a life, as we may see,
Yet at the last wasted is the tree.

'Consider too how that the hard stone
Under our feet, on which we tread and go on,
Yes wastes it as it lies by the way.
The broad river sometimes waxes dry;
The great towns see we wane and wend.
Then may you see that all these things have end.

'Of man and woman see we well also
That needs, in one of these terms two -
This is to say, in youth or else age -
He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
Some in his bed, some in the deep sea,
Some in the large field, as men may see;
There helps naught; all goes that same way.
Then may I say that all these thing must die.

'What makes this but Jupiter, the king,
That is prince and cause of all things,
Converting all unto his proper well
From which it is derived, truth to tell?
And here against no creature alive,
Of no degree, availleth for to strive.

'Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To make virtue of necessity,
And take it well that we may not eschew,
And namely that to us all is due.
And whoso grouches ought, he does folly,
And rebel is to him that all may gye.
And certainly a man has most honor
To die in his excellence and flower,
When he is secure of his good name;
Then has he done his friend, nor him, no shame.
And gladder ought his friend be of his death,
When with honor up yielded is his breath,
Than when his name paled is for age,
For all forgotten is his vassalage.
Then is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To die when that he is best of name.

'The contrary of all this is willfulness.
Why grouch we, why have we heaviness,
That good Arcite, of chivalry flower,
Departed is with duty and honor
Out of this foul prison of this life?
Why grouch here his cousin and his wife
Of his welfare, that loved them so well?
Can he them thank? Nay, God knows, never a dell;
They both his soul and too themselves offend,
And yet they must their lusts not amend.

'What may I conclude of this long series,
But after woe I read us to be merry
And thank Jupiter of all his grace?
And ere that we depart from this place
I read that we make of sorrows two
One perfect joy, lasting evermore.

And look now, where most sorrow is herein,
There will we first amend and begin.

'Sister, ' said he, 'this is my full assent,
With all the advice here of my parliament,
That gentle Palamon, your own knight,
Who serves you with will, heart, and might,
And ever has done since you first knew him,
That you shall of your grace have upon him rue,
And take him for husband and for lord.
Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.
Let see now of your womanly pity.
He is a king's brother's son, indeed;
And though he were a poor bachelor,
Since he has served you so many a year,
And had for you so great adversity,
It must be considered, believe me,
For gentle mercy ought to pass right.'

Then said he thus to Palamon the knight:
'I trust there needs little sermoning
To make you assent to this thing.
Come near, and take your lady by the hand.'

Between them was made anon the band
That's called matrimony or marriage,
By all the council and the baronage.
And thus with all bliss and melody
Has Palamon wedded Emily.
And God, that all this wide world has wrought,
Send him his love that has it dear bought;
For now is Palamon in all wealth,
Living in bliss, in riches, and in health,
And Emily him loves so tenderly,
And he her serves so gently,
That never was there no word them between
Of jealousy or any other tene.
Thus ends Palamon and Emily;
And God save all this fair company! Amen.

Here is ended the Knights Tale

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Man Of Law's Tale Epilogue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

[Our Host upon his stirrups stood anon,
And said, 'Good men, hearken every one!
This was a thrifty tale for the nones!
Sir Parish Priest, ' said he, 'for God's bones,
Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore..
I see well that you learned men in lore
Ken much good, by God's dignity! ']

The Parson him answered, 'Benedicite!
What ails the man, so sinfully to swear? '
Our Host answered, 'O Jankin, be you there?
I smell a Lollard in the wind, ' said he.
'Now! good men, ' said our Host, 'hearken me;
Abide, for God's high passion,
For we shall have a preachion;
This Lollard here will preach us somewhat.'

'Nay, by my father's soul, that shall he not! '
Said the Shipman, 'Here shall he not preach;
He shall no gospel gloss here nor teach.
We believe all in the great God, ' said he;
'He would sow some difficulty,
Or spring cockle in our clean corn.
And therefore, Host, I warn thee before,
My jolly body shall tell a tale,
And I shall clink you so merry a bell,
That I shall waken all this company.
But it shall not be of philosophy,
Nor physic, nor terms quaint of law.
There is but little Latin in my maw! ']

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Man Of Law's Tale First Part (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

In Syria once dwelt a company
Of chapmen rich, and thereto steady and true,
That wide-where sent their spicery,
Cloths of gold, and satins rich of hue.
Their chaffer was so thrifty and so new
That every wight had daintees to chaffer
With them, and too to sell them their ware.

Now fill it that the masters of that sort
Have shaped them to Rome for to wend;
Were it for chapmanhood or for disport,
No other message would they thither send,
But come themselves to Rome; this is the end.
And in such place as thought them advantage
For their intent, they take their herbergage.

Sojourned have these merchants in that town
A certain time, as fell to their pleasance.
And so befell that the excellent renown
Of the Emperor's daughter, dame Custance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto these Syrian merchants in such wise,
From day to day, as I shall you devise.

This was the common voice of every man:
'Our Emperor of Rome - God him see! -
A daughter has that, since the world began,
To reckon as well her goodness as beauty,
There was never such another as is she.
I pray to God to honor her sustain,
And would she were of all Europe the queen.

'In her is hight beauty, without pride,
Youth, without green-head folly;
To all her works virtue is her guide;
Humbleness has slain in her all tyranny.
She is mirror of all courtesy;

Her heart is verry chamber of holiness,
Her hand, minister of freedom for alms.'

And all this voice was sooth, as God is true.
But now to purpose let us turn again.
These merchants have done fraught their ships new,
And when they have this blissful maiden seen,
Home to Syria they went full fain,
And done their needs as they have done yore,
And live in weel; I can say you no more.

Now fill it that these merchants stood in grace
Of him that was the Sultan of Syria;
For when they came from any strange place,
He would, of his benign courtesy,
Make them good cheer, and busily espy
Tidings of sundry reigns, for to learn
The wonders that they might seen or heard.

Amongst other things, specially,
These merchants have him told of Lady Custance
Such great noblesse in earnest, seriously,
That this Sultan has caught so great pleasance
To have her figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust and all his busy cure
Was to love her while his life may dure.

Peradventure in that large book
Which that men call the heaven written was
With stars, when that he his birth took,
That he for love should have his death, alas!
For in the stars, clearer than is glass,
Is written, God knows, whoso could it read,
The death of every man, without dread.

In stars, many a winter therebeforn,
Was written the death of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, ere they were born;
The strife of Thebes; and of Hercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The death; but men's wits be so dull
That no wight can well read it at full.

This Sultan for his privy council sent,
And, shortly of this matter for to pace,
He has to them declared his intent,
And said them, certain, but he might have grace
To have Custance within a little space,
He was but dead; and charged them in high
To shape for his life some remedy.

Diverse men diverse things said;
They argue, cast up and down;
Many a subtle reason forth they laid;
They speak of magic and abusion.
But finally, as in conclusion,
They cannot see in that none advantage,
Nor in no other way, save marriage.

Then saw they therein such difficulty
By way of reason, for to speak all plain,
Because that there was such diversity
Between their both laws, that they say
They trow that no 'Christian prince would fain
Wed his child under our law sweet
That us was taught us by Mohammed, our prophet.'

And he answered, 'Rather than I lose
Custance, I will be christened, doubtless.
I must be hers; I may no other choose.
I pray you hold arguments peace;
Save my life, and be not reckless
To get her that has my life in cure,
For in this woe I may not long endure.'

What needs greater dilatation?
I say, by treaty and embassadry,
And by the pope's mediation,
And all the church, and all the chivalry,
That in destruction of mohametry,
And in increase of Christ's law dear,
They be accorded, so as you shall hear:

How that the Sultan and his baronage

And all his lieges should christened be,
And he shall have Custance in marriage,
And certain gold, I know not what quantity;
And hereto found sufficient surety.
This same accord was sworn on either side;
Now, fair Custance, almighty God thee guide!

Now would some men wait, as I guess,
That I should tell all the purveyance
That the Emperor, of his great nobless,
Has shaped his daughter, Lady Custance.
Well may men know that so great ordinance
May no man tell in a little clause
As was arrayed for so high a cause.

Bishops were shaped with her for to wend,
Lords, ladies, knights of renown,
And other folk enough; this is the end;
And notified is throughout the town
That every wight, with great devotion,
Should pray Christ that He this marriage
Receive in gree and speed this voyage.

The day is come of her departure;
I say, the woeful fatal day is come,
That there may be no longer tarrying,
But forthward they them dress, all and some.
Custance, that was with sorrow all overcome,
Full pale arises, and dresses her to wend;
For well she sees there is no other end.

Alas, what wonder is it though she wept,
That shall be sent to strange nation
From friends that so tenderly her kept,
And to be bound under subjection
Of one, she knows not his condition?
Husbands be all good, and have been yore;
That wives know; I dare say you no more.

'Father, ' she said, 'thy wretched child Custance,
Thy young daughter fostered up so soft,
And you, my mother, my sovereign pleasance

Over all things, out-taken Christ on-loft,
Custance your child her recommends oft
Unto your grace, for I shall to Syria,
Nor shall I never see you more with eye.

'Alas, unto the Barber nation
I must go anon, since that it is your will;
But Christ, that starved for our redemption
So give me grace his heste to fulfill!
I, wretched woman, no force though I spill!
Women are born to thralldom and penance,
And to be under man's governance.'

I trow at Troy, when Pirrus broke the wall
Before Ilion burned, at Thebes the city,
Nor at Rome, for the harm through Hannibal
That Romans has vanquished times three,
Nas heard such tender weeping for pity
As in the chamber was for her departing;
But forth she must, whereso she weeps or sings.

O first moving! Cruel firmament,
With thy diurman sway that crowds ay
And hurls all from east til occident
That naturally would hold another way,
Thy impetus set the heaven in such array
At the beginning of this fierce voyage,
That cruel Mars has slain this marriage.
Unfortunate ascendent tortuous
Of which the lord is helpless fallen, alas,
Out of his angle into the darkest house!
O Mars, o atazir, as in this case!
O feeble moon, unhappy be thy pace!
Thou knittest thee where thou art not received;
There thou were well, from thence art thou weaved.

Imprudent Emperor of Rome, alas!
Was there no philosopher in all thy town?
Is no time better than another in such case?
Of voyage is there no election,
Namely for folk of high condition?
Not when a route is of a birth unknow?

Alas, we've been too lewd or too slow!

To ship is brought this woeful fair maid
Solemnly, with every circumstance.
'Now Jesus Christ be with you all! ' she said;
There's no more, but 'Farewell, fair Custance! '
She paineth her to make good countenance;
And forth I let her sail in this manner,
And turn I will again to my matter.

The mother of the Sultan, well of vices,
Espied has her son's plain intent,
How he will leave his old sacrifices;
And right anon she for her council sent,
And they be come to know what she meant.
And when assembled was this folk in-fere,
She set her down, and said as you shall hear.

'Lords, ' said she, 'you know every one,
How that my son in point is for to let
The holy laws of our Koran,
Given by God's messenger Mohammet.
But one vow to great God I heete,
The life shall rather out of my body stert
Before Mohammet's law out of my heart!

'What should us tide of this new law
Except thralldom to our bodies and penance,
And afterward hell to be draw,
For we deny Moham our credence?
But, lords, will you make assurance,
As I shall say, assenting to my lore,
And I shall make us safe for evermore? '

They swore and assent, every man,
To live with her and die, and by her stand,
And every one, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen her shall all his friends found;
And she has this emprise take in hand,
Which you shall hear that I shall devise,
And to them all she spoke right in this wise:

'We shall first feign us Christendom to take -
Cold water shall not grieve us but a lute! -
And I shall such a feast and revel make
That, as I trow, I shall the Sultan quite.
For though his wife be christened never so white,
She shall have need to wash away the red,
Though she a font full water with her led.'

O Sultanness, root of iniquity!
Virago, thou Semirame the second!
O serpent under femininity,
Like to the serpent deep in hell bound!
O feigned woman, all that may confound
Virtue and innocence, through thy malice,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice!

O Satan, envious since that day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Well knowest thou to women the old way!
Thou madest Eva bring us in servage;
Thou wilt fordoon this Christian marriage.
Thy instrument so - wellaway the while! -
Makest of women, when thou wilt beguile.

This Sultanness, whom I thus blame and warye,
Let privately her council go their way.
What should I in this tale longer tarry?
She rides to the Sultan on a day,
And said him that she would renay her lay,
And Christendom of priest's hands fonge,
Repenting her she heathen was so long,
Beseeching him to do her that honor,
That she might have the Christian folk to feast -
'To please them I will do my labor.'
The Sultan says, 'I will do at your hest.'
And kneeling thanks her of that request.
So glad he was, he knew not what to say.
She kissed her son, and home she goes her way.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Man Of Law's Tale Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

O hateful harm, condition of poverty!
With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded!
To ask help thou shamed in thy heart;
If thou none ask, with need art thou so wounded
That very need unwrapped all thy wounds hid!
Despite thy heed, thou must for indigence
Or steal, or beg, or borrow thy expense!

Thou blamest Christ and sayest full bitterly
He misdeparted riches temporal;
Thy neighbor thou blamest sinfully,
And sayest thou hast too lite and he hath all.
'Par faith, ' sayest thou, 'sometime he reckon shall,
When that his tail shall burn in the glede,
For he not helpeth needful in their need.'

Hearken what is the sentense of the wise:
'Better to die than have indegence';
'Thy self neighbor will thee despise.'
If thou be poor, farewell thy reverence!
Yet of the wise man take this sentence:
'All the days of poor men be wicked.'
Beware, therefore, er thou come to that prick!

If thou be poor, thy brother hates thee,
And all thy friends flee from thee, alas!
O rich merchants, full of weel be yee,
O noble, o prudent folk, as in this case!
Your bags be not filled with ambes ace,
But with six cinque, that runneth for your chance;
At Christmas merry may you dance!

You seek land and sea for your winnings;
As wise folk you know all the estate
Of reign; you be fathers of tidings
And tales, both of peace and of debate.
I were right now of tales desolate,

Nere that a merchant, gone is many a year,
Me taught a tale, which that you shall hear.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Man Of Law's Tale Second Part (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Arrived be this Christian folk to land
In Syria, with a great solemn route,
And hastily this Sultan sent his sonde
First to his mother, and all the reign about,
And said his wife was come, out of doubt,
And prayed her to ride again the queen,
The honor of his reign to sustain.

Large was the press, and rich was the array
Of Syrians and Romans met ifere;
The mother of the Sultan, rich and gay,
Receives her with as glad a cheer
As any mother might her daughter dear,
And to the next city there beside
A soft pace solemnly they ride.

Not trow I the triumph of Julius,
Of which that Lucan makes such a boast,
Was royaler nor more curious
Than was the assembly of this blissful host.
But this scorpion, this wicked ghost,
The Sultanness, for all her flattering,
Cast under this full mortally to sting.

The Sultan comes himself soon after this
So royally that wonder is to tell,
And welcomes her with all joy and bliss.
And thus in mirth and joy I let them dwell;
The fruit of this matter is that I tell.
When time came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint, and men go to their rest.

The time came, this old Sultanness
Ordained has this feast of which I told,
And to the feast Christian folk them dress
In general, yes, both young and old.
Here may men feast and royalty behold,

And dainties more than I can you devise;
But all too dear they bought it ere they rise.

O sudden woe, that ever art successor
To worldly bliss, sprayed with bitterness,
The end of the joy of our worldly labor!
Woe occupies the end of our gladness.
Heark this counsel for thy certainness:
Upon thy glad day have in thy mind
The unaware woe or harm that comes behind.

For shortly for to tell, at one word,
Sultan and the Christians each one
Be all hacked and stabbed at the board,
But it were only dame Lady Custance alone.
This old Sultanness, cursed crone,
Has with her friends done this cursed deed,
For she herself would all the country lead.

Nor there was Syrian none that was converted,
That of the counsel of the Sultan wot,
That he's not all hacked ere he astarted.
And Custance have they take anon foot-hot,
And in a ship all steerless, God-wot,
They have her set, and bid her learn sail
Out of Syria again-ward to Italy.

A certain treasure that she there led,
And, truth to say, victuals great plenty
They have her given, and clothes too she had,
And forth she sails in the salt see.
O my Custance, full of benignity,
O Emperor's young daughter dear,
He that is lord of Fortune be thy steer!

She blessed herself, and with full piteous voice
Unto the cross of Christ thus said she:
'O clear, o welful altar, holy cross,
Red of the Lamb's blood full of pity,
That washed the world from the old iniquity,
Me from the fiend and from his claws,
That day that I shall drench in the deep.

'Victorious tree, protection of true,
That only worthy were for to bear
The King of Heaven with his wounds new,
The white Lamb, that hurt was with a spear,
Flamer of fiends out of him and her
On which thy limbs faithfully extend,
Me keep, and give me might my life to amend.'

Years and days floated this creature
Throughout the Sea of Greece unto the Strait
Of Morroco, as it was her adventure.
On many a sorry meal now may she bait;
After her death full often may she wait,
Ere that the wild waves will her drive
Unto the place there she shall arrive.

Men might ask why she was not slain
Too at the feast? Who might her body save?
And I answer to that demand again,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave
Where every wight save he, master and knave,
Was with the lion eaten ere he astert?
No wight but God that he bore in his heart.

God liked to show his wonderful miracle
In her, for we should see his mighty works;
Christ, which that is to every harm treacle,
By certain means oft, as know clerks,
Does thing for certain end that full dark is
To man's wit, that for our ignorance,
Cannot know his prudent purveyance.

Now since she was at the feast slain,
Who kept her from the drenching in the sea?
Who kept Jonas in the fish's maw
Until he was spouted up at Nineveh?
Well may men know it was no wight but he
That kept people Hebrew from their drenching,
With dry feet throughout the sea passing.

Who bade the four spirits of tempest

That power have to annoy land and sea,
Both north and south, and also west and east,
'Annoy neither sea, nor land, nor tree'?
Truly, the commander of that was he
That from the tempest aye this woman kept
As well when she woke as when she slept.

Where might this woman meat and drink have
Three years and more? How lasts her vitaile?
Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave,
Or in desert? No wight but Christ, sans fail.
Five thousand folk it was as great marvel
With loaves five and fishes two to feed.
God sent his foison at their great need.

She drives forth into our ocean
Throughout our wild sea, til at the last
Under a hold that I can't name,
Far in Northumberland the waves her cast,
And in the sand her ship stuck so fast
That thence it would not for all a tide;
The will of Christ was that she should abide.

The constable of the castle down is fare
To see this wreck, and all the ship he sought,
And found this weary woman full of care;
He found also the treasure that she brought.
In her language mercy she besought,
The life out of her body to take twin,
Her to deliver of woe that she was in.

A manner Latin corrupt was her speech,
But algates thereby was she understood.
The constable, when he list no longer search,
This woeful woman brought he to the land.
She kneels down and gives thanks God's sonde;
But what she was she would no man say,
For foul nor fair, though that she should die.

She said she was so mazed in the sea
That she forgot her mind, by her truth.
The constable has of her so great pity,

And too his wife, that they weep for ruth.
She was so diligent, without sloth,
To serve and please every one in that place
That all her love that look in her face.

This constable and dame Hermengild, his wife,
Were pagans, and that country everywhere;
But Hermengild loved her right as her life,
And Custance has so long sojourned there,
In prayers, with many a bitter tear,
Until Jesus has converted through his grace
Dame Hermengild, constableness of that place.

In all that land no Christians dared route;
All Christian folk have fled from that country
Through pagans, that conquered all about
The plagues of the north, by land and sea.
To Wales fled the Christianity
Of old Britons dwelling in this isle;
There was their refuge for the mean while.

But yet Christian Britons so exiled
That there were some that in their privacy
Honored Christ and heathen folk beguiled,
And none the castle such there dwelt three.
The one of them was blind and might not see,
Unless it were with those eyes of his mind
With which men see, after that they be blind.

Bright was the sun in that summer's day,
For which the constable and his wife also
And Custance have taken the right way
Toward the sea a furlong way or two,
To play and to roam to and fro,
And in their walk this blind man they met,
Crooked and old, with eyes fast shut.

'In the name of Christ, ' cried this blind Briton,
'Dame Hermengild, give me my sight again! '
This lady waxed afraid of the sound,
Lest that her husband, shortly to say,
Would her for Jesus Christ's love have slain,

Til Custance made her bold, and bade her work
The will of Christ, as daughter of his church.

The constable waxed abashed of that sight,
And said, 'What amounts all this fare? '
Custance answered, 'Sire, it is Christ's might,
That helps folk out of the fiend's snare.'
And so ferforth she did our lay declare
That she the constable, ere that it was eve
Converts, and on Christ made him believe.

This constable was nothing lord of this place
Of which I speak, there he Custance found,
But kept it strongly many a winter's space
Under Alla, king of all Northumberland,
That was full wise, and worthy of his hand
Against the Scots, as men may well hear;
But I will turn again to my matter.

Satan, that ever us waits to beguile,
Saw of Custance all her perfection,
And cast anon how he might quite her while,
And made a young knight that dwelt in that town
Love her so hot, of foul affection,
That verily he thought he should spill,
But he of her might once have his will.

He woos her, but it avails not;
She would do no sin, by no way.
And for despite he compassed in his thought
To make her on a shameful death to die.
He waits when the constable was away,
And privily upon a night he crept
In Hermengild's chamber, while she slept.

Weary, forwaked in her orisons,
Sleeps Custance, and Hermengild also.
This knight, through Satan's temptations,
All softly is to the bed go,
And cut the throat of Hermengild in two,
And laid the bloody knife by Lady Custance,
And went his way, may God give him mischance!

Soon after, comes this constable home again,
And too Alla, that king was of that land,
And saw his wife despitously slain,
For which full oft he wept and wrung his hand,
And in the bed the bloody knife he found
By Dame Custance. Alas, what might she say?
For very woe her wit was all away.

To king Alla was told all this mischance,
And too the time, and where, and in what wise
That in a ship was found this Custance,
As here before that you have heard devise.
The king's heart of pity was agrise,
When he saw so benign a creature
Fallen in dis-ease and in misadventure.

For as the lamb toward his death is brought,
So stands this innocent before the king.
This false knight, has has this treason wrought,
Bore her on hand that she has done this thing.
But nonetheless, there was great mourning
Among the people, and say they can not guess
That she had done so great a wickedness,

For they have seen her ever so virtuous,
And loving Hermengild right as her life.
Of this bore witness every one in that house,
Save he that Hermengild slayed with his knife.
This gentle king has caught a great motif
Of this witness, and thought he would enquire
Deeper in this, a truth for to learn.

Alas! Custance, thou hast no champion,
Nor fight can thou not, so wailaway!
But He that starved for our redemption,
And bound Satan (and yet lies there he lay) ,
So be thy strong champion this day!
For, but if Christ open miracle kithe,
Without guilt thou shalt be slain as swiftly.

She set her down on knees, and thus she said:

'Immortal God, that saved Susanne
From false blame, and thou, merciful maid,
Mary I mean, daughter to Saint Anne,
Before whose child angels sing Hosanna,
If I be guiltless of this felony,
My succor be, for else shall I dye! '

Have you not seen sometime a pale face,
Among a press, of him that has been led
Toward his death, where as he got no grace,
And such a color in his face has had
Men might know his face that was bistad
Among all the faces in that route?
So stands Custance, and looks her about.

O queens, living in prosperity,
Duchesses, and you ladies every one,
Have some ruth on her adversity!
An Emperor's daughter stands alone;
She has no person to whom to make her moan.
O blood royal, that stands in this dread,
Far be thy friends at thy great need!

This Alla king has such compassion,
As gentle heart is filled of pity,
That from his eyes ran the water down.
'Now hastily do fetch a book, ' said he,
'And if this knight will swear how that she
This woman slew, yet will we us advise
Whom that we will that shall be our justice.'

A British book, written with Evangels,
Was fetched, and on this book he swore anon
She guilty was, and in the mean while
A hand him smote upon the neck-boon,
That down he fell at once as a stone,
And both his eyes burst out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A voice was heard in general audience,
And said, 'Thou hast disclandered, guiltless,
The daughter of holy church in high presence;

Thus hast thou done, and yet hold I my peace! '
Of this marvel aghast was all the press;
As mazed folk they stood each one,
For dread of wretch, save Custance alone.

Great was the dread and too the repentance
Of them that had a wrong suspicion
Of this seely innocent, Custance;
And for this miracle, in conclusion,
And by Custance's mediation,
The king - and many another in that place -
Converted was, thanked be Christ's grace!

This false knight was slain for his untruth
By judgment of Alla hastily;
And yet Custance had for his death great ruth.
And after this Jesus, of His mercy,
Made Alla wed full solemnly
This holy maiden, that is so bright and sheen;
And thus has Christ made Custance a queen.

But who was woeful, if I shall not lie,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and no more
The king's mother, full of tyranny?
She thought her cursed heart burst in two.
She would not her son had done so;
She thought a despite that he should take
So foreign a creature unto his make.

Me list not of the chaff, nor of the straw,
Making so long a tale as of the corn.
What should I tell of the royalty
At the marriage, or which course goes before;
Who blows in a trumpet or in a horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to say:
They eat, and drink, and dance, and sing, and play.

They go to bed, as it was skill and right;
For though that wives be full holy things,
They must take in patience at night
Such manners necessary as be pleasing
To folk that have wedded them with rings,

And lay a lite their holiness aside,
As for the time - it may no bet betide.

On her he got a knave child anon,
And to a bishop, and his constable eke,
He took his wife to keep, when he is gone
Toward Scotland, his foemen for to seek.
Now fair Custance, that is so humble and meek,
So long is gone with child, til that still
She halt her chamber, abiding Christ's will.

The time is come a knave child she bear;
Mauricius at the font stone they him call.
This constable doth forth come a messenger,
And wrote unto his king, who called was Alla,
How that this blissful tiding is befall,
And other tidings speedful for to say.
He takes the letter, and forth he goes his way.

This messenger, to do his advantage,
Unto the king's mother rides swiftly,
And salutes her full fair in his language:
'Madame, ' said he, 'you may be glad and blithe,
And thank God a hundred thousand sithe!
My lady queen has child, without doubt,
To joy and bliss to all this reign about.

'Lo, here the letters sealed of this thing,
That I must bear with all the haste I may.
If you will ought unto your son the king,
I am your servant, both night and day.'
Donegild answered, 'As now, at this time, nay;
But here all night I will thou take thy rest.
Tomorrow will I say thee what I lest.'

This messenger drank sadly ale and wine,
And stolen were his letters privily
Out of his box, while he slept as a swine;
And counterfeited was full subtly
Another letter, wrought full sinfully,
Unto the king direct of this matter
From his constable, as you shall after hear.

The letter spoke the queen delivered was
Of so horrible a fiendish creature
That in the castle no one so hardy was
That any while dare there endure.
The mother was an elf, by adventure
Come, by charms or by sorcery,
And every wight hates her company.

Woe was this king when he this letter had seen,
But to no wight he told his sorrows sore,
But by his own hand he wrote again,
'Welcome the sonde of Christ for evermore
To me that am now learned in his lore!
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy pleasure;
My lust I put all in thine ordinance.

'Keep this child, all be it foul or fair,
And too my wife, unto my home-coming.
Christ, when him list, may send me an heir
Moore agreeable than this to my liking.'
This letter he seals, privily weeping,
Which to the messenger was taken soon,
And forth he goes; there is no more to do.

O messenger, fulfilled of drunkenness,
Strong is thy breath, thy limbs falter aye,
And thou betray all secrets.
Thy mind is lorn, thou janglest as a jay,
Thy face is turned in a new array.
There drunkenness reigns in any rout,
There is no counsel hid, without doubt.

O Donegild, I have no English digne
Unto thy malice and thy tyranny!
And therefore to the fiend I thee resign;
Let him endite of thy treachery!
Fie, mannish, fie! - o nay, by God, I lie -
Fie, fiendish spirit, for I dare well tell,
Though thou here walk, thy spirit is in hell!

This messenger comes from the king again,

And at the king's mother's court he alight,
And she was of this messenger full fain,
And pleased him in all that ever she might.
He drank, and well girdle underpight;
He sleeps, and he snores in his guise
All night, until the sun did arise.

Eft were his letters stolen every one,
And counterfeited letters in this wise:
'The king commands his constable anon,
On pain of hanging, and on high juise,
That he should suffer in no wise
Custance in-with his realm for t' abide
Three days and a quarter of a tide;

'But in the same ship as he her found,
Her, and her young son, and all her gear,
He should put, and crowd her from the land,
And charge her that she never eft come there.'
O my Custance, well may thy ghost have fear,
And, sleeping, in thy dream be in penance,
When Donegild cast all this ordinance.

This messenger on morrow, when he woke,
Unto the castle halt the next way,
And to the constable he the letter took;
And when that he this pitious letter say,
Full oft he said, 'Alas andwailaway! '
'Lord Christ, ' said he, 'how may this world endure,
So full of sin is many a creature?

'O mighty God, if that it be thy will,
Since thou art rightful judge, how may it be
That thou will suffer innocents to spill,
And wicked folk reign in prosperity?
O good Custance, alas, so woe is me
That I must be thy tormentor, or die
In shame's death; there is no other way.'

Weeping both young and old in all that place
When that the king this cursed letter sent,
And Custance, with a deadly pale face,

The fourth day toward her ship she went.
But nonetheless she takes in good intent
The will of Christ, and kneeling on the strand,
She said, 'Lord, aye welcome be thy sonde!

'He that me kept from the false blame
While I was on the land among you,
He can me keep from harm and too from shame
In salt sea, although I see not how.
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
In him trust I, and in his mother dear,
That is to me my sail and too my steer.'

Her little child lay weeping in her arm,
And kneeling, piteously to him she said,
'Peace, little son, I will do thee no harm.'
With that her coverchief off her head she braid,
And over his little eyes she it laid,
And in her arm she lulls it full fast,
And into heaven her eyes up she caste.

'Mother, ' said she, 'and maid bright, Mary,
Sooth is that through woman's eggement
Mankind was lorn, and damned aye to die,
For which thy child was on a cross rent.
Thy blissful eyes saw all his torment;
Then is there no comparison between
Thy woe and any woe man may sustain.

'Thou saw thy child slain before thy eye,
And yet now lives my little child, par faith!
Now, lady bright, to whom all woeful (people) cry,
Thou glory of womanhood, thou fair maid,
Thou haven of refuge, bright star of day,
Rue on my child, that of thy gentleness
Ruest on every ruefull in distress.

'O little child, alas! What is thy guilt,
That never wroughtest sin as yet, pardee?
Why will thy hard father have thee spilt?
O mercy, dear constable, ' said she,
'As let my little child dwell here with thee;

And if thou dare not save him, for blame,
So kiss him once in his father's name! '

Therewith she looked backward to the land,
And said, 'Farewell, husband ruthless ! '
And up she rises, and walks down the strand
Toward the ship - her followed all the press -
And ever she prays her child to hold his peace;
And takes her leave, and with a holy intent
She blesses her, and into ship she went.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no dread,
Abundantly for her very long space,
And other necessaries that should need
She had enough - haried be God's grace!
For wind and weather almighty God purchase,
And bring her home! I can no better say,
But in the sea she drives forth her way.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Man Of Law's Tale Third Part (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Alla the king comes home soon after this
Unto his castle, of which I told,
And asks where his wife and his child is.
The constable began about his heart cold,
And plainly all the manner he him told
As you have heard - I can tell it no better -
And shows the king his seal and too his letter,

And said, 'Lord, as you commanded me
Upon pain of death, so have I done, certain.'
This messenger tortured was til he
Must beknow and tell, plat and plain,
From night to night, in what place he had lain;
And thus, by wit and subtle enquiring,
Imagined was by whom this harm did spring.

The hand was known that the letter wrote,
And all the venom of this cursed deed,
But in what wise, certainly, I know't.
The effect is this: that Alla, out of dread,
His mother slew - that may men plainly read -
For that she traitor was to her allegiance.
Thus ends old Donegild, with mischance!

The sorrow that this Alla night and day
Makes for his wife, and for his child also,
There is no tongue that it can tell may.
But now will I unto Custance go,
That floats in the sea, in pain and woe,
Five years and more, as like Christ's sonde,
Ere that her ship approached unto land.

Under a heathen castle, at the last,
Of which the name in my text not I find,
Custance, and too her child, the sea up cast.
Almighty God, that saves all mankind,
Have on Custance and on her child some mind,

That fallen is in heathen hand eftsoon,
In point to spill, as I shall tell you soon.

Down from the castle comes there many a wight
To gaze on this ship and on Custance.
But shortly, from the castle, on a night,
The lord's steward - God give him mischance! -
A thief, that had renounced our credence,
Came into ship alone, and said he should
Her lover be, whereso she would or not.

Woe was this wretched woman then bigon;
Her child cried, and she cried pitiously.
But blissful Mary helped her right anon;
For with her struggling well and mightily
The thief fell over board all suddenly,
And in the sea he drowned for vengeance;
And thus has Christ unwemmed kept Custance.

O foul lust of lechery, lo, thy end!
Not only that thou faintest man's mind,
But verily thou will his body shend.
The end of thy work, or of thy lusts blind,
Is complaining. How many a one may men find
That not for work sometimes, but for the intent
To do this sin, are either slain or shent!

How may this weak woman have this strength
Hers to defend against this renegade?
O Goliath, unmeasurable of length,
How might David make thee so defeat,
So young and of armor so desolate?
How dared he look upon thy dreadful face?
Well may men see, it's nothing but God's grace.

Who gave Judith courage or hardiness
To slay him Holofernes in his tent,
And to deliver out of wretchedness
The people of God? I say, for this intent,
That right as God spirit of vigor sent
To them and saved them out of mischance
So sent he might and vigor to Custance.

Forth goes her ship throughout the narrow mouth
Of Gibraltar and Septe, driving ay
Sometimes west, and sometimes north and south,
And sometimes east, full many a weary day,
Til Christ's mother - blessed be sheay! -
Has shaped, through her endless goodness,
To make an end of all her heaviness.

Now let us stint of Custance but a throw,
And speak we of the Roman Emperor,
That out of Syria has by letters known
The slaughter of Christian folk, and dishonor
Done to his daughter by a false traitor,
I mean the cursed wicked Sultanness
That at the feast let slain both more and less.

For which this Emperor has sent anon
His senator, with royal ordinance,
And other lords, God knows, many a one,
On Syrians to take great vengeance.
They burn, slay, and bring them to mischance
Full many a day; but shortly - this is the end -
Homeward to Rome they shaped them to wend.

This senator repairs with victory
To Rome-ward, sailing full royally,
And met the ship driving, as says the story,
In which Custance sits full piteously.
Nothing knew he what she was, nor why
She was in such array, she'll not say
Of her estate, although she should die.

He brings her to Rome, and to his wife
He gave her, and her young son also;
And with the senator she led her life.
Thus can Our Lady bring out of woe
Woeful Custance, and many another more.
And long time dwelled she in that place,
In holy works ever, as was her grace.

The senator's wife her aunt was,

But for all that she knew her never the more.
I will no longer tarry in this case,
But to king Alla, which I spoke of yore,
Who for his wife weeps and sighs sore,
I will return, and I leave I will Custance
Under the senator's governance.

King Alla, which that had his mother slain,
Upon a day fell in such repentance
That, if I shortly tell shall and plain,
To Rome he comes to receive his penance;
And put him in the Pope's governance
In high and low, and Jesus Christ besought
Forgive his wicked workds that he wrought.

The fame anon through Rome town is born,
How Alla king shall come in pilgrimage,
By harbingers that went him before;
For which the senator, as was usage,
Rode to him against, and many of his lineage,
As well to show his high magnificence
As to do any king a reverence.

Great cheer does this noble senator
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Each of them does other great honor.
And so befekk that in a day or two
This senator is to king Alla go
To feast, and shortly, if I shall not lie,
Custance's son went in his company.

Some men would say at request of Custance
This senator has led this child to feast;
I may not tell every circumstance -
Be as be may, there was he at the least.
But truth is this, that at his mother's hest
Before Alla, during the meet's space,
The child stood, looking in the king's face.

This king Alla has of this child great wonder,
And to the senator he said anon,
'Whose is that fair child that stands yonder? '

'I noot, ' said he, 'by God, and by Saint John!
A mother he has, but father has he none
That I of woot' - and shortly, stound,
He told Alla how that this child was found.

'But God knows, ' said this senator also,
'So virtuous a liver in my life
Saw I never as she, nor heard of more,
Of worldly women, maiden, nor of wife.
I dare well say she had leave a knife
Through her breast, than be a woman wicked;
There is no man could bring her to that pricked.'

Now was this child as like unto Custance
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla has the face in remembrance
Of Lady Custance, and thereon mused he
If that the child's mother were aught she
Who is his wife, and privily he sighed,
And sped himself from the table that he might.

'Par faith, ' thought he, 'fantom is in my head!
I ought deem, of skillful judgment,
That in the salt sea my wife is dead.'
And afterward he made his argument:
'What know I if Christ has hither sent
My wife by sea, as well as he her sent
To my country from thence that she went? '

And after noon, home with the senator
Goes Alla, to see this wonder chance.
This senator does Alla great honor,
And hastily he sent after Custance.
But trust well, her list not to dance
When that she wist wherefore was that sonde;
Unease upon her feet she might stand.

When Alla saw his wife, fair he her greet,
And wept that it was ruth for to see;
For at the first look he on her set
He knew well verily that it was she.
And she, for sorrow, as dumb stands as a tree,

So was her heart shut in her distress,
When she remembered his unkindness.

Twice she swooned in his own sight;
He wept, and him excuses piteously.
'Now God, ' said he, 'and his hallows bright
So wisely on my soul as have mercy,
That of your harm as guiltless am I
As is Maurice my son, so like your face;
Else the fiend me fetch out of this place! '

Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain,
Ere that their woeful hearts might cease;
Great was the pity for to hear them plain,
Through which plaints began their woe increase.
I pray you all my labor to release;
I may not tell their woe until to-morrow,
I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.

But finally, when the sooth is wist
That Alla guiltless was of her woe,
I trow a hundred times been they kissed,
And such a bliss is there between them two
That, except for the joy that lasts evermore,
There is none like that any creature
Has seen or shall, while that the world may dure.

Then prayed she her husband meekly,
In relief of her long, pitious pain,
That he would pray her father specially
That of his majesty he would incline
To vouchsafe some day with him to dine.
She prayed him too he should by no way
Unto her father no word of her say.

Some men would say that the child Maurice
Does this message unto this Emperor;
But, as I guess, Alla was not so nice
To him that was of so sovereign honor
As he that is of Christian folk the flower,
Send any child, but it is better to deem
He went himself, and so it may well seem.

This Emperor has granted gently
To come to dinner, as he him besought;
And well read I he looked busily
Upon this child, and on his daughter thought.
Alla goes to his inn, and as he ought,
Arrayed for this feast in every wise
So ferforth as his far cunning may suffice.

The morning came, and Alla began him dress,
And too his wife, this Emperor to meet;
And forth they ride in joy and in gladness.
And when she saw her father in the street,
She lights down, and falls him to feet.
'Father, ' said she, 'your young child Custance
Is now full clean out of your remembrance.

'I am your daughter Custance, ' said she,
'That whilom you have sent unto Syria.
It am I, father, that in the salt sea
Was put alone and damned for to die.
Now, good father, mercy I you cry!
Send me no more unto no heatheness,
But thank my lord here of his kindnesses.'

Who can the pitious joy tell all
Between them three, since they be thus met?
But of my tale make an end I shall;
The day goes fast, I will no longer let.
This glad folk to dinner they them set;
In joy and bliss at meet I let them dwell
A thousand fold well more than I can tell.

This child Maurice was since then Emperor
Made by the Pope, and lived Christianly;
To Christ's church he did great honor.
But I let all his story pass by;
Of Custance is my tale specially.
In the old Roman gestes may men find
Maurice's life; I bear it not in mind.

This king Alla, when he his time say,

With his Custance, his holy wife so sweet,
To England be they come the right way,
Where as they live in joy and in quiet.
But little while it lasts, I you heste,
Joy of this world, for time will not abide;
From day to night it changes as the tide.

Who lived ever in such delight one day
That he's not moved either conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or some kind affray,
Envy, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I'll not say but for this end this sentence,
That little while in joy or in pleasance
Lasts the bliss of Alla with Custance.

For Death, that takes of high and low his rent,
When passed was a year, even as I guess,
Out of this world this king Alla he hent,
For whom Custance has full great heaviness.
Now let us pray God his soul bless!
And dame Custance, finally to say,
Toward the town of Rome goes her way.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And finds her friends whole and sound;
Now is she caped all her adventure.
And when that she her father has found,
Down on her knees falls she to ground;
Weeping for tenderness in heart blithe,
She praises God a hundred thousand times.

In virtue and in holy alms-deed
They live all, and never asunder wend;
Until death departs them, this life they lead.
And fare now well! my tale is at an end.
Now Jesus Christ, that of his might may send
Joy after woe, govern us in his grace,
And keep us all that be in this place! Amen

Heere endeth the tale of the Man of Lawe

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Merchant's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

'Weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow
I know enough, on even and a morrow, '
Said the Merchant, 'and so do others more
That wedded be. I trust that it be so,
For well I know it fares so with me.
I have a wife, the worst that may be;
For though the fiend to her coupled were,
She would him overmatch, I dare well swear.
Why should I you rehearse in special
Her high malice? She is a shrew at all.
There is a long and large difference
Between Griselda's great patience
And of my wife the passing cruelty.
Were I unbound, also must I thee,
I would never again come in the snare.
We wedded men live in sorrow and care.
Assay whoso will, and he shall find
That I say truth, by Saint Thomas of Ind,
As for the more part - I say not all.
God shield that it should so befall!
'Ah, good sir Host, I have wedded be
These months two, and more not, pardee;
And yet, I trust, he that all his life
Wifeless has been, though that men would have him rive
Unto the heart, nor could in no manner
Tell so much sorrow as I now here
Could tell of my wife's cursedness! '

'Now, ' said our Host, 'Merchant, so God you bless,
Since you so much know of that art
Full heartily I pray you tell us part.'

'Gladly, ' said he, 'but of my own sorrow,
For sorry heart, I tell may no more.'

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Miller's Prologue - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Miller's Prologue

Here follow the words between the Host and the Miller.

When that the Knight had thus his tale told,
In all the route not was there young nor old
That he not said it was a noble story
And worthy for to draw to memory,
And namely the gentles every one.
Our Host laughed and swore, 'So must I go on,
This goes all right; unbuckled is the male.
Let's see now who shall tell another tale;
For truly the game is well begun.
Now tell you, sir Monk, if that you can,
Somewhat to quite with the Knight's tale.'
The Miller, that for drinking was all pale,
So that uneasy upon his horse he sat,
He would doff neither hood nor hat,
Nor abide no man for his courtesy,
But in Pilate's voice he began to cry,
And swore, 'By arms, and by blood and bones,
I ken a noble tale for the nones,
With which I will now quite the Knight's tale.'
Our Host saw that he was drunk of ale,
And said, 'Abide, Robin, my dear brother;
Some better man shall tell us first another.
Abide, and let us work thriftily."

'By God's soul, ' said he, 'that will not I;
For I will speak or else go my way.'
Our Host answered, 'Tell on, a devil way!
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome.'

'Now hearken, ' said the Miller, 'all and some!
But first I make a protestation
That I am drunk; I know it by my sound.
And therefore if that I misspeak or say,

Blame it the ale of Southwerk, I you pray.
For I will tell a legend and a life
Both of a carpenter and of his wife,
How a clerk has set the wright's cap.'

The Reeve answered and said, 'Stop thy clap!
Let be thy lewd drunken harlotry.
It is a sin and too a great folly
To slander any man, or him defame,
And too to bring wives in such fame.
Thou may enough of other things say.'

This drunken Miller spoke full soon again
And said, 'Dear brother Oswald,
Who has no wife, he is no cuckold.
But I say not therefore that thou art one;
There be full good wives many a one,
And ever a thousand good against one bad.
That knows you well thyself, but if thou mad.
Why art thou angry with my tale now?
I have a wife, indeed, as well as thou;
Yet would not I, for the oxen in my plow,
Take upon me more than enough,
As deem of myself that I were one;
I will believe well that I am none.
A husband shall not be inquisitive
Of God's privity, nor of his wife.
So he may find God's plenty there,
Of the remnant he needs not enquire.'

What more I more say, but this Miller
He would not his words for no man forbear,
But told his churl's tale in his manner.
I regret that I shall rehearse it here.
And therefore every gentle wight I pray,
For God's love, deemeth not that I say
Of evil intent, but for I must rehearse
Their tales all, be they better or worse,
Or else falsen some of my matter.
And therefore, whoso list it not to hear,
Turn over the leaf and choose another tale;
For he shall find enough, great and small,

Of storical thing that touches gentilles,
And too morality and holiness.
Blame not me if that you choose amiss.
The Miller is a churl; you know well this.
So was the Reeve too and others more,
And harlotry they told both two.
Advise you, and put me out of blame;
And too men shall not make earnest of game.

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Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Miller's Tale - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Miller's Tale

Here begins the Miller his tale.
While on there was dwelling at Oxford
A rich gnof, that guests held to board,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him there was dwelling a poor scholar,
Had learned art, but all his fantasy
Was turned for to learn astrology,
And knew a certain of conclusions,
Determined by interrogations,
If that men asked him, in certain hours
When that men should have drought or else showers,
Or if men asked him what should befall
Of everything; I may not reckon them all.
This clerk was called handy Nicholas.
Of dear love he knew and of solace;
And thereto he was sly and full privy,
And like a maiden meek for to see.
A chamber had he in that hostelry
Alone, without any company,
Full fetisly adorned with herbs swoot;
And he himself as sweet as is the root
Of licorice or any setwall.
His Almagest, and books great and small,
His astrolabe, longing for his art,
His augrim stones laying fair apart,
On shelves couched at his bed's head;
His press covered with a falding red;
And all above there lay a gay psaltry,
On which he made a night's melody
So sweetly that all the chamber rang;
And Angelus ad virginem he sang;
And after that he sang the King's Note.
Very often blessed was his merry throat.
And thus this sweet clerk his time spent
After his friends' funding and his rent.

This carpenter had wedded new a wife,
Which that he loved more than his life:
Of eighteen year she was of age.
Jealous he was, and held her narrow in cage,
For she was wild and young, and he was old
And deemed himself been like a cuckold.
He knew not Cato, for his wit was rude,
That bade man should wed his similitude.
Men should wed after their estate,
For youth and old is often in debate.
But since that he was fallen in the snare,
He must endure, as other folk, his care.
Fair was this young wife, and therewithal
As any weasel was her body gent and small.
A ceint she wore, barred all of silk,
A barmcloth as white as morning milk
Upon her loins, full of many a gore.
White was her smock, and broidered before
And too behind, on her collar about,
Of coal-black silk, within and too without.
The tapes of her white voluper
Were of the same sight as her collar;
Her filet broad of silk, and set full hight.
And surely she had a lecherous eye;
Full small pulled were her brows two,
And those were bent and black as any sloe.
She was full more blissful on to see
Than is the new pear-jonette tree,
And softer than the wool is of a wether.
And by her girdle hung a purse of leather,
Tasseled with silk and pearled with latoun.
In all this world, to seek up and down,
There is no man so wise that could thenche
So gay a popelote or such a wench.
Full brighter was the shining of her hue
Than in the Tower the noble forged new.
But of her song, it was as loud and yerne
As any swallow sitting on a barn.
Thereto she could skip and make game,
As any kid or calf following his dame.
Her mouth was sweet as bragot or the mead,
Or hoard of apples laid in hay or heath.

Winsome she was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she bore upon her low collar,
As broad as is the boss of a shield.
Her shoes were laced on her legs high.
She was a primrose, a pig's eye,
For any lord to laydown in his bed,
Or yet for any good yeoman to wed.
Now, sir, and aft, sir, so befell the case
That on a day this handy Nicholas
Fill with this young wife to flirt and play,
While that her husband was at Oseneye,
As clerks be full subtle and full quaint;
And prively he caught her by the queynte,
And said, 'Indeed, but if I have my will,
For derne love of thee, leman, I spill.'
And held her hard by the haunchbones,
And said, 'Leman, love me all atones,
Or I will die, all so God me save! '
And she sprang as a colt does in the trave,
And with her head she wired fast away,
And said, 'I will not kiss thee, by my faith!
Why, let be! ' said she. 'Let be, Nicholas,
Or I will cry out, "harrow' and `alas'!
Do way your hands, for your courtesy! '
This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry,
And spoke so fair, and proffered him so fast,
That she her love him granted at the last,
And swore her oath, by Saint Thomas of Kent,
That she will be at his commandment,
When she may her leisure well espy.
'My husband is so full of jealousy
That unless you wait well and be privy,
I know right well I am but dead, ' said she.
'You must be full derne, as in this case.'
'Nay, thereof care thee not, " said Nicholas.
'A clerk had litherly beset his while,
But if he could a carpenter beguile.'
And thus they be accorded and sworn
To wait a time, as I have told before.
When Nicholas had done thus every deel
And thacked her about the loins well,

He kissed her sweet and takes his psaltery,
And plays fast, and makes melody.
Then fill it thus, that to the parish church,
Christ's own works for to work,
This good wife went on a holiday.
Her forehead shone as bright as any day,
It was so washed when she left her work.
Now was there of that church a parish clerk,
The which that was called Absolon.
Curly was his hair, and as the gold it shone,
And strouted as a fan large and broad;
Very straight and even lay his jolly shode.
His rode was red, his eyes gray as goose.
With Paul's window carved on his shoes,
In hose red he went fetisely.
Clad he was full small and properly
All in a kirtle of a light waget;
Very fair and thick are the points set.
And thereupon he had a gay surplice
As white as is the blossom upon the rys.
A merry child he was, so God me save.
Well could he let blood, and clip and shave,
And make a charter of land or acquittance.
In twenty manner could he trip and dance
After the school of Oxford though,
And with his legs cast to and fro,
And play songs on a small ribible,
Thereto he sang some times a loud quinible;
And as well could he play on a guiterne.
In all the town was no brewhouse nor tavern
That he didn't visit with his solos,
Where any gay tappestere was.
But truth to say, he was somewhat squeamish
Of farting, and of speech fastidious.
This Absolon, jolly was and gay,
Goes with a censer on the holiday,
Censing the wives of the parish fast;
And many a lovely look on them he cast,
And namely on this carpenter's wife.
To look on her he thought a merry life,
She was so proper and sweet and lickerish.
I dare well say, if she had been a mouse,

And he a cat, he would her hent anon.
This parish clerk, this jolly Absolon,
Has in his heart such a love-longing
That of no wife took he any offering;
For courtesy, he said, he would none.
The moon, when it was night, full brightly shone,
And Absolon his guiterne has take;
For paramours he thought for to wake.
And forth he goes, jolly and amorous,
Til he came to the carpenter's house
A little after cocks had crow,
And dressed him up by a shot-window
That was upon the carpenter's wall.
He sings in his voice gentle and small,
'Now, dear lady, if will be,
I pray you that you will rue on me, '
Full well according to his guiterning.
This carpenter awoke, and heard him sing,
And spoke unto his wife, and said anon,
'What! Alison! Hearest thou not Absolon,
That chants thus under our bower's wall? '
And she answered her husband therewithal,
'Yes, God knows, John, I hear it every deel.'
This passes forth; what will you bet than weel?
From day to day this jolly Absolon
So woos her that he is woebegone.
He wakes all the night and all the day;
He combs his locks broad, and made him gay;
He woos her by means and brokerage,
And swore he would be her own page;
He sings, breaking as a nightingale;
He sent her piment, mead, and spiced ale,
And wafers, piping hot out of the glead;
And, for she was of town, he proffered meed;
For some folk will be won for riches,
And some by force, and some for gentleness.
Sometimes, to show his lightness and mastery,
He plays Herod upon a scaffold high.
But what avails him as in this case?
She so loves this handy Nicholas
That Absolon may blow the bucks horn;
He had for his labor not but a scorn.

And thus she makes Absolon her ape,
And all his earnest turns to a jape.
Full truth is this proverb, it is no lie,
Men say right thus: 'Always the nye sly
Makes the far love to be loath.'
For though that Absolon be wood or wroth,
Because that he far was from her sight,
This nye Nicholas stood in his light.
Now bear thee well, thou handy Nicholas,
For Absolon may wail and sing 'alas.'

And so befell it on a Saturday,
This carpenter was gone to Osenay;
And hady Nicholas and Alison,
Accorded be to this conclusion,
That Nicholas shall shape him a wile
This silly jealous husband to beguile;
And if so be the game went right,
She should sleep in his arms all night,
For this was his desire and hers also.
And right anon, without words more,
This Nicholas no longer would tarry,
But does full soft unto his chamber carry
Both meat and drink for a day or two,
And to her husband bade her for to say,
If that he asked after Nicholas,
She should say she knew not where he was;
Of all that day she saw him not with eye;
She trowed that he was in malady,
For, for no cry her maid could him call,
He'd not answer for thing that might fall.
This passes forth all this Saturday,
That Nicholas still in his chamber lay,
And eat and sleep, or did what he lest,
Until Sunday, that the sun goes to rest.
This silly carpenter has great marvel
Of Nicholas, or what thing might him ail,
And said, 'I am afraid, by Saint Thomas,
It stands not aright with Nicholas.
God shield that he'd die suddenly!
This world is now full tickle, surely.
I saw today a corpse born to church

That now, on Monday last, I saw him work.
'Go up, ' said he unto his knave anon,
'Call at his door, or knock with a stone.
Look how it is, and tell me boldly.'
This knave goes him up full sturdily,
And at the chamber door while that he stood,
He cried and knocked as that he were wood,
'What, hey! What do you, master Nicholay?
How may you sleep all the long day? '
But all for naught; he heard not a word.
A hole he found, full low upon a board,
There as the cat was wont in for to creep,
And at that hole he looked in full deep,
And at the last he had of him a sight.
This Nicholas sat ever gaping upward,
As he had gazed on the new moon.
Down he goes, and told his master soon
In what array he saw this same man.
This carpenter to bless him began,
And said, 'Help us, Saint Frideswide!
A man knows little what he shall betide.
This man is fallen, with his astronomy,
In some woodness or in some agony.
I thought aye well how that it should be!
Men should not know of God's privity.
Yes, blessed be always a leued man
That naught but only his belief ken!
So fared another clerk with astronomy;
He walked in the fields for to pry
Upon the stars, what there should befall,
Until he was in a marl pit fall;
He saw not that. But yet, by Saint Thomas,
I ruth sore of handy Nicholas.
He shall be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Jesus, heaven's king!
Get me a staff, that I may underspore,
While that thou, Robyn, heave up the door.
He shall out of his studying, as I guess.'
And to the chamber door he gave his dress.
His knave was a strong carl; for the nones,
And by the hasp he heaved it off at once;
Into the floor the door fell anon.

This Nicholas sat aye as still as stone,
And ever gaped upward into the air.
This carpenter wend he were in despair,
And held him by the shoulders mightily,
And shook him hard, and cried spitously,
'What! Nicholay! What, how! What, look down!
Awake, and think on Christ's passion!
I crouch thee from elves and from wights.'
Therewith the night-spell said he anon-rights
On four halves of the house about,
And on the threshold of the door without:
'Jesus Christ and Saint Benedict,
Bless this house from every wicked wight,
For night's verie, the white pater-noster!
Where went thou, Saint Peter's sister? '
And at the last this handy Nicholas
Began to sigh sore, and said, 'Alas!
Shall all the world be lost so soon now? '
This carpenter answered, 'What sayest thou?
What! Think on God, as we do, men that swink.'
This Nicholas answered, 'Fetch me drink,
And after will I speak in privity
Of certain things that touch me and thee.
I will tell it to no other man, certain.'
This carpenter goes down, and comes again,
And brought of mighty ale a large quart;
And when each of them had drunk his part,
This Nicholas his door fast shut,
And down the carpenter by him he sat.
He said, 'John, my host, lief and dear,
Thou shalt upon thy troth swear me here
That to no wight thou shalt this counsel wreye,
For it is Christ's counsel that I say,
And if thou tell it man, thou art forlorn;
For this vengeance thou shalt have therefore,
That if thou betray me, thou shalt be wood.'
'Nay, Christ forbid it, for his holy blood! '
Said then this silly man, 'I am no blab,
Nor, though I say, I'm not lief to gab.
Say what thou will, I shall it never tell
To child nor wife, by him that harrowed hell! '
'Now John, ' said Nicholas, 'I will not lie;

I have found in my astrology,
As I have looked on the bright moon,
That now a Monday next, at quarter night,
Shall fall a rain, and that so wild and wood
That half so great was never Noah's flood.
This world, ' he said, 'in less than an hour
Shall all be drowned, so hideous is the shower.
Thus shall mankind drench, and lose his life.'
This carpenter answered, 'Alas, my wife!
And shall she drown? Alas, my Alison! '
For sorrow of this he fell almost down,
And said, 'Is there no remedy in this case? '
'Why, yes, by God, ' said handy Nicholas,
'If thou will work after lore and red.
Thou mayst not work after thine own head;
For thus says Salomon, that was full true:
'Work all by counsel, and thou shalt not rue'
And if thou work well by good counsel,
I undertake, without mast and sail,
Yet shall I save her and thee and me.
Hast thou not heard how saved was Noah,
When that our Lord had warned him before
That all the world should be lorn? '
'Yes, " said this Carpenter, 'full yore ago.'
'Hast thou not heard, ' said Nicholas, 'also
The sorrow of Noah with his fellowship,
Er that he might get his wife to ship?
He had rather, I dare well undertake,
At that time, than all his wethers black
That she had had a ship herself alone.
And therefore, know thou what is best to do?
This asks haste, and of a hasty thing
Men may not preach or make tarrying.
'Anon go get us fast into this inn
A kneading trough, or else a kemelin,
For each of us, but look that they be large,
In which we may swim as in a barge,
And have therein vitaille sufficient
But for a day - fie on the remnant!
The water shall aslake and go away
About prime upon the next day.
But Robin may not wit of this, thy knave,

Nor too thy maid Gille I may not save;
Ask not why, for though thou ask me,
I will not tell God's privity.
Sufficeth thee, but if thy wit's mad,
To have as great a grace as Noah had.
Thy wife shall I well save, out of doubt.
Go now thy way, and speed thee here-about.
'But when thou hast, for her and thee and me,
Gotten us these kneading tubs three,
Then shalt thou hang them in the roof full high,
In a way that no man of our purveyance espy.
And when thou thus hast done as I have said,
And hast our victuals fair in them laid,
And too an axe to smite the cord in two,
When that the water comes, that we may go
And break a hole on high, upon the gable,
Unto the garden-ward, over the stable,
That we may freely pass forth our way,
When that the great shower is gone away.
Then shalt thou swim as merry, I undertake,
As does the white duck after her drake.
Then will I call, `How, Alison! How, John!
Be merry, for the flood will pass anon.'
And thou will say, `Hail, master Nicholay!
Good morrow, I see thee well, for it is day.'
And then shall we be lords all our life
Of all the world, as Noah and his wife.
'But of one thing I warn thee full right:
Be well advised on that same night
That we be entered onto shipboard,
That none of us speak not a word,
Nor call, nor cry, but be in his prayer;
For it is God's own heste dear
'Thy wife and thou must hang far a-twin,
So that between you shall be no sin,
No more in looking than there shall in deed.
This ordinance is said. Go, God thee speed!
Tomorrow at night, when men be all asleep,
Into our kneading-tubs will we creep,
And sit there, abiding God's grace.
Go now thy way; I have no longer space
To make of this no longer sermoning.

Men say thus, 'send the wise, and say nothing.'
Thou art so wise, one needeth thee not teach.
Go, save our life, and that I thee beseech.'
This silly carpenter goes forth his way.
Very often he said 'Alas and wail away, '
And to his wife he told his privy,
And she was ware, and knew it better than he,
What all this quaint cast was for to see.
But nonetheless she fared as she would die,
And said, 'Alas! go forth thy way anon,
Help us escape, or we be dead each one!
I am thy true, very wedded wife;
Go, dear spouse, and help to save our life.'
Lo, what a great thing is affection!
Men may die of imagination,
So deep may impression be take.
This silly carpenter begins to quake;
He thinks verily that he may see
Noah's flood come wallowing as the sea
To drench Alison, his honey dear.
He weeps, wails, makes sorry cheer;
He sighs with full many a sorry swough;
He goes and gets him a kneading trough,
And after that a tub and a kemelin
And privily he sent them to his inn,
And hung them in the roof privy.
His own hand he made ladders three,
To climb by the rungs and the stalks
Unto the tubs hanging in the balks,
And them vitailed, both trough and tub,
With bread, and cheese, and good ale in a jub,
Sufficing right enough for a day.
But er that he had made all this array,
He sent his servant, and too his wench also,
Upon his need to London for to go.
And on the Monday, when it drew to night,
He shut his door without candlelight,
And dressed all things as it should be.
And shortly, up they climbed all three;
They sat still well a furlong way.
'Now, Pater-noster, quiet! ' said Nicholay,
And 'Quiet! ' said John, and 'Quiet! ' said Alison.

This carpenter said his devotion,
And still he sits, and bides his prayer,
Awaiting on the rain, if he it hear.
The dead sleep, for weary business,
Fell on this carpenter right, as I guess,
About curfew time, or little more;
For travail of his ghost he groans sore,
And too he snores, for his head mislay.
Down on the ladder stalks Nicholay,
And Alison full soft down she sped;
Without more words they go to bed,
Where the carpenter is wont to lie.
There was the revel and the melody;
And thus lie Alison and Nicholas,
In business of mirth and of solace,
Til the bell of lauds began to ring,
And friars in the chapel gone sing.
This parish clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love always so woebegone,
Upon the Monday was at Oseneye
With company, him to disport and play,
And asked upon case a cloiterer
Very privily after John the carpenter;
And he drew him apart out of the church,
And said, 'I know not; I saw him here not work
Since Saturday; I think that he be went
For timber, where our abbot has him sent;
For he is wont for timber for to go
And dwell at the grange a day or two;
Or else he is at his house, certain.
Where that he be, I can not truly say.'
This Absolon full jolly was and light,
And thought, 'Now is time to wake all night,
For surely I saw him not stirring
About his door, since day began to spring.
'So might I thrive, I shall, at cock's crow,
Full privily knock at at his window
That stands full low upon his bower's wall.
To Alison now will I tell all
My love-longing, for yet I shall not miss
That at the least way I shall her kiss.
Some manner comfort shall I have parfay.

My mouth has itched all this long day;
That is a sign of kissing at the least.
All night me mette too I was at a feast.
Therefore I will go sleep an hour or tway,
And all the night then will I wake and play.'
When the first cock has crowed, anon
Up rose this jolly lover Absolon,
And him arrayed gay, at point-device.
But first he chews grain and licorice,
To smell sweet, before he had combed his hair.
Under his tongue a true-love bear,
For thereby thought he to be gracious.
He roams to the carpenter's house,
And still he stands under the shot-window -
Unto his breast it reached, it was so low -
And soft he coughs with a seemly sound:
'What do you, honey-comb, sweet Alison,
My fair bird, my sweet cinnamon?
Awake, leman mine, and speak to me!
Well little think you upon my woe,
That for your love I sweat there I go.
No wonder is though that I swelt and sweat;
I mourn as does a lamb after the tit.
Iwis, leman, I have such love-longing
That like a turtle true is my mourning.
I can eat no more than a maid.'
'Go from the window, Jack fool, " she said;
'So help me God, it will not be `come paw me.'
I love another - and else I were to blame -
Well bet than thee, by Jesus, Absolon.
Go forth thy way, or I will cast a stone,
And let me sleep, a twenty devil way! '
'Alas, ' said Absolon, 'and wail away,
That true love was ever so evil beset!
Then kiss me, since it may be no bet,
For Jesus' love, and for the love of me.'
'Wilt thou then go thy way therewith? ' said she.
'Yes, certainly, leman, ' said this Absolon.
'Then make thee ready, ' said she, 'I come anon.'
And unto Nicholas she said still,
'Now hush, and thou shalt laugh all thy fill.'
This Absolon down set him on his knees

And said, 'I am a lord in all degrees;
For after this I hope there comes more.
Leman, thy grace, and sweet bird, thine ore! '
The window she undoes, and that in haste.
'Get done with it, ' said she, 'come on, and speed the fast,
Lest that our neighbors thee espy.'
This Absolon then wiped his mouth full dry.
Dark was the night as pitch, or as the coal,
And at the window out she put her hole,
And Absolon, him feel no bet nor worse,
But with his mouth he kissed her naked arse
Full savorly, er he were aware of this.
Aback he stert, and thought it was amiss,
For well he wist a woman has no beard.
He felt a thing all rough and long haired,
And said, 'Fie! alas! what have I do? '
'Tehee! ' said she, and clapped the window to,
And Absolon goes forth a sorry pass.
'A beard! A beard! ' said handy Nicholas,
'By God's corpus, this goes fair and well.'
This silly Absolon heard every deel,
And on his lip he began for anger bite,
And to himself he said, 'I shall thee quite.'
Who rubs now, who froths now his lips
With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with chips,
But Absolon, who says full oft, 'Alas! '
'My soul betake I unto Satan's,
But were me offered than all this town, " said he,
'Of this disdain avenged for to be.
Alas, ' said he, 'alas, I had not blenched! '
His hot love was cold and all quenched;
For from that time that he had kissed her ass,
Of paramours he set not a kress,
For he was healed of his malady.
Full oft paramours he gan defy,
And wept as does a child that is beat.
A soft pace he went over the street
Until a smith men called dan Gerveys,
Who in his forge smithed plow harneys;
He sharpens ploughshares and culter busily.
This Absolon knocked all easily,
And said, 'Undo, Gerveys, and that anon.'

'What, who art thou? ' 'It am I, Absolon.'
 'What, Absolon! for Christ's sweet tree,
 Why rise you so rath? Ay, benedicite!
 What ails you? Some gay girl, God it woot,
 Hath brought you thus upon the viritoot.
 By Saint Note, you woot well what I mean.'
 This Absolon recked not a bean
 For all his play; no word again he gave;
 He had more tow on his distaf
 Than Gerveys knew, and said, 'Friend so dear,
 That hot plough culter in the chimney here,
 As lend it me; I have therewith to do,
 And I will bring it thee again full soon.'
 Gerveys answered, 'Certain, were it gold,
 Or in a poke nobles all untold,
 Thou should have, as I am true smith.
 Ay, Christ's foe! What will you do therewith? '
 'Thereof, ' said Absolon, 'be as be may.
 I shall well tell it thee to-morrow day' -
 And caught the culter by the cold steel.
 Full soft out at the door he gan to steal,
 And went unto the carpenter's wall.
 He coughs first, and knocks therewithal
 Upon the window, just as he did ere.
 This Alison answered, 'Who is there
 That knocks so? I warrant it a thief.'
 'Why, nay, ' said he, 'God woot, my sweet lief,
 I am thy Absolon, my darling.
 Of gold, ' said he, 'I have thee brought a ring.
 My mother gave it me, so God me save;
 Full fine it is, and thereto well engraved.
 This will I give thee, if thou me kiss.'
 This Nicholas was risen for to piss,
 And thought he would amend all the jape;
 He should kiss his arse ere that he scape.
 And up the window did he hastily,
 And out his arse he put privily
 Over the buttock, to the haunch bone;
 And then spoke this clerk, this Absolon,
 'Speak, sweet bird, I know not where thou art.'
 This Nicholas anon let fly a fart
 As great as if it had been a thunder-dent,

That with the stoke he was almost blent;
And he was ready with his iron hoot,
And Nicholas amid the arse he smoot.
Off goes the skin a hand's breadth about,
The hot culter burned so his toute,
And for the smart he wend for to die.
As he were wood, for woe he began to cry,
'Help! Water! Water! Help, for God's heart! '
This carpenter out of his slumber start,
And heard one cry 'water! ' as if he were wood,
And thought, 'Alas, now comes Noah's flood! '
He sits him up without words more,
And with his ax he smote the cord in two,
And down goes all; he found neither to sell,
No bread nor ale, until he came to the cell
Upon the floor, and there a-swoon he lay.
Up started here Alison and Nicholay,
And cried 'Out' and 'Harrow' in the street.
The neighbors, both small and great,
In running for to gawk on this man,
That yet a-swoon lay, both pale and wan,
For with the fall he broken had his arm.
But stand he must unto his own harm;
For when he spoke, he was anon bore down
By handy Nicholas and Alison.
They told every man that he was wood;
He was aghast so of Noah's flood
Through fantasy that of his vanity
He had bought him kneading tubs three,
And had hanged them in the roof above;
And that he prayed them, for God's love,
To sit in the roof, for company.
The folk then laugh at his fantasy;
Into the roof they gaze and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.
For what so that this carpenter answered,
It was for naught; no man his reason heard,
With oaths great he was so sworn down
That he was held wood in all the town;
For every clerk anon right held with the another.
They said, 'The man is wood, my lief brother';
And every wight then laughed at this strife.

Thus swived was this carpenter's wife,
In spite of all his keeping and his jealousy,
And Absolon has kissed her nether eye,
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.
This tale is done, and God save all the route!

Heere endeth the Millere his Tale
[Here ends the Miller's Tale]

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Reeve's Prologue - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Reeve's Prologue

Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation

When folk had laughed at this nice case
Of Absolon and handy Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they said,
But for the most part they laughed and played.
Nor at this tale I saw no man him grieve,
But it were only Oswald the Reeve.
Because he was of carpenter's craft,
A little ire is in his heart left;
He began to grouch, and blamed it a lite.

'So thrive, " said he, "full well could I thee quite
With blearing of a proud miller's eye,
If that me list speak of ribaldry.
But I am old; I like not play for age;
Grass time is done; my fodder is now forage;
This white top writes my old years;
My heart is also moldy as my hairs,

But if I fare as does an open-ers-
That same fruit is ever longer the worse,
Til it be rotten in rubbish or in straw.
We old men, I dread, so fare we:
Til we be rotten, can we not be ripe;
We dance always while the world will pipe.
For in our will there sticks ever a nail,
To have a hoar head and a green tail,
As has a leek; for though our might be gone,
Our will desires folly ever in one.
For when we may not do, then will we speak;
Yet in our ashes old is fire raked.

'Four gleeds have we, which I shall devise -
Avaunting, lying, anger, covetise;
These four sparks belong unto eld.

Our old limbs may well be unweld,
But will shall not fail, that is sooth.
And yet I have always a colt's tooth,
As many years as it is passed hence
Since that my tap of life began to run.
For surely, when I was born, anon
Death drew the tap of life and let it gone,
And ever since has to the tap run
Til that almost all empty is the ton.
The stream of life now drops on the chimb.
The silly tongue may well ring and chime
Of wretchedness that passed is full yore;
With old folk, save dotage, there is no more! '

When that our Host had heard this sermoning,
He began to speak as lordly as a king.
He said, 'What amounts all this wit?
What! shall we speak all day of holy writ?
The devil made a reeve for to preach,
Or of a souter a shipman or a leche.
Say forth thy tale, and tarry not the time.
Lo Deptford, and it is have-way prime!
Lo Greenwich, there many a shrew is in!
It were all time thy tale to begin.'

'Now, sires, ' said this Oswald the Reeve,
'I pray you all that you'll not grieve,
Though I answer, and somedeal set his houve;
For lawful is with force force off-shove.

'This drunk Miller has told us here
How that beguiled was a carpenter,
Peradventure in scorn, for I am one.
And, by your leave, I shall him quite anon;
Right in his churl's terms will I speak.
I pray to God his neck might to-break;
He can well in my eye see a stalk,
But in his own he cannot see a balke.'

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Reeve's Tale - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation) - Poem By Forrest Hainline

The Reeve's Tale

Here beginneth the Reeve's Tale.
At Trumpington, not far from Cambridge,
There goes a brook, and over that a bridge,
Upon the which brook there stands a mill;
And this is very true that I you tell:
A miller was there dwelling many a day.
As any peacock he was proud and gay.
Pipe he could and fish, and nets beete,
and turn cups, and well wrestle and shoot;
Aye by his belt he bore a long panade,
And of a sword full trenchant was the blade.
A jolly poppere bore he in his pouch;
There was no man, for peril, dared him touch.
A Sheffield thwittle bore he in his hose.
Round was his face, and camus was his nose;
As piled as an ape was his skull.
He was a market-beater at full.
There dared no wight hand upon him lay,
That he'd not swear he should anon aby.
A thief he was, for truth, of corn and meal,
And that a sly, and usant for to steal.
His name was called deinous Symkyn.
A wife he had, come of noble kin;
The parson of the town her father was.
With her he gave full many a pan of brass,
So that Symkyn should in his blood ally.
She was fostered in a nunnery;
For Symkyn would no wife, as he said,
But she were well nourished and a maid,
To preserve his state of yeomanry.
And she was proud, and pert as a magpie.
A very fair sight was it upon them two;
On holidays before her would he go
With his tippet wound about his head,

And she came after in a gown of red;
And Symkyn had hose of the same.
There dared no wight called her but 'dame';
Was no one so hardy that went by the way
That with her dared flirt or once play,
But if he would be slain of Symkyn
With panade, or with knife, or bodkin.
For jealous folk be perilous evermore -
At least they would their wives to think so.
And too, for she was somewhat a smutty bitch.
She was as haughty as water in a ditch,
And full of hauteur and mockery.
She thought that a lady should her spare,
What for her kindred and her upbringing
That she had learned in the nunnery.

A daughter had they between them two
Of twenty year, without any more,
Saving a child that was of half year age;
In cradle it lay and was a proper page.
This wench thick and well grown was,
With camus nose and eyes gray as glass,
With buttocks broad and breasts round and high.
But right fair was her hair; I will not lie.

This parson of the town, because she was fair,
In purpose was to make her his heir,
Both of his cattle and his mesuage,
And strange he made it of her marriage.
His purpose was for to bestow her high
Into some worthy blood of ancestry;
For holy church's goods must be dispended
On holy church's blood, that is descended.
Therefore he would his holy blood honor,
Though that he holy church should devour.

Great sokene has this miller, out of doubt,
With wheat and malt of all the land about;
And namely there was a great college
Men call the Soler Hall at Cambridge;
There was their wheat and too their malt ground.
And on a day it happened, in a stound,

Sick lay the manciple on a malady;
Men weened wisely that he should die.
For which this miller stole both meal and corn
A hundred times more than before;
For there before he stole but courteously,
But now he was a thief outrageously,
For which the warden chided and made fare.
But thereof set the miller not a tare;
He cracked a boast, and swore it was not so.

Then were there young poor scholars two,
Who dwelt in this hall, of which I say.
Testy they were, and lusty for to play,
And, only for their mirth and revelry,
Upon the warden busily they cry
To give them leave, but a little stound,
To go to mill and see their corn ground;
And hardily they dared lay their necks
The miller should not steal them half a peck
Of grain by sleight, nor by force them reave;
And at the last the warden gave them leave.
John hight that one, and Aleyn hight that other;
Of a town were they born, that hight Strother,
Far in the north; I cannot tell where.

This Aleyn makes ready all his gear,
And on a horse the sack he cast anon.
Forth goes Aleyn the clerk, and also John,
With good sword and with buckler by their side.
John knew the way - they needed no guide -
And at the mill the sack adown he laid.
Aleyn spoke first: 'All hail, Symond, in faith!
How fares thy fair daughter and thy wife? '

'Aleyn, welcome' said Symkyn, 'by my life!
And John also, how now, what do you here? '

'Symond, ' said John, 'by God, need has no peer.
He must serve himself that has no swain,
Or else he is a fool, as clerks say.
Our manciple, I hope he will be dead,
So aches ay the teeth in his head;

And therefore is I come, and too Alayn,
To grind our grain and carry it home again;
I pray you speed us hence that you may.'

'It shall be done, ' said Symkyn, 'by my faith!
What will you do while that it is in hand? '

'By God, right by the hopper will I stand, '
Said John, 'and see how the corn goes in.
Yet saw I never, by my father's kin,
How that the hopper wags to and fro.'

Aleyn answered, 'John, and wilt you so?
Then will I be beneath, by my crown,
And see how that the meal falls down
Into the trough; that shall be my sport.
For John, in faith, I may be of your sort;
I is as ill a miller as are you.'

This miller smiled at their nicety,
And thought, 'All this is done but for a wile.
They ween that no man may them beguile,
But by my thrift, yet shall I blur their eye,
For all the sleight in their philosophy.
The more quaint tricks that they make,
The more will I steal when I take.
Instead of flour yet will I give them bran.
'The greatest clerks be not wisest men, '
As once to the wolf thus spoke the mare.
Of all their art count I not a tare.'

Out at the door he goes full privily,
When that he saw his time, softly.
He looks up and down til he has found
The clerks' horse, there as it stood bound
Behind the mill, under a levesel;
And to the horse he goes him fair and well;
He strips off the bridle right anon.
And when the horse was loose, he was gone
Toward the fen, where wild mares run,
And forth with 'wehee, ' through thick and through thin.

This miller goes again, no word he said,
But does his work, and with the clerks played
Til that their corn was fair and well ground.
And when the meal is sacked and bound,
This John goes out and finds his horse away,
And gan to cry 'Harrow! ' and 'Wellaway!
Our horse is lorn, Alayn, for God's bones,
Step on thy feet! Come off, man, all at once!
Alas, our warden has his palfrey lorn.'
This Aleyn all forgot, both meal and corn;
All was out of his mind his husbandry.
'What, which way is he gone? ' he gan to cry.

The wife came leaping inward with a run.
She said, 'Alas! Your horse goes to the fen
With wild mares, as fast as he may go.
Unthank come on his hand that bound him so,
And he that better should have knot the rein! '

'Alas, ' said John, 'Aleyn, for Christ's pain
Lay down thy sword, and I will mine also.
I is full wight, God knows, as is a roe;
By God's heart, he shall not scape us both!
Why not had thou put the capel in the lath?
Ill hail! By God, Alayn, thou art a fon! '

These silly clerks have full fast run
Toward the fen, both Aleyn and too John.

And when the miller saw that they were gone,
He half a bushel of their flour has take,
And bade his wife go knead it in a cake.
He said, 'I trow the clerks were afeard.
Yet can a miller make a clerk's beard,
Despite all his art; now let them go their way!
Lo, there he goes! Yes, let the children play.
They get him not so lightly, by my crown.'

These silly clerks run up and down
With 'Keep! Keep! Stand! Stand! Jossa, ware the rear,
Go whistle thou, and I shall keep him here! '
But shortly, til that it was very night,

They could not, though they did all their might,
Their capel catch, he ran always so fast,
Til in a ditch they caught him at last.

Weary and wet, as beast is in the rain,
Comes silly John, and with him comes Aleyn.
'Alas, ' said John, 'the day that I was born!
Now are we driven to hething and to scorn.
Our grain is stolen; men will us fools call,
Both the warden and our fellows all,
And namely the miller, wellaway! '

Thus pleyne John as he goes by the way
Toward the mill, and Bayard in his hand.
The miller sitting by the fire he found,
For it was night, and further might they not;
But for the love of God they him besought
Of harbor and of ease, as for their penny.

The miller said again, 'If there be any,
Such as it is, yet shall you have your part.
My house is strict, but you have learned art;
You can by arguments make a place
A mile broad of twenty feet of space.
Let's see now if this place may suffice,
Or make it room with speech, as is your guise.'

'Now, Symond, ' said John, 'by Saint Cuthbert,
Always thou merry, and this is fair answered.
I have heard said, `Man shall take of two things:
Such as he finds, or take such as he brings.'
But specially I pray thee, host dear,
Get us some meat and drink, and make us cheer,
And we will pay truly at the full.
With empty hand men may not hawks tull;
Lo, here's our silver, ready for to spend.'

This miller into town his daughter send
For ale and bread, and roasted them a goose,
And bound their horse, it should no more go loose,
And in his own bedroom them made a bed,
With sheets and with chalons fair spread

Not from his own bed ten foot or twelve.
His daughter had a bed, all by herself,
Right in the same chamber by and by.
It might be no better, and cause why?
There was no roomier harbor in the place.
They sup and they speak, them to solace,
And drink ever strong ale at the best.
About midnight went they to rest.

Well has this miller varnished his head;
Full pale he was for drunken, and not red.
He yexed, and he speaks through the nose
As he were on the quack, or on the pose.
To bed he goes, and with him goes his wife.
As any jay she light was and jolif,
So was her jolly whistle well wet.
The cradle at her bed's feet is set,
To rock, and to give the child to suck.
And when that drunken all was in the crock,
To bed went the daughter right anon;
To bed goes Aleyn and also John;
There was no more - they needed no dwale.
This miller has so wisely bibed ale
That as a horse he snorts in his sleep,
Nor of his tail behind he took no keep.
His wife bore him a burdoun, a full strong;
Men might their snoring hear two furlong;
The wench snores too, par company.

Aleyn the clerk, who heard this melody,
He poked John, and said, 'Sleepest thou?
Heardest thou ever such a song er now?
Lo, such a compline is among them all;
May a wild fire upon their bodies fall!
Who heard ever such a ferly thing?
Yes, they shall have the flour of ill ending.
This long night there tides me no rest;
But yet, no fors, all shall be for the best.
For, John, ' said he, 'as ever may I thrive,
If that I may, yon wench will I swive.
Some easement has law shaped us,
For, John, there is a law that says thus:

That if a man in a point be aggrieved,
That in another he shall be relieved.
Our corn is stolen, truly, it is not nay,
And we have had an ill fit all this day;
And since I shall have no amendment
Against my lost, I will have easement.
By God's soul, it shall no other be! '

This John answered, 'Alayn, advise thee!
The miller is a perilous man, ' he said,
'And if he out of his sleep abraid,
He might do us both a villainy.'

Aleyn answered, 'I count him not a fly.'
And up he rises, and by the wench he crept.
This wench lay upright and fast slept,
Until he so nye was, er she might espy,
That it had been too late for to cry,
And shortly to say, they were at one.
Now play, Aleyn, for I will speak of John.

This John lies still a furlong way or two,
And to himself he makes ruth and woe.
'Alas! ' said he, 'this is a wicked jape;
Now may I say that I is but an ape.
Yet has my fellow somewhat for his harm;
He has the miller's daughter in his arm.
He auntred them, and has his needs sped,
And I lie as a draft-sack in my bed;
And when this jape is told another day,
I shall be had a daft, a cokenay!
I will arise and auntre it, by my faith!
'Unhardy is unseemly, ' thus men say.'
And up he rose, and softly he went
To the cradle, and in his hand it hent,
And bore it softly unto his bed's feet.

Soon after this the wife her snoring leet,
And gan awake, and went her out to piss,
And came back, and gan her cradle miss,
And groped here and there, but she found none.
'Alas! ' said she, 'I had almost misgone;

I had almost gone to the clerks' bed.
Ay, benedicite! Then had I foul sped! '
And forth she goes until she the cradle found.
She gropes always further with her hand,
And found the bed, and thought not but good,
Because that the cradle by it stood,
And nist where she was, for it was dark;
But fair and well she creeps in to the clerk,
And lies full still, and would have caught a sleep.
Within a while this John the clerk up leap,
And on this good wife he lays on sore.
So merry a fit had she not full yore;
He pricketh hard and deep as he were mad.
This jolly life have these two clerks led
Til that the third cock began to sing.

Aleyn waxed weary in the dawning,
For he had swinked all the long night,
And said, 'Farewell, Malyne, sweet wight!
The day is come; I may no longer bide;
But evermore, where so I go or ride,
I is thine own clerk, so have I seel! '

'Now, dear leman, ' said she, 'go, farewell!
But before thou go, one thing I will thee tell:
When that thou wends homeward by the mill,
Right at the entry of the door behind
Thou shalt a cake of half a bushel find
That was made of thine own meal,
Which I helped my sire for to steal.
And, good leman, God thee save and keep! '
And with that word almost she gan to weep.

Aleyn up rises, and thought, 'Er that it dawn,
I will go creep in by my fellow, '
And found the cradle with his hand anon.
'By God, ' thought he, 'all wrong I have misgone.
My head is totty of my swink tonight,
That makes me that I go not right.
I know well by the cradle I have misgone;
Here lies the miller and his wife also.'
And forth he goes, a twenty devil way,

Unto the bed there as the miller lay.
He weened have crept by his fellow John,
And by the miller in he crept anon,
And caught him by the neck, and soft spake.
He said, 'Thou John, thou swine's-head, awake,
For Christ's soul, and hear a noble game.
For by that lord that is called Saint Jame,
I have thrice in this short night
Swived the miller's daughter bolt upright,
While thou hast, as a coward, been aghast.'

'Yes, false harlot, ' said the miller, 'hast?
Ah, false traitor! False clerk! ' said he,
'Thou shalt be dead, by God's dignity!
Who dared be so bold to disparage
My daughter, that is come of such lineage? '
And by the throat-bole he caught Alayn,
And he hent him despiteously again,
And on the nose he smote him with his fist.
Down ran the bloody stream upon his breast;
And on the floor, with nose and mouth tobroke,
They wallow as do two pigs in a poke;
And up they go, and down again anon,
Til that the miller tripped at a stone,
And down he fell backward upon his wife,
That wist nothing of this nice strife;
For she was fall asleep a light wight
With John the clerk, that waked had all night,
And with the fall out of her sleep she brayed.
'Help! holy cross of Bromeholm, ' she said,
'In manus tuas! Lord, to thee I call!
Awake, Symond! The fiend is on me fall.
My heart is broken; help! I am but dead!
There lies one upon my womb and on my head.
Help, Symkyn, for the false clerks fight! '

This John started up as fast as ever he might,
And grasps by the walls to and fro,
To find a staff; and she start up also,
And knew the estres bet than did this John,
And by the wall a staff she found anon,
And saw a little shimmering of a light,

For at a hole in shone the moon bright,
And by that light she saw them both two,
But surely she knew not who was who,
But as she saw a white thing in her eye.
And when she gan this white thing espy,
She weened the clerk had worn a voluper,
And with the staff she drew ay near and near,
And weened have hit this Aleyn at the full,
And smote the miller on the bald skull,
That down he goes, and cried, 'Harrow! I die! '
These clerks beat him well and let him lie,
And greithen them, and took their horse anon,
And too their meal, and on their way they go.
And at the mill yet they took their cake
Of half a bushel flour, full well bake.

Thus is the proud miller well beat,
And has lost the grinding of the wheat,
And paid for the supper every deel
Of Aleyn and of John, who beat him well.
His wife is swived, and his daughter als.
Lo, such it is a miller to be false!
And therefore this proverb is said very sooth,
'Him that not weens well that evil doeth.'
A guiler shall himself beguiled be.
And God, that sits high in majesty,
Save all this company, great and small!
Thus have I quite the Miller in my tale.

Here is ended the Reeve's Tale

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Summoner's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

This Summoner in his stirrups high stood;
Upon this Friar his heart was so wood
That like an aspen leaf he quaked for ire.

'Lords, ' said he, 'but a thing I desire;
I you beseech that, of your courtesy,
Since you have heard this false Friar lie,
As suffer me I may my tale tell.
This Friar boasts that he knows hell,
And God it knows, that it is little wonder;
Friars and fiends be but lite asunder.
For, pardie, you have oft times heard tell
How that a friar ravished was to hell
In spirit once by a vision;
And as an angel led him up and down,
To show him the pains that were there,
In all the place saw he not a friar;
Of other folk he saw enough in woe.
Unto this angel spoke the friar though:

`Now, sir, ' said he, `have friars such a grace
That none of them shall come to this place? '

`Yes' said this angel, `many a million! '
And unto Satan he led him down.
`And now has Satan, ' says he, `a tail
Broader than of a carrack is the sail.
Hold up thy tail, thou Satan! ' said he;
`Show forth thy ass, and let the friar see
Where the nest of friars is in this place! '
And ere that half a furlong way of space,
Right so as bees out swarm from a hive,
Out of the devil's ass there gone drive
Twenty thousand friars on a rout,
And throughout hell swarmed all about,
And came again as fast as they may gone,
And in his ass they crept every one.

He clapped his tail again and lay full still.
This friar, when he looked had his fill
Upon the torments of this sorry place,
His spirit God restored, of his grace,
Unto his body again, and he awoke.
But nonetheless, for fear yet he quoke,
So was the devil's ass aye in his mind,
That is his heritage of very kind.
God save you all, save this cursed Friar!
My prologue will I end in this manner.'

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Summoner's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Summoner's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Lords, there is in Yorkshire, as I guess,
A marshy country called Holderness,
In which there went a limiter about
To preach, and too to beg, it is no doubt.
And so befell that on a day this friar
Had preached at a church in his manner,
And specially, above everything,
Excited he the people in his preaching
To trentals, and to give, for God's sake,
Wherewith men might holy houses make,
There as divine service is honored,
Not there as it is wasted and devoured,
Nor there it needs not for to be give,
As to possessioners, that may live,
Thanked be God, in weel and abundance.
'Trentals, ' said he, 'deliver from penance
Their friends' souls, as well old as young -
Yes, when that they've been hastily sung,
Not to hold a priest jolly and gay -
He sings not but a masse in a day.
Deliver out, ' said he, 'anon the souls!
Full hard it is with flesh hook or with awls
To be clawed, or to burn or bake.
Now speed you hastily, for Christ's sake! '
And when this friar had said all he intent,
With qui cum patre forth his way he went.

When folk in church had give him what they lest,
He went his way; no longer would he rest.
With scrippe and tipped staff, tucked high,
In every house he gan to peer and pry,
And begs meal and cheese, or else corn.
His fellow had a staff tipped with horn,
A pair of tablets all of ivory,

And a pointel polished fetisly,
And wrote the names always, as he stood,
Of all folk that gave him any good,
Askance that he would for them pray.
'Give us a bushel wheat, malt, or rye,
A God's kechel, or a trip of cheese,
Or else what you list, we may not choose;
A God's halfpenny, or a mass penny,
Or give us of your brawn, if you have any;
A dagon of your blanket, lief dame,
Our sister dear - lo! Here I write your name -
Bacon or beef, or such thing as you find.'

A sturdy harlot went aye them behind,
Who was their host's man, and bore a sack,
And what men gave them, laid it on his back.
And when that he was out at door, anon
He planed away the names every one
That he before had written in his tables;
He served them with nifles and with fables.

'Nay, there thou lie, thou Summoner! ' said the Friar.

'Peace, ' said our Host, 'for Christ's mother dear!
Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at al.'

'So thrive I, ' said this Summoner, 'so I shall! '

So long he went, house by house, til he
Came to a house there he was wont to be
Refreshed more that in a hundred places.
Sick lay the good man whose that the place is;
Bedrid upon a couch low he lay.
'Deus hic! ' said he, 'Oh Thomas, friend, good day! '
Said this friar, courteously and soft.
'Thomas, ' said he, 'God yield you! Full oft
Have I upon this bench fared full weel;
Here have I eaten many a merry meal.'
And from the bench he drove away the cat,
And laid down his potent and his hat,
And also his scrippe, and set him softly down.
His fellow was go walked into town

Forth with his knave, into that hostelry
Where as he shaped him that night to lie.

'Oh dear master, ' said this sick man,
'How have you fared since that March began?
I saw you not this fortnight or more.'
'God knows, ' said he, 'labored I have full sore,
And specially for thy salvation
Have I said many a precious orison,
And for our other friends, God them bless!
I have today been at your church at mass,
And said a sermon after my simple wit -
Not all after the text of holy writ,
For it is hard for you, as I suppose,
And therefore will I teach you all the gloss.
Glossing is a glorious thing, certainly,
For letter slays, so we clerks say -
There have I taught them to be charitable,
And spend their goods there it is reasonable;
And there I saw our dame - Ah! Where is she? '

'Yond in the yard I trow that she be, '
Said this man, 'and she will come anon.'

'Ey, master, welcome are you, by Saint John! '
Said this wife, 'How fare you, heartily? '"

The friar arises up full courteously,
And her embraces in his arms narrowly,
And kissed her sweetly, and chirps as a sparrow
With his lips: 'Lady, ' said he, 'right well,
he that is your servant every dell,
Thanked be God, that you gave soul and life!
Yet saw I not this day so fair a wife
In all the church, God so save me! '
'Yes, God amend my faults, sir, ' said she.
'Always, welcome be you, by my faith! '

'Grant mercy, dame, this have I found always.
But of your great goodness, by your leave,
I would pray you that you not be grieve,

I will with Thomas speak a little throw.
These curates be full negligent and slow
To grope tenderly a conscience
In shrift; in preaching is my diligence,
And study in Peter's words and in Paul's.
I walk and fish Christian men's souls
To yield Jesus Christ his proper rent;
To spread his word is set all my intent.'

'Now, by your leave, oh dear sir, ' said she,
'Chide him well, for Saint Trinity!
He is as angry as a pismire,
Though that he have all that he can desire;
Though I him cover at night and make him warm,
And over him lay my leg or my arm,
He groans like our boar, lying in our sty.
Other disport right none of him have I;
I may not please him in no manner case.'

'Oh Thomas, je vous dis, Thomas! Thomas!
This makes the fiend; this must be amended.
Ire is a thing that high God defended,
And thereof will I speak a word or two.'

'Now, master, ' said the wife, 'ere that I go,
What will you dine? I will go thereabout.'

'Now, lady, ' said he, 'now je vous die sans doute
Have I not of a capon but the liver,
And of your soft breed not but a shiver,
And after that a roasted pig's head -
But that I would no beast for me were dead -
Then had I with you homely suffisance.
I am a man of little sustenance;
My spirit has his fostering in the Bible.
The body is aye so ready and penible
To wake, that my stomach is destroyed.
I pray you, dame, you be not annoyed,
Though I so friendly you my counsel show.
By God! I would not tell it but a few.'

'Now, sir, ' said she, 'but a word ere I go.

My child is dead within these weeks two,
Soon after you went out of this town.'

'His death saw I by revelation, '
Said this friar, 'at home in our dortour.
I dare well say that, ere that half an hour
After his death, I saw him born to bliss
In my vision, so God me wisse!
So did our sexton and our fermerere,
That have been true friars fifty years;
They may now - God be thanked of his loan! -
Make their jubilee and walk alone.
And up I rose, and all our convent eke,
With many a tear trilling on my cheek,
Without noise or clattering of bells;
Te Deum was our song, and nothing else,
Except that to Christ I said an orison,
Thanking him of his revelation.
For, sir and dame, trust me right well,
Our prayers be more effectual,
And more we see of Christ's secret things,
Than borrel folk, although they were kings.
We live in poverty and in abstinence,
And borrel folk in riches and dispense
Of mean and drink, and in their foul delight.
We hold this world's lust all in despite.
Lazar and Dives lived diversely,
And diverse guerdon had they thereby.
Whoso will pray, he must fast and be clean,
And fatten his soul, and make his body lean.
We fare as says the apostle; clothes and food
Suffice us, though they be not full good.
The cleanness and the fasting of us friars
Makes that Christ accepts our prayers.

'Lo, Moses forty days and forty nights
Fasted, ere that the high God of might
Spoke with him in the mountain of Sinai.
With empty womb, fasting many a day,
Received he the law that was written
With God's finger; and Elijah, well you witen,
In mount Horeb, ere he had any speech

With high God, that is our life's leech,
He fasted long and was in contemplance.

'Aaron, who had the temple in governance,
And eek the other priests every one,
Into the temple when they should go on
To pray for the people and do service,
They would not drink in no manner wise
No drink which that might them drunk make,
But there in abstinence pray and keep wake,
Lest that they died. Take heed what I say!
But they be sober that for the people pray,
Ware that - I say no more, for it suffices.
'Our Lord Jesus, as holy writ devises,
Gave us example of fasting and prayers.
Therefore we mendicants, we silly friars,
Be wedded to poverty and continence,
To charity, humbleness, and abstinence,
To persecution for righteousness,
To weeping, mercy, and cleanness.
And therefore may you see that our prayers -
I speak of us, we mendicants, we friars -
Be to the high God more acceptable
Than yours, with your feasts at the table.
From Paradise first, if I shall not lie,
Was man out chased for his gluttony;
And chaste was man in Paradise, certainly.

'But hearken now, Thomas, what I shall say.
I have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shall find it in a manner gloss,
That specially our sweet Lord Jesus
Spoke this by friars, when he said thus:
'Blessed be they that poor in spirit be.'
And so forth all the gospel may you see,
Where it be liker our profession,
Or theirs who swim in possessions.
Fie on their pomp and on their gluttony!
And for their lewdness I them defy.

'Me thinks they be like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walking as a swan,

All vinolent as bottle in the spence.
Their prayer is of full great reverence,
When they for souls say the psalm of David:
Lo, `buf! ' they say, `cor meum eructavit! '
Who follows Christ's gospel and his fore,
But we that humble be, and chaste, and poor,
Workers of God's word, not auditors?
Therefore, right as a hawk up at a sours
Up springs into the air, right so prayers
Of charitable and chaste busy friars
Make their sours to God's ears two.
Thomas, Thomas! So must I ride or go,
And by that lord that called is Saint Yve,
Nere thou our brother, shouldst not thrive.
In our chapter pray we day and night
To Christ, that he thee send health and might
Thy body for to wield hastily.'

'God knows, ' said he, 'nothing thereof feel I!
As help me Christ, as I in few years,
Have spent upon diverse manner friars
Full many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.
Certain, my good have I almost beset.
Farewell, my gold, for it is all ago! '

The friar answered, 'Oh Thomas, dost thou so?
What need you diverse friars seek?
What needs him that has a perfect leech
To seek other leeches in the town?
Your inconstance is your ruin.
Hold you then me, or else our convent,
To pray for you be insufficient?
Thomas, that jape's not worth a mite.
Your malady is for we have too lite.
Ah, give that convent half a quarter oats!
Ah, give that convent four and twenty groats!
Ah, give that friar a penny, and let him go!
Nay, nay, Thomas, it may nothing be so!
What is a farthing worth parted in twelve?
Lo, each thing that is oned in itself
Is more strong than when it is too scattered.
Thomas, of me thou shalt not be flattered;

Thou wouldst have our labor all for naught.
The high God, that all this world has wrought,
Says that the workman worthy is his hire.
Thomas, naught of your treasure I desire
As for myself, but that all our convent
To pray for you is aye so diligent,
And for to build Christ's own church.
Thomas, if you will learn for to werche,
Of building up of churches may you find
If it be good Thomas' life of Inde.
You lie here full of anger and of ire,
With which the devil set your heart afire,
And chide here the silly innocent,
Your wife, that is so meek and patient.
And therefore, Thomas, trust me if thou lest,
Strive not with thy wife, as for thy best;
And bear this word away now, by thy faith;
Touching such thing, lo, what the wise man saith:
' Within thy house be thou no lion;
To thy subjects do no oppression,
Nor make thy acquaintances to flee.'
And, Thomas, yet eftsoon I charge thee,
Beware from Ire that in thy bosom sleeps;
Ware from the serpent that so slyly creeps
Under the grass and stings subtly.
Beware, my son, and hearken patiently
That twenty thousand men have lost their lives
For striving with their lemans and their wives.
Now since you have so holy meek a wife,
Why needs you, Thomas, to make strife?
There is, iwis, no serpent so cruel,
When man treads on his tail, nor half so fell,
As woman is, when she has caught an ire;
Vengeance is then all that they desire.
Ire is a sin, one of the great of seven,
Abominable unto the God of heaven;
And to himself it is destruction.
This every lewd vicar or parson
Can say, how ire engenders homicide.
Ire is, in truth, executor of pride.
I could of ire say so much sorrow,
My tale should last til tomorrow.

And therefore pray I God both day and night
An irous man, God send him little might!
It is great harm and certain great pity
To set an irous man in high degree.

'Once there was an irous potentate,
As says Seneca, who, during his estate,
Upon a day out rode knights two,
And as Fortune would that it were so,
That one of them came home, that other not.
Anon the knight before the judge is brought,
Who said thus, `Thou hast thy fellow slain,
For which I demn thee to the death, certain.'
And to another knight commanded he,
`Go lead him to the death, I charge thee.'
And happened, as they went by the way
Toward the place where he should die,
The knight came which men wend had been dead.
Then thought they it would be the best read
To lead them both to the judge again.
They said, `Lord, the knight has not slain
His fellow; here he stands whole alive.'
`You shall be dead, ' said he, `so must I thrive!
That is to say, both one, and two, and three! '
And to the first knight right thus spoke he,
`I damned thee; thou must algate be dead.
And thou also must needs lose thy head,
For thou art cause why thy fellow dies.'
And to the third knight right thus he says,
`Thou hast not done what I commanded thee.'
And thus he did do slay them all three.

'Irous Cambises was too dronkelewe,
And aye delighted him to be a shrew.
And so befell, a lord of his meiny
That loved virtuous morality
Said on a day betwixt them two right thus:

'` A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And drunkenness is too a foul record
Of any man, and namely in a lord.
There is full many an eye and many an ear

Awaiting on a lord, and he knows not where.
For God's love, drink more temperately!
Wine makes man to lose wretchedly
His mind and too his limbs every one.'

'The reverse shall thou see,' said he, 'anon,
And prove it by thy own experience,
That wine does to folk no such offence.
There is no wine bereft me my might
Of hand nor foot, nor of my eyesight.'
And for despite he drank full much more,
An hundred part, than he had done before;
And right anon this irous, cursed wretch
Let this knight's son before him fetch,
Commanding him he should before him stand.
And suddenly he took his bow in hand,
And up the string he pulled to his ear,
And with an arrow he slew the child right there.
'Now whether have I a sure hand or none?'
Said he; 'Is all my might and mind gone?
Has wine bereft me of my eyesight?'
What should I tell the answer of the knight?
His son was slain; there is no more to say.
Beware, therefore, with lords how you play.
Sing Placebo and 'I shall, if I can,'
But if it be unto a poor man.
To a poor man men should his vices tell,
But not to a lord, though he should go to hell.

'Lo irous Cyrus, that Persian,
How he destroyed the river of Gysen,
For that a horse of his was drowned therein,
When that he went Babylon to win.
He made that the river was so small
That women might wade it over all.
Lo, what said he that so well teach can?
'Be no fellow to an irous man,
Nor with an angry man walk by the way,
Lest thee repent; 'I will no further say.

'Now, Thomas, lief brother, leave thine ire;
Thou shalt me find as just as is a square.

Hold not the devil's knife aye at thy heart -
Thine anger does thee all too sore smart -
But show to me all thy confession.'

'Nay, ' said the sick man, 'by Saint Simon!
I have been shriven this day at my curate.
I have him told wholly all my estate;
Needs no more to speak of it, ' says he,
'But if me wish, of my humility.'

'Give me then of thy gold, to make our cloister, '
Said he, 'for many a mussel and many an oyster,
When other men have been full well at ease,
Have been our food, our cloister for to raise.
And yet, God knows, hardly the fundament
Performed is, nor of our pavement
There's not a tile yet within our wones.
By God, we owe forty pounds for stones.

'Now help, Thomas, for him that harrowed hell!
For else must we our books sell.
And if you lack our predication,
Then goes the world all to destruction.
For whoso would us from this world bereave,
So save me God, Thomas, by your leave,
He would bereave out of this world the sun.
For who can teach and work as we can?
And that is not of little time, ' said he,
'But since Elijah was, or Elisha,
Have friars been - that find I of record -
In charity, thanked be our Lord!
Now Thomas, help, for saint charity! '
And down anon he set him on his knee.

This sick man waxed well nigh mad for ire;
He would that the friar had been on fire
With his false dissimulation.
'Such thing as is in my possession, '
Said he, 'that may I give, and none other.
You say me thus, how that I am your brother? '

'Yes, certainly, ' said the friar, 'trust well.

I took our dame our letter with our seal.'

'Well now, ' said he, 'and somewhat shall I give
Unto your holy convent while I live;
And in thy hand thou shalt it have anon,
On this condition, and other none,
That thou depart it so, my dear brother,
That every friar have also much as other.
This shalt thou swear on thy profession,
Without fraud or cavillation.'

'I swear it, ' said this friar, 'by my faith! '
And therewithal his hand in his he lays,
'Lo, here my faith; in me shall be no lack.'

'Now then, put in thy hand down by my back, '
Said this man, 'and grope well behind.
Beneath my buttock there shalt thou find
A thing that I have hid in privity.'

'Ah! ' thought this friar, 'That shall go with me! '
And down his hand he launched to the cleft
In hope for to find there a gift.
And when this sick man felt this friar
About his towel grope there and here,
Amid his hand he let the friar a fart;
There's no capel, drawing in a cart,
That could have let a fart of such a sound.

The friar up started as does a mad lion -
'Ah, false churl, ' said he, 'for God's bones!
This hast thou for despite done for the nones.
Thou shalt abyee this fart, if that I may! '

His meine, which that heard this affray,
Came leaping in and chased out the friar;
And forth he goes, with a full angry cheer,
And fette his fellow, there as lay his store.
He looked as it were a wild boar;
He grinded with his teeth, so was he wroth.
A sturdy pace down to the court he goes,
Whereas there woned a man of great honor,

To whom that he was always confessor.
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This friar came as he were in a rage,
Whereas this lord sat eating at his board;
Uneath might the friar speak a word,
Til at last he said, 'God you see! '

This lord did look, and said, 'Benedicite!
What, friar John, what manner world is this?
I see well that something there is amiss;
You look as if the wood were full of thieves.
Sit down anon, and tell me what your grief is,
And it shall be amended, if I may.'

'I have, ' said he, 'had a despite this day,
God yield you, down in your village,
That in this world is none so poor a page
That he would not have abomination
Of that I have received in your town.
And yet there grieves me nothing so sore,
As that this old churl with locks hoar
Blasphemed has our holy convent eke."

'Now, master, ' said this lord, 'I you beseech - '

'No master, sir, ' said he, 'but servitor,
Though I have had in school that honor.
God likes not that `Rabbi' men us call,
Neither in market nor in your large hall.'

'No fors, ' said he, 'but tell me all your grief.'

'Sir, ' said this friar, 'an odious mischief
This day betide is to my order and me,
And so, per consequence, to each degree
Of holy church - God amend it soon! '

'Sir, ' said the lord, 'you know what is to be done.
Distemper you naught; you be my confessor;
You be the salt of the earth and the savor.
For God's love, your patience you hold!
Tell me your grief.' And he anon him told,

As you have heard before - you know well what.

The lady of the house aye still sat
Til she had heard what the friar said.
'Ey, God's mother, ' said she, 'Blissful maid!
Is there ought else? Tell me faithfully.'

'Madame, ' said he, 'how think you hereby? '

'How that me think' said she. 'So God me speed,
I say a churl has done a churl's deed.
What should I say? God let him never thee!
His sick head is full of vanity;
I hold him in a manner frenzy.'

'My lady, ' said he, 'by God, I shall not lie,
But I on other wise may be wreck,
I shall disclaim him over all I speak,
This false blasphemmer that charged me
To part that will not departed be
To every man alike, with mischance! '

The lord sat still as he were in a trance,
And in his heart he rolled up and down,
'How had this churl imagination
To show such a problem to the friar?
Never ere now heard I of such matter.
I trow the devil put it in his mind.
In arithmetic shall there no man find,
Before this day, of such a question.
Who should make a demonstration
That every man should have alike his part
As of the sound or savor of a fart?
Oh nice, proud churl, I shrew his face!
Lo, sirs, ' said the lord, 'with hard grace!
Who ever heard of such a thing ere now?
To every man alike? Tell me how.
It is an impossible; it may not be.
Ey, nice churl, God let him never thee!
The rumbling of a fart, and every sound,
Is but of air reverberation,
And ever it wastes little and little away.

There is no man can judge, by my faith,
If that it were departed equally.
What, lo, my churl, lo, yet how shrewdly
Unto my confessor to-day he spoke!
I consider him certain a demoniac!
Now eat your meat, and let the churl go play;
Let him go hang himself a devil's way! '

The words of the lord's squire and
his carver for departing of the
fart on twelve.

Now stood the lord's squire at the board,
That carved his meat, and heard word by word
Of all things which I have you said.
'My lord, ' said he, 'be you not evil apaid,
I could tell, for a gown-cloth,
To you, sir friar, so you be not wroth,
How this fart should even dealed be
Among your convent, if it liked me.'

'Tell, ' said the lord, 'and thou shalt have anon
A gown-cloth, by God and by Saint John! '

'My lord, ' said he, 'when that the weather is fair,
Without wind or perturbing of air,
Let bring a cartwheel here into this hall;
But look that it have his spokes all -
Twelve spokes has a cartwheel commonly.
And bring me then twelve friars. Know you why?
For thirteen is a convent, as I guess.
Your confessor here, for his worthiness,
Shall perform up the number of his convent.
Then shall they kneel down, by one assent,
And to every spoke's end, in this manner,
Full sadly lay his nose shall a friar.
Your noble confessor - there God him save! -
Shall hold his nose upright under the nave.
Then shall this churl, with belly stiff and taut
As any tabor, hither be brought;
And set him on the wheel right of this cart,

Upon the nave, and make him let a fart.
And you shall see, up peril of my life,
By proof which that is demonstrative,
That equally the sound of it will wend,
And also the stink, unto the spokes' ends,
Save that this worthy man, your confessor,
Because he is a man of great honor,
Shall have the first fruit, as reason is.
The noble usage of friars yet is this,
The worthy men of them shall first be served;
And certainly he has it well deserved.
He has to-day taught us so much good
With preaching in the pulpit there he stood,
That I may vouchsafe, I say for me,
He had the first smell of farts three;
And so would all his convent hardily,
He bears him so faire and holily.'

The lord, the lady, and each man, save the friar,
Said that Jankyn spoke, in this matter,
As well as Euclid or Ptolemy.
Touching the churl, they said, subtlety
And high wit made him speak as he spoke;
He's no fool, nor no demoniac.
And Jankyn has won a new gown -
My tale is done; we be almost at town.

Here ends the Summoner's Tale.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Wife Of Bath's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

'Experience, though no authority
Were in this world, is right enough for me
To speak of woe that is in marriage;
For, lordings, since I twelve year was of age,
Thanked be God that is eternally alive,
Husbands at church door I have had five -
If I so oft might have wedded be -
And all were worthy men in their degree.
But me was told, certain, not long ago is,
That since that Christ went never but once
To wedding, in the Cana of Galilee,
That by the same example taught he me
That I should wedded be but once.
Hearken too, lo, which a sharp word for the nonce,
Beside a well, Jesus, God and man,
Spoke in reproof of the Samaritan:
'Thou hast had five husbands, ' said he,
'And that same man that now has thee
Is not thy husband, ' thus said he certain.
What that he meant thereby, I can not say;
But that I ask, why that the fifth man
Was no husband to the Samaritan?
How many might she have in marriage?
I heard I never tell in my age
Upon this number definition.
Men may divine and gloss, up and down,
But well I know, expressly, without lie,
God bade us for to wax and multiply;
That gentle text can I well understand.
Too well I know, he said my husband
Should leave father and mother and take to me.
But of no number mention made he,
Of bigamy, or of octogamy;
Why should men then speak of it villainy?

Lo, here the wise king, lord Salomon;
I trust he had wives more than one.

As would God it lawful were unto me
To be refreshed half so often as he!
Which a gift of God had he for all his wives!
No man has such that in this world alive is.
God knows, this noble king, as to my wit,
The first night had many a merry fit
With each of them, so well was him on live.
Blessed be God that I have wedded five!
[Of which I have picked out the best,
Both of their nether purse and of their chest.
Diverse schools schools make perfect clerks,
And diverse practice in many sundry works
Makes the workman perfect surely;
Of five husbands' schooling am I.]
Welcome the sixth, when that ever he shall.
For truth, I will not keep me chaste in all.
When my husband is from the world gone,
Some Christian man shall wed me anon,
For then the apostle says that I am free
To wed, by God's half, where it liketh me.
He says that to be wedded is no sin;
Better is to be wedded than to burn.
What reckon me, though folk say villainy
Of wicked Lamech and his bigamy?
I know well Abraham was a holy man,
And Jacob too, insofar as I kan;
And each of them had wives more than two,
And many another holy man also.
Where can you see, in any manner age,
That high God forbade marriage
By express word? I pray you, tell me.
Or where commanded he virginity?
I know as well as you, it is no dread,
The apostle, when he speaks of maidenhead,
He said that percept thereof had no none.
Men may counsel a woman to be one,
But counseling is no commandment.
He put it to our own judgment;
For had God commanded maidenhead,
Then had he damned wedding with the deed.
And certain, if there were no seed sown,
Virginity, then whereof should it grow?

Paul dare not command, at least,
A thing of which his master gave no heste.
The dart is set up for virginity;

Catch whoso may, who runneth best let's see.
But this word is not taken of every wight,
But there as God lust give it of his might.
I know well that the apostle was a maid;
But nonetheless, though that he wrote and said
He would that every wight were such as he,
All's not but counsel to virginity.
And for to be a wife he gave me leave
Of indulgence; so it's no reprieve
To wed me, if that my mate die,
Without exception of bigamy.
All were it good no woman for to touch -
He meant as in his bed or in his couch,
For peril is both fire and tow to assemble;
You know what this example may resemble.
This is all and sum: he held virginity
More perfect than wedding in frailty.
Frailty call I, but if that he and she
Would lead all their life in chastity.

I grant it well; I have no envy,
maidenhood prefer bigamy.
It like them to be clean, body and ghost;
Of my estate I'll not make no boast,
For well you know, a lord in his household,
He has not every vessel all of gold;
Some be of tree, and do their lord service.
God calls folk to him in sundry ways,
And every one has of God an proper gift -
Some this, some that, as himi liketh shift.

Virginity is great perfection,
And continence too with devotion,
But Christ, that of perfection is well,
Bade not every wight he should go sell
All that he had, and give it to the poor,
And in such wise follow him and his fore.
He spoke to them that would live perfectly;

And lordings, by your leave, that am not I.
I will bestow the flower of all my age
In the acts and in fruit of marriage.

Tell me also, to what conclusion
Were members made of generation,
And of so perfect wise a wright wrought?
Trust right well, they were not made for nought.
Gloss whoso will, and say both up and down
That they were made for purgation
Of urine, and our both things small
Were too to know a female from a male,
And for no other cause - say you no?
The experience knows well it is not so.
So that the clerks be not with me wroth,
I say this: that they made be for both;
That is to say, for office and for ease
Of engender, there we not God displease.
Why should men else in their books set
That man shall yield to his wife her debt?
Now wherewith should he make his payment,
If he not use his holy instrument?
Then were they made upon a creature
To purge urine, and too for engender.

But I say not that every wight is hold,
That has such harness as I to you told,
To go and use them in engender.
Then should men take of chastity no cure.
Christ was a maid and shaped as a man,
And many a saint, since that the world began;
Yet lived they ever in perfect chastity.
I'll envy no virginity.
Let them be bread of pure wheat-seed,
And let us wives be called barley-bread;
And yet with barley-bread, Mark tell can,
Our Lord Jesus refreshed many a man.
In such estate as God has called us
I will persevere; I am not precious.
In wifehood I will use my instrument
As freely as my Maker has it sent.
If I be dangerous, God give me sorrow!

My husband shall have it both eve and morrow,
When that him list come forth and pay his debt.
A husband I will have - I will not let -
Whick shall be both my debtor and my thrall,
And have his tribulation withal
Upon his flesh, while that I am his wife.
I have the power during all my life
Over his proper body, and not he.
Right thus the Apostle told it unto me,
And bade our husbands for to love us well.
Al this sentence me liketh every deel' -

Up start the Pardoner, and that anon;
'Now, dame, ' said he, 'by God and by Saint John!
You be a noble preacher in this case.
I was about to wed a wife; alas!
What should I buy it on my flesh so dear?
Yet had I lief wed no wife this year! '

'Abide! ' said she, 'my tale is not begun.
Nay, thou shalt drink of another tun,
Er that I go, shall savor worse than ale.
And when that I have told thee forth my tale
Of tribulation in marriage,
Of which I am expert in all my age -
This is to say, myself have been the whip -
Than may thou choose whether thou will sip
Of that tun that I shall abroche.
Beware of it, er thou too night approach;
For I shall tell examples more than ten.
'Whoso that won't be warned by other men,
By him shall other men corrected be.'
The same words writes Ptolemy;
Read in his Almagest, and take it there.'

'Dame, I would pray you, if your will it were, '
Said this Pardoner, 'as you began,
Tell forth your tale, spareth for no man,
And teach us young men of your practice.'

'Gladly, ' said she, 'since it may you like;

But yet I pray to all this company,
If that I speak after my fantasy,
As taketh not agrief of that I say,
For my intent is but for to play.

Now, sir, now will I tell forth my tale.
As ever may I drink wine or ale,
I shall say sooth; those husbands that I had,
As three of them were good, and two were bad.
The three were good men, and rich, and old;
Hardly might they the statute hold
In which that they were bound unto me.
You know well what I mean of this, pardee!
As help me God, I laugh when I think
How piteously at night I made them swink!
And, by my faith, I told of it no store.
They had me given their land and their treasure;
I needed not so longer diligence
To win their love, or do them reverence.
They loved me so well, by God above,
That I told no dainty of their love!
A wise woman will busy her ever in one
To get their love, yes, there as she has none.
But since I had them wholly in my hand,
And since they had me given all their land,
What should I take keep them for to please,
But it were for my profit and my ease?
I set them so at work, by my faith,
That many a night they sang `Wail away! '
The bacon was not fat for them, I trow,
That some men have in Essex at Dunmowe.
I governed them so well, after my law,
That each of them full blissful was and fawe
To bring me gay things from the fair.
They were full glad when I spoke to them fair,
For, God it knows, I chide them spitously.

Now hearken how I bore me properly,
You wise wives, that can understand.
Thus should you speak and bear them wrong on hand,
For half so boldly can there no man
Swear and lie, as a woman can.

I say not this by wives that be wise,
But if it be when they them misadvise.
A wise wife, if that she knows her good,
Shall bear him on hand the cow is wood,
And take witness of her own maid
Of her assent. But hearken how I said:

` Sir old cainard, is this thy array?
Why is my neighbor's wife so gay?
She is honored overall there she goes;
I sit at home; I have no thrifty clothes.
What dost thou at my neighbor's house?
Is she so fair? Art thou so amorous?
What whisper you with our maid? Benedicite!
Sir old lecher, let thy japes be!
And if I have a godsib or a friend,
Innocently, thou chidest as a fiend,
If that I walk or play unto his house!
Thou comest home as drunk as a mouse,
And preach on thy bench, bad evil proof!
Thou sayest to me it is a great misfortune
To wed a poor woman, for costage;
And if that she be rich, of high lineage,
Then sayest thou that it is a tormentry
To suffer her pride and her melancholy.
And if that she be fair, thou very knave,
Thou sayest that every whorer will her have;
She may no while in chastity abide,
Who is assailed upon each a side.

Thou sayest some folk desire us for riches,
Some for our shape, and some for our fairness,
And some for she can either sing or dance,
And some for gentleness and dalliance;
Some for her hands and her arms small;
Thus goes all to the devil, by thy tale.
Thou sayest men may not keep a castle wall,
It may so long assailed be overall.

And if that she be foul, thou sayest that she
Covets every man that she may see,
For as a spaniel she will on him leap,

Until she find some man her to cheap.
Nor does so grey goose go there in the lake,
As, sayest thou, will be without mate.
And sayest it is an hard thing for to wield
A thing that no man will, his thanks, hold.
Thus sayest thou, lorel, when thou goes to bed,
And that no wise man needs for to wed,
Nor no man that intended unto heaven.
With wild thunder-bolt and fiery lightning
May thy wrinkled neck be to broke!

Thou sayest that dripping houses, and also smoke,
And chiding make men to flee
Out of their own houses; ah, benedicite!
What ails such an old man for to chide?

Thou sayest we wives will our vices hide
Til we be fast, and then we will them show -
Well may that be a proverb of a shrew!

Thou sayest that oxen, asses, horses, and hounds,
They've been assayed at diverse stounds;
Basins, lavours, er that men them buy,
Spoons and stools, and all such husbandry,
And so be pots, clothes, and array;
But folk of wives make no assay,
Til they be wedded - old dottard shrew! -
And then, sayest thou, we will our vices show.

Thou sayest also that it displeases me
But if that thou will praise my beauty,
And but thou peer always upon my face,
And call me 'fair dame' in every place.
And but thou make a feast on this day
That I was born, and make me fresh gay;
And but thou do to my nurse honor,
And to my chamberer within my bower,
And to my father's folk and his allies -
Thus sayest thou, old barrellful of lies!

And yet of our apprentice Janekin,
For his crispy hair, shining as gold so fine,

And for he squireth me both up and down,
Yet hast thou caught a false suspicion.
I will him not, though thou were dead tomorrow!

But tell me this: why hidest thou, with sorrow,
The keys of thy chest away from me?
It is my good as well as thine, pardee!
What, think thou make an idiot of our dame?
Now by that lord that called is Saint James,
Thou shalt not both, though thou were wood,
Be master of my body and of my good;
That one thou shalt forgo, despite thy yearn.
What helps it of me to inquire or spy?
I trust thou would lock me in thy chest!
Thou should say, 'Wife, go where you list;
Take your sport; I will believe no tales.
I know you for a true wife, dame Alice.'
We love no man that takes keep or charge
Where that we go; we will be at our large.

Of all men blessed may he be,
The wise astrologer, Dan Ptolemy,
That says this proverb in his Almagest:
'Of all men his wisdom is the highest
That reckons never who has the world in his hand.'
By this proverb thou shalt understand,
Have thou enough, what should thee reck or care
How merrily that other folks fare?
For, certainly, old dottard, by your leave,
You shall have quite right enough at eve.
He is too great a niggard that would werne
A man to light a candle at his lantern;
He shall have never the less light, pardee.
Have thou enough, you should not plain thee.

Thou sayest also, that if we make us gay
With clothing, and with precious array,
That it is peril of our chastity;
And yet - with sorrow! - thou must enforce thee,
And say these words in the Apostle's name:
'In habit made with chastity and shame
You women shall apparel you, ' he said,

'And not in tressed hair and gay perrie,
As pearls, nor with gold, nor clothes rich."
After thy text, nor after thy rubric,
I will not work as much as a gnat.

Thou said this, that I was like a cat;
For whoso would singe a cat's skin,
Then would the cat well dwell in his inn;
And if the cat's skin be sleek and gay,
She will not dwell in house half a day,
But forth she will, er any day be dawning,
To show her skin and go a-caterwauling.
This is to say, if I be gay, sir shrew,
I will run out my burel for to show.

Sir old fool, what helps thee to spy?
Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyes
To be my wardencors as he can best,
In fait, he shall not keep me but me lest;
Yet could I make his beard, so might I thee!

Thou said too that there be things three,
The which things trouble all this earth,
And that no wight may endure the fourth.
O leave sir shrew, Jesus shorten thy life!
Yet preachest thou and sayest a hateful wife
Reckoned is for one of these mischances.
Be there no other manner resemblances
That you may liken your parables to,
But if a silly wife be one of those?

Thou likens too women's love to hell,
To barren land, there water may not dwell.
Thou likens it also to wild fire;
The more it burns, the more it has desire
To consume every thing that burnt will be.
Thou sayest, just as worms shend a tree,
Right so a wife destroys her husband;
This know they that be to wives bound.'

Lord, right thus, as you have understand,
Bore I stiffly my old husband's own hand

That thus they said in their drunkenness;
And all was false, but that I took witness
On Janekin, and on my niece also.
O Lord! The pain I did them and the woe,
Full guiltless, by God's sweet pain!
For as a horse I could bite and whin.
I could plain, and yet was in the guile,
Or else often time had I been spilt.
Whoso that first to mill comes, first grint;
I plained first, so was our war stint.
They were full glad to excuse them blive
Of things of which they were aguilt their live.
Of wenchies would I bear them on hand,
When that for sickness might they stand.

Yet tickled I his heart, for that he
Wend that I had of him so great charity!
I swore that all my walking out by night
Was for to spy wenchies that he dight;
Under that color had I many a mirth.
For all such wit is given us in our birth;
Deceit, weeping, spinning God has give
To women kindly, while that they may live.
And thus of one thing I avaunt me:
At the end I had the better in each degree,
By sleight, or force, or by some manner thing,
As by continual murmur or grouching.
Namely abed had they mischance:
There would I scold and do them no pleasance;
I would no longer in the bed abide,
If that I felt his arm over my side,
Til he had made his ransom unto me;
Then would I suffer him do his nicety.
And therefore every man this tale I tell,
Win whoso may, for all is for to sell;
With empty hand men may no hawks lure.
For winning would I all his lust endure,
And make me a feigned appetite;
And yet in bacon had I never delight.
That made me that ever I would them chide,
For though the pope had sat them beside,
I would not spare them at their own board,

For, by my troth, I quit them word for word.
As help me very God omnipotent,
Though I right now should make my testament,
I owe them not a word that isn't quit.
I brought it so about by my wit
That they must give it up, as for the best,
Or else had we never been in rest;
For though he looked as a wood lion,
Yet should he fail of his conclusion.

Then I would say, ` Good lief, take keep
How meekly looks Willy, our sheep!
Come near, my spouse, let me ba thy cheek!
You should be all patient and meek,
And have a sweet spiced conscience,
Since you so preach of Job's patience.
Suffer always, since you so well can preach;
And but you do, certain we shall you teach
That it is fair to have a wife in peace.
One of us two must bow, doubtless,
And since a man is more reasonable
Than woman is, you must be sufferable.
What ails you to grouch thus and groan?
Is it for you would have my queynte alone?
Why, take it all! Lo, have it every deel!
Peter! I shrew you, but you love it well;
For if I would sell my belle chose,
I could walk as fresh as is a rose;
But I will keep it for your own tooth.
You be to blame, by God! I say you sooth.'

Such manner words had we on hand.
Now will I speak of my fourth husband.

My fourth husband was a reveller -
This is to say, he had a paramour -
And I was young and full of gaiety,
Stubborn and strong, and jolly as a pie.
How could I dance to a harp small,
And sing, indeed, as any nightingale,
When I had drunk a draft of sweet wine!
Metellius, the foul churl, the swine,

Who with a staff bereft his wife her life,
For she drank wine, though I had been his wife,
He should not have daunted me from drink!
And after wine on Venus must I think,
For al so certain as cold engenders hail,
A lecherous mouth must have a lecherous tail.
In women vinolent is no defense -
This know lechers by experience.

But - Lord Christ! - when that it remembered me
Upon my youth, and on my jolity,
It tickles me about my heart's root.
Unto this day it does my heart boot
That I have had my world as in my time.
But age, alas, that all will envenom,
Has me bereft my beauty and my pith.
Let go. Farewell! The devil go therewith!
The flour is gone; there is no more to tell;
The bran, as I best can, now must I sell;
But yet to be right merry will I fond.
Now will I tell of my fourth husband.

I say, I had in heart great despite
That he of any other had delight.
But he was quit, by God and by Saint Joss!
I made him of the same wood a cross;
Not of my body, in no foul manner,
But certainly, I made folk such cheer
That in his own grease I made him fry
For anger, and for very jealousy.
By God, in earth I was his purgatory,
For which I hope his soul be in glory.
For, God it knows, he sat full oft and song,
When his shoe full bitterly him wrong.
There was no wight, save God and he, that wiste
In many wise, how sore I him twist.
He died when I came from Jerusalem,
And lies agrave under the rood beam,
All is his tomb not so curious
As was the sepulcher of him Darius,
Which that Appelles wrought subtly;
It's not but waste to bury him preciously.

Let him fare well; God give his soul rest!
He is now in his grave and in his chest.

Now of my fifth husband will I tell.
God let his soul never come in hell!
And yet was he to me the most shrew;
That feel I on my ribs all by rue,
And ever shall unto my ending day.
But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
And therewithal so well could he me gloss,
When that he would have my belle chose;
That though he had me beat on every bone,
He could win again my love anon.
I trow I loved him best, for that he
Was of his love dangerous to me.
We women have, if that I shall not lie,
In this matter a quaint fantasy:
Wait what thing we may not lightly have,
Thereafter will we cry all day and crave.
Forbid us thing, and that desire we;
Press on us fast, and then will we flee.
With danger out we all our chaffer;
Great press at market makes dear ware,
And too great cheap is held at little price:
This knows every woman that is wise.

My fifth husband - God his soul bless! -
Which that I took for love, and no riches,
He some time was a clerk of Oxford,
And had left school, and went at home to board
With my godsib, dwelling in our town;
God have her soul! Her name was Alison.
She knew my heart, and too my privity,
Better than our parish priest, so moot I thee!
To her bewrayed I my counsel all.
For had my husband pissed on a wall,
Or done a thing that should have cost his life,
To her, and to another worthy wife,
And to my niece, which that I loved well,
I would have told every deel.
And so I did full often, God it want,
That made his face often red and hot

For very shame, and blamed himself for he
Had told to me so great a privity.

And so befell that once in a Lent -
Since often times I to my godsib went,
For ever yet I loved to be gay,
And for to walk in March, April, and May,
From house to house, to hear sundry tales -
That Jankin the clerk, and my godsib dame Alys,
And I myself, into the fields went.
My husband was at London all that Lent;
I had the better leisure for to play,
And for to see, and too for to be seen
Of lusty folk. What wised I where my grace
Was shaped for to be, or in what place?
Therefore I made my visitations
To vigils and to processions,
To preaching too, and to these pilgrimages,
To plays of miracles, and to marriages,
And wore upon my gay scarlet gites.
These worms, nor these moths, nor these mites,
Upon my peril, bit them never a deel;
And would you know why? For they were used well.

Now will I tell forth what happened me.
I say that in the fields walked we,
Til truly we had such dalliance,
This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
I spoke to him and said him how that he,
If I were widow, should wed me.
For certainly - I say for no bobance -
Yet was I never without purveyance
Of marriage, nor of other things eek.
I hold a mouse's heart not worth a leek
That has but one hole for to start to,
And if that fail, then all is ado.

I bare him on hand he had enchanted me -
My dame taught me that subtlety -
And too I said I dreamed of him all night,
He would have slain me as I lay upright,
And all my bed was full of verrey blood;

` But yet I hope that you shall do me good,
For blood betokens gold, as me was taught.'
And all was false; I dreamed of it right not,
But I followed aye my dame's lore,
As well of this as of other things more.

But now, sir, let me see what I shall say.
A ha! By God, I have my tale again.

When that my fourth husband was on bier,
I wept algate, and made sorry cheer,
As wives must, for it is usage,
And with my kerchief covered my visage,
But because I was purveyed of a make,
I wept but small, and that I undertake.

To church was my husband born a morrow
With neighbors, that for him made sorrow;
And Jankin, our clerk, was one of those.
As help me God, when that I saw him go
After the bier, me thought he had a pair
Of legs and of feet so clean and fair
That all my heart I gave unto his hold.
He was, I trow, twenty winter old,
And I was forty, if I shall say sooth;
But yet I had always a colt's tooth.
Gap-toothed I was, and that became me well;
I had the print of Saint Venus' seal
As help me God, I was a lusty one,
And fair, and rich, and young, and well bigon,
And truly, as my husbands told me,
I had the best quoniam might be.
For certainly, I am all Venerian
In feeling, and my heart is Martian.
Venus me gave my lust, my lecherousness,
And Mars gave me my sturdy hardiness;
My ascendant was Taurus, and Mars therein.
Alas, alas! That ever love was sin!
I followed aye my inclination
By virtue of my constellation;
That made me I could not withdraw
My chamber of Venus from a good fellow.

Yet have I Mars' mark upon my face,
And also in another private place.
For God so wise be my salvation,
I loved never by no discretion,
But ever followed my appetite,
All were he short, or long, or black, or white;
I took no keep, so that he liked me,
How poor he was, nor too of what degree.

What should I say but, at the month's end,
This jolly clerk, Jankin, that was so hend,
Has wedded me with great solemnity,
And to him gave I all the land and fee
That ever was me given therebefore.
But afterward repented me full sore;
He would suffer nothing of my list.
By God, he smote me once on the list,
For that I rent out of his book a leaf,
That of the stroke my ear wax all deaf.
Stubborn I was as is a lioness,
And of my tongue a very jangleress,
And walk I would, as I had done before,
From house to house, although he had it sworn;
For which he often times would preach,
And me of old Roman gestes teach;
How he, Simplicius Gallus, left his wife,
And her forsook for term of all his life,
Not but for open-headed he her say
Looking out at his door upon a day.

Another Roman told he me by name,
That, for his wife was at a summer's game
Without his witting, he forsook her eke.
And then would he upon his Bible seek
That same proverb of Ecclesiast
Where he commands and forbiddeth fast
Man should suffer his wife go roll about.
Then would he say right thus, without doubt:

`Whoso that builds his house all of shallows,
And pricks his blind horse over the fallows,
And suffers his wife to go seek hallows,

Is worthy to be hanged on the gallows! '
But all for naught, I set not a hawe
Of his proverbs nor of his old sawe,
Nor I would not of him corrected be.
I hate him that my vices telleth me,
And so do more, God knows, of us than I.
This made him with me mad al utterly;
I would not forbear him in no case.

Now will I say you true, by Saint Thomas,
Why that I rent out of his book a leaf,
For which he smote me so that I was deaf.

He had a book that gladly, night and day,
For his disport he would read alway.
He called it Valerie and Theofraste,
At which book he laughed always full fast.
And too there was some time a clerk at Rome,
A cardinal that called Saint Jerome,

That made a book against Jovinian,
In which book too there was Tertullian,
Crisippus, Trotula, and Heloise,
That was abbess not far from Paris,
And too the Parables of Solomon,
Ovid's Art, and book many on,
And all these were bound in one volume,
And every night and day was his custome
When he had leisure and vacation
From other worldly occupation
To read on this book of wicked wives.
He knew of them more legends and lives
Than be of good wives in the Bible.
For trust well, it is an impossible
That any clerk will speak good of wives,
But if it be of holy saints' lives,
Nor of no other woman never the more.
Who painted the lion, tel me, who?
By God! if women had written stories,
As clerks have within their oratories,
They would have written of men more wickedness
Than all the mark of Adam may redress.

The children of Mercury and Venus
Been in their workings full contrarius,
Mercury loves wisdom and science,
And Venus loves riot and dispence.
And for their diverse disposition
Each falls in other's exaltation,
And thus, God knows, Mercurie is desolate
In Pisces, where Venus is exaltat;
And Venus falls there Mercury is raised.
Therefore no woman of no clerk is praised.
The clerk, when he is old and may not do
Of Venus' works worth his old shoe,
Then sit he down, and write in his dotage
That women cannot keep their marriage.

But now to purpose, why I told thee
That I was beaten for a book, pardee.
Upon a night Jankyn, that was our sire,
Read on his book as he sat by the fire
Of Eve first, that for her wickedness
Was all mankind brought to wretchedness,
For which that Jesus Crist himself was slain,
That bought us with his heart's blood again.
Lo, here express of woman may you find,
That woman was the loss of all mankind.

Though read he me how Sampson loste his hairs,
Sleeping, his leman cut it with her shears,
Throught which treason lost he both his eyes.

Though read he me, if that I shall not lie,
Of Hercules and of his Diana,
That caused him to set himself afire.

No thing forgot he the penance and woe
That Socrates had with his wives two,
How Xanthippe cast piss upon his head.
This silly man sat still as he were dead;
He wiped his head, nomore does he say
But, 'Ere that thuder stint, comes a ray.'

Of Pasiphaë, that was the queen of Crete,

For shrewdness he thought the tale sweet-
Fye! Speak no more - it is a grissly thing -
Of her horrible lust and her liking.

Of Clytemnestra for her lechery,
That falsely made her husband for to die,
He read it with full good devotion.

He told me too for what occasion
Amphiorax at Thebes lost his life.
My husband had a legend of his wife
Eriphyle, that for an ounce of gold
Had prively unto the Greeks told
Where that her husband hid him in a place,
For which he had at Thebes'sorry grace.

Of Livia tolde he me, and of Lucia,
They both made their husbands for to die,
That one for love, that other was for hate.
Livia her husband, on an even late,
Empoisoned had, for that she was his foe.
Lucia, lecherous, loved her husband so,
That for he should always upon her think,
She gave him such a manner love-drink
That he was dead, ere it were by the morow.
And thus always husbands have sorrow.

Then told he me, how that Latomus
Complained unto his fellow Arius,
That in his garden growed such a tree,
On which he said how that his wives three
Hanged themselves, for heart despiteous.
O dear brother, ' said this Arius,
'Give me a plant of this blessed tree,
And in my garden planted it shall be.'

Of later date of wives has he read,
That some have slain their husbands in their bed,
And let her lecher dight her all the night,
When that the corpse lay in the floor upright.
And some have drive nails in their brain
While that they slept, and thus they have them slain.

Some have them give poison in their drink.
He spoke more harm than heart may bethink,
And therewithal he knew of more proverbs
Than in this world there grows grass or herbs.
'Better, ' said he, 'thy habitation
Be with a lion, or a foul dragon,
Than with a woman using for to chide.'
'Better, ' said he, 'high in the roof abide
Than with an angry wife down in the house,
They be so wicked and contrarious.
They hate that their husbands love always.'
He said, 'a woman cast her shame away
When she cast off her smock, ' and further more,
'A fair woman, but she be chaste also,
Is like a gold ring in a sow's nose.'
Who would leave, or who would suppose
The woe that in my heart was, and pine?
And when I saw he would never fine
To read on this cursed book all night,
All suddenly three leaves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he read, and eke
I with my fist so took him on the cheek,
That in our fire he role backward adown.
And he up-start as does a wood lion,
And with his fist he smote me on the head
That in the floor I lay, as I were dead.
And when he saw how still that I lay,
He was aghast, and would have fled his way,
Til at last out of my swoon I braid.
'O, hast thou slain me, false thief, ' I said,
'And for my land thus hast thou murdered me?
Ere I be dead, yet will I kiss thee.'

And near he came and kneeled fair adown,
And said, 'Deere sister Alison,
As help me God, I shall thee never smite.
That I have done, it is thyself to wite,
Forgive it me, and that I thee beseek.'
And yet again I hit him on the cheek,
And said, 'Theif, thus much am I wreke;
Now will I die, I may no longer speak.'
But at last, with much care and woe,

We fill accorded by ourselves two.
He gave me all the bridal in my hand,
To have the governance of house and land,
And of his tounge, and of his hand also,
And made him burn his book anon right though.
And when that I had gotten unto me
By mastery, all the sovereignty,
And that he said, 'My own true wife,
Do as thee lust the term of all thy life,
Keep thy honor, and keep too my estate, ' -
After that day we had never debate.
God help me so, I was to him as kind
As any wife from Denmark unto Indie,
And also true, and so was he to me.
I pray to God, that sit in magesty,
So bless his soul for his mercy dear.
Now will I say my tale, if you will hear.

Behold the words between the Summoner the Friar.

The Friar laughed when he had heard all this.-
'Now dame, ' said he, 'so have I joy or bliss,
This is a long preamble of a tale.'
And when the Summoner heard the Friar gale,
'Lo, ' said the Summoner, 'God's arms two,
A friar will entermet him everemore.
Lo good men, a fly and too a friar
Will fall in every dish and too mateer.
What speaks thou of perambulation?
What, amble, or trot, or peace, or go sit down,
Thou lettest our disport in this manner.'

'Yea, will thou so, sir Summoner? ' said the Friar,
'Now by my faith, I shall ere that I go
Tell of a summoner such a tale or two
That all the folk shall laugh in this place.'

'Now else, friar, I beshrew thy face, '
Said this Summoner, 'and I beshrew me,
But if I tell tales two or three
Of friars, ere I come to Sittingbourne,
That I shall make thy heart for to mourn

For well I know thy patience in gone.'

Oure Host cried, 'Peace, and that anon! '
And said, 'let the woman tell hir tale,
Ye fare as folk that drunk were of ale.
Do, dame, tell forth your tale, and that is best.'

'Al ready, sire, ' said she, 'right as you lest,
If I have licence of this worthy Friar.'

'Yes, dame, ' said he, 'tell forth, and I will hear.'

Here endeth the Wife of Bath her Prologue.

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Wife Of Bath's Tale (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Heere begins the Tale of the Wife of Bath

In the old days of the King Arthur,
Of which that Britons speak great honor,
All was this land filled of fairy.
The elf-queen, with her jolly company,
Danced full oft in many a green mead.
This was the old opinion, as I read;
I speak of many hundred years ago.
But now can no man see no elves more,
For now the great charity and prayers
Of limiters and other holy friars,
That search every land and every stream,
As thick as motes in the sun-beam,
Blessing halls, chambers, kitchens, bowers,
Cities, burgs, castles, high towers,
Thorps, barns, shippons, dairies -
This makes that there be no fairies.
For there as wont to walk was an elf
There walks now the limiter himself
In undermels and in mornings,
And says his matins and his holy things
As he goes in his limitation.
Women may go safely up and down.
In every bush or under every tree
There is no other incubus but he,
And he will not do them but dishonor.

And so befell that this king Arthur
Had in his house a lusty bachelor,
That on a day came riding from rivere,
And happened that, alone as he was born,
He saw a maid walking him before,
Of which maiden anon, maugre her head,
By very force, he rafte her maidenhead;
For which oppression was such clamor

And such pursuit unto the king Arthur
That damned was this knight for to be dead,
By course of law, and should have lost his head -
Peradventure such was the statute tho -
But that the queen and other ladies mo
So long prayed the king of grace
Til he his life him granted in the place,
And gave him to the queen, all at her will,
To choose whether she would him save or spill.

The queen thanks the king with all her might,
and after this thus she spoke to the knight,
when that she saw her time, upon a day:
'Thou stand yet, ' said she, 'in such array,
that of thy life yet hast thou no surety.
I grant thee life, if thou canst tell me
What thing it is that women most desire.
Beware, and keep thy neck-bone from iron!
And if thou canst not tell it anon,
yet will I give thee leave to go
A twelvemonth and a day, to seek to learn
an answer sufficient in this matter;
and surety will I have, ere that thou pace,
Thy body for to yield in this place.'

Woe was this knight, and sorrowfully he sighs;
But what! He cannot do all as he likes.
And at the last he chose him for to wend
And come again, right at the year's end,
With such answer as God would him purvey;
And takes his leave, and wends forth his way.

He seeks every house and every place
Where as he hopes for to find grace
To learn what thing women love most,
But he could not arrive in no coast
Where as he might find in this matter
Two creatures according in-fere.
Some said women love best riches,
Some said honor, some said jolliness,
Some rich array, some said lust abed,
And oft-times to be widow and wed.

Some said that our hearts be most eased
When that we be flattered and pleased.
He goes full nye the truth, I will not lie.
A man shall win us best with flattery,
And with attendance and with busyness
Be we limered, both more and less.

And some say that we love best
For to be free and do right as us lest,
And that no man reprove us of our vice,
But say that we be wise and no thing nice.
For truly there is none of us all,
If any wight will claw us on the gall,
That we'll not kick, for he says us sooth.
Assay and he shall find it that so dooth;
For, be we never so vicious within,
We will be held wise and clean of sin.

And some say that great delight have we
For to be held stable, and too secrecy,
And in one purpose steadfastly to dwell,
And not bewray things that men us tell.
But that tale is not worth a rake-steel.
Pardie, we women can nothing heal;
Witness on Midas - will you hear the tale?

Ovid, among other things small,
Said Midas had, under his long hair,
Growing upon his head two ass's ears,
The which vice he hid as he best might
Full subtly from every man's sight,
That, save his wife, there knew of it no more.
He loved her most, and trusted her also;
He prayed her that to no creature
She should tell of his disfigure.

She swore him, 'Nay'; for all this world to win,
She would not do that villainy or sin,
To make her husband have so foul a name.
She would not tell it for her own shame.
But nonetheless, she thought that she died
That she so long should a counsel hide;

She thought it swelled so sore about her heart
That needly some word she must astart;
And since she durst tell it to no man,
Down to a marsh fast by she ran -
Til she came there her heart was afire -
And as a bittern bumbles in the mire,
She laid her mouth unto the water down:
'Bewray me not, thou water, with thy sound, '
Said she; 'to thee I tell it and no more;
My husband has long asses ears two!
Now is my heart all whole; now is it out.
I might no longer keep it, out of doubt.'
Here you may see, though we a time abide,
Yet out it must; we can no counsel hide.
The remnant of the tale if you will hear,
Read Ovid, and there you may it learn.

This knight, of which my tale is specially,
When he saw he might not come thereby -
This is to say, what women love most -
Within his breast full sorrowful was the ghost.
But home he goes; he might not sojourn;
The day was come that homeward must he turn.
And in his way he happened him to ride,
In all this care, under a forest side,
Where as he saw upon a dance go
Of ladies four and twenty, and yet more;
Toward the which dance he drew full yern,
In hope that some wisdom should he learn.
But certainly, er he came fully there,
Vanished was this dance, he knew not where.
No creature saw he that bore life,
Save on the green he saw sitting a wife -
A fouler wight there may no man devise.
Against the knight this old wife did rise,
And said, 'Sir knight, here forth no lies no way.
Tell me what that you seek, by your faith!
Peradventure it may the better be;
These old folk know many things, ' said she.

'My lief mother, ' said this knight, 'certainly
I am but dead but if that I can say

What thing it is that women most desire.
Could you me wise, I would well quite your hire.'

'Plight me thy troth here in my hand, ' said she,
'The next thing that I require thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lies in thy might,
And I will tell it you ere it be night.'

'Have here my troth, ' said the knight, 'I grant.'
'Then, ' said she, 'I dare me well avaunt
Thy life is safe, for I will stand thereby;
Upon my life, the queen will say as I.
Let's see which is the proudest of them all
That wears on a kerchief or a calle
That dares say `nay' of that I shall thee teach.
Let us go forth without longer speech.'
Then round she a pistle in his ear,
And bade him to be glad and have no fear.
When they be come to the court, this knight
Said he had held his day, as he had hight,
And ready was his answer, as he said.
Full many a noble wife, and many a maid,
And many a widow, for that they be wise,
The queen herself sitting as a justice,
Assembled be, his answer for to hear;
And afterward this knight was bade appear.

To every wight commanded was silence,
And that the knight should tell in audience
What thing that worldly women love best.
This knight stood not silent as does a beast,
But to his question anon answered
With manly voice, that all the court it heard:

'My liege lady, generally, ' said he,
'Women desire to have sovereignty
As well over her husband as her love,
And for to be in mastery him above.
This is your most desire, though you me kill.
Do as you like; I am here at your will.'
In all the court nor was there wife, nor maid,
Nor widow that contraried that he said,

But said that he was worthy have his life.
And with that word up start the old wife,
Which that the knight saw sitting on the green:
'Mercy, ' said she, 'my sovereign lady queen!
Ere that your court departs, do me right.
I taught this answer unto the knight;
For which he plight me his troth there,
The first thing that I would him require
He would it do, if it lay in his might.
Before the court then pray I thee, sir knight, '
Said she, 'that thou me take unto thy wife,
For well thou know that I have kept thy life.
If I say false, say `nay', upon thy faith! '

This knight answered, 'Alas and wail away!
I know right well that such was my behest.
For God's love, as choose a new request!
Take all my goods and let my body go.'

'Nay, then, ' said she, 'I shrew us both two!
For though I be foul, and old, and poor
I would not for all the metal, nor for ore
That under earth is grave or lies above,
But if thy wife I were, and too thy love.'

'My love? ' said he, 'nay, my damnation!
Alas, that any of my nation
Should ever so foully disparaged be! '
But all for naught; the end is this, that he
Constrained was; he needs must her wed,
And takes his old wife, and goes to bed.

Now would some men say, peradventure,
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tell you the joy and all the array
That at the feast was that same day.
To which thing shortly answer I shall:
I say there was no joy nor feast at all;
There was but heaviness and much sorrow.
For privily he wedded her on morrow,
And all day after hid himself as an owl,
So woe was him, his wife looked so foul.

Great was the woe the knight had in his thought,
When he was with his wife abed brought;
He wallows and he turns to and fro.
His old wife lay smiling evermore,
And said, 'O dear husband, benedicite!
Fareth every knight thus with his wife as you?
Is this the law of king Arthur's house?
Is every knight of his so dangerous?
I am your own love and your wife;
I am she which that saved has your life,
And, certain, yet did I you never unright;
Why fare you thus with me this first night?
You fare like a man had lost his wit.
What is my guilt? For God's love, tell it,
And it shall be amended, if I may.'

'Amended?' said this knight, 'Alas, nay, nay!
It will not be amended never more.
Thou art so loathly, and so old also,
And thereto comes of so low a kind,
That little wonder is though I wallow and wind.
So would God my heart would burst! '

'Is this, ' said she, 'the cause of your unrest? '

'Yes, certainly, ' said he, 'no wonder is.'

'Now, sir, ' said she, 'I could amend all this,
If that me like, ere it were days three,
So well you might bare you unto me.

'But, for you speak of such gentleness
As is descended out of old riches,
That therefore should you be gentlemen,
Such arrogance is not worth a hen.
Look who that is most virtuous always,
Private and apart, and most intended ay
To do the gentle deeds that he can;
Take him for the greatest gentleman.
Christ will we claim of him our gentleness,
Not of our elders for their old riches.

For though they give us all their heritage,
For which we claim to be of high parage,
Yet may they not bequeath for no thing
To none of us their virtuous living,
That made them gentlemen called be,
And bade us follow them in such degree.

'Well can the wise poet of Florence,
That called Dante, speak in this sentence.
Lo, in such manner rime is Dante's speech:
` Full seldom up rises by his branches small
Prowess of man, for God, of his goodness,
Will that of him we claim our gentleness;
For of elders may we no thing claim
But temporal things, that man may hurt and maim.

'Too everyone knows this as well as I,
If gentleness were planted naturally
Unto a certain lineage down the line,
Private and apart then would they never fine
To do of gentleness the fair office;
They might do no villainy or vice.

'Take fire and bear it in the darkest house
Between this and the mount of Caucasus,
And let men shut the doors and go thence;
Yet will the fire as fair lie and burn
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
His office natural always will it hold,
Up peril of my life, til that die.

'Here may you see well how that gentility
Is not annexed to possession,
Since folk do not their operation
Always, as does the fire, lo, in his kind.
For, God it knows, men may well often find
A lord's son do shame and villainy;
And he that will have praise of his gentility,
For he was born of a gentle house
And had his elders noble and virtuous,
And will himself do no gentle deeds
Nor follow his gentle ancestor that dead is,

He is not gentle, be he duke or earl,
For villainous sinful deeds make a churl.
For gentleness is not but renown
Of thy ancestors, for their high bounty,
Which is a strange thing to thy person.
Thy gentleness comes from God alone.
Then comes our very gentleness of grace;
It was no thing bequeathed us with our place.

'Think how noble, as says Valerius,
Was that same Tullius Hostillius,
That out of poverty rose to high noblesse.
Read Seneca, and read too Boethius;
There shall you see express that it no doubt is
That he is gentle that does gentle deeds.
And therefore, lief husband, I thus conclude:
Although it that my ancestors were rude,
Yet may the high God, and so hope I,
Grant me grace to live virtuously.
Then am I gentle, when that I begin
To live virtuously and waive sin.

'And whereas you of poverty me reprove,
The high God, on whom that we believe,
In willful poverty chose to live his life.
And certainly every man, maiden, or wife
May understand that Jesus, heaven's king,
Would not choose a vicious living.
Glad poverty is an honest thing, certainly;
This will Seneca and other clerks say.
Whoso that halt him paid of his poverty,
I hold him rich, all had he not a shirt.
He that covets is a poor wight,
For he would have that is not in his might;
But he that naught has, nor covets to have,
Is rich, although you hold him but a knave.
Very poverty, it sings properly;
Juvenal says of poverty merrily:
'The poor man, when he goes by the way,
Before the thieves he may sing and play.'
Poverty is hateful good and, as I guess,
A full great bringer out of business;

A great amender too of sapience
To him that takes it in patience.
Poverty is this, although it seem elenge:
Possession that no wight will challenge.
Poverty full oft, when a man is low,
Makes his God and too himself to know.
Poverty a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Through which he may his very friends see.
And therefore, sir, since that I not you grieve,
Of my poverty no more you me reprove.

'Now, sir, of old you reprove me;
And certain, sir, though no authority
Were in no book, you gentles of honor
Say that men should an old wight do favor
And call him father, for your gentleness;
And authors shall I find, as I guess.

'Now there you say that I am foul and old,
Than dread you not to be a cuckold;
For filth and old, also moot I thee,
Be great wardens upon chastity.
But nonetheless, since I know your delight,
I shall fulfill your worldly appetite.

'Choose now, ' said she, 'one of these things two:
To have me foul and old til that I die,
And be to you a true, humble wife,
And never you displease in all my life,
Or else you will have me young and fair,
And take your adventure of the repair
That shall be to your house because of me,
Or in some other place, may well be.
Now choose yourself, whichever that you like.'

This knight advises him and sore sighs,
But at the last he said in this manner:
'My lady and my love, and wife so dear,
I put me in your wise governance;
Choose yourself which may be most pleasance
And most honor to you and me also.
I do not force the whether of the two,

For as it like, it suffices me.'

'Then have I get of you mastery, ' said she,
'Since I may choose and govern as I lest? '

'Yes, certain, wife, ' said he, 'I hold it best.'

'Kiss me, ' said she, 'we are no longer wroth,
For, by my troth, I will be to you both -
This is to say, yes, both fair and good.
I pray to God that I may starve wood
But I to you be also good and true
As ever was wife, since that the world was new.
And but I be tomorrow as fair to seen
As any lady, empress, or queen,
That is between the east and too the west,
Do with my life and death right as you lest.
Cast up the curtain, look how that it is.'

And when the knight saw verily all this,
That she so fair was, and so young thereto,
For joy he held her in his arms two.
His heart bathed in a bath of bliss.
A thousand times a row he did her kiss,
And she obeyed him in everything
That might do him pleasure or liking.

And thus they live unto their lives' end
In perfect joy; and Jesus Christ us send
Husbands meek, young, and fresh abed,
And grace to outlive them that we wed;
And too I pray Jesus shorten their lives
That not will be governed by their wives;
And old and angry niggards of dispense,
God send them soon very pestilence!

Heere endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe

Forrest Hainline

Geoffrey Chaucer, To Rosamund - (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

Madame, you be of all beauty shrine
As far as circled is the mappamund,
For as the crystal glorious you shine,
And like ruby be your cheeks round.
Therewith you be so merry and so jocund,
That at a revel when that I see you dance,
It is an ointment unto my wound,
Though you to me not do no dalliance.

For though I weep of tears full a tyne,
Yet may that woe my heart not confound;
Your seemly voice, that you so small out-twine
Makes my thought in joy and bliss abound.
So courteously I go, with love bound,
That to myself I say, in my penance,
Suffiseth me to love you, Rosamund,
Though you to me not do no dalliance.

No never pike wallowed in galantine
As I in love am wallowed and am wound,
For which full oft I of myself divine
That I am truly Tristan the second.
My love may not refreyd be nor a found
I burn aye in amorous pleasure.
Do what you list, I will your thrall be found,
Though you to me not do no dalliance.

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Forrest Hainline

Ghost Lights

Lights like ghosts dancing
Along the span of the bridge
Morning fog's magic

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God Calls

God calls us by name
As with Mary at the tomb
We are known and loved

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God Does Not Write Books

God does not write books
But God's hot breath inspires our
Poems, songs and cool jazz

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God's Anger

I looked
At formless earth
And the empty heavens
The mountains were quaking with God's
Anger

(2007)

Forrest Hainline

God's Colors

Rose breasted grosbeak
Indigo bunting, goldfinch
God colors the world

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God's Image

You will make your world
In the image of your God
World of love or hate

(2009)

Forrest Hainline

God's Love

God so loves the world
Even me - God's love is the
Very air we breathe

Forrest Hainline

God's Presence

Whether bidden or
Not bidden, God is present
Here, now, among us

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God's Shadow

Walk always with God
God's shadow as my shadow
My shadow is God's

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God-Shaped Hole

My heart's God-shaped hole
An empty longing, a space
Only God can fill

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Geoffrey Chaucer, The Reeve's Prologue (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

The Reeve's Prologue

Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation

When folk had laughed at this nice case
Of Absolon and handy Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they said,
But for the most part they laughed and played.
Nor at this tale I saw no man him grieve,
But it were only Oswald the Reeve.
Because he was of carpenter's craft,
A little ire is in his heart left;
He began to grouch, and blamed it a lite.

'So thrive, " said he, "full well could I thee quite
With blearing of a proud miller's eye,
If that me list speak of ribaldry.
But I am old; I like not play for age;
Grass time is done; my fodder is now forage;
This white top writes my old years;
My heart is also moldy as my hairs,

But if I fare as does an open-ers-
That same fruit is ever longer the worse,
Til it be rotten in rubbish or in straw.
We old men, I dread, so fare we:
Til we be rotten, can we not be ripe;
We dance always while the world will pipe.
For in our will there sticks ever a nail,
To have a hoar head and a green tail,
As has a leek; for though our might be gone,
Our will desires folly ever in one.
For when we may not do, then will we speak;
Yet in our ashes old is fire raked.

'Four gleeds have we, which I shall devise -
Avaunting, lying, anger, covetise;
These four sparks belong unto eld.

Our old limbs may well be unwweld,
But will shall not fail, that is sooth.
And yet I have always a colt's tooth,
As many years as it is passed hence
Since that my tap of life began to run.
For surely, when I was born, anon
Death drew the tap of life and let it gone,
And ever since has to the tap run
Til that almost all empty is the ton.
The stream of life now drops on the chimb.
The silly tongue may well ring and chime
Of wretchedness that passed is full yore;
With old folk, save dotage, there is no more! '

When that our Host had heard this sermoning,
He began to speak as lordly as a king.
He said, 'What amounts all this wit?
What! shall we speak all day of holy writ?
The devil made a reeve for to preach,
Or of a souter a shipman or a leche.
Say forth thy tale, and tarry not the time.
Lo Deptford, and it is have-way prime!
Lo Greenwich, there many a shrew is in!
It were all time thy tale to begin.'

'Now, sires, ' said this Oswald the Reeve,
'I pray you all that you'll not grieve,
Though I answer, and somedeal set his houve;
For lawful is with force force of-shouve.
'This drunk Miller has told us here
How that beguiled was a carpenter,
Peradventure in scorn, for I am one.
And, by your leave, I shall him quite anon;
Right in his churl's terms will I speak.
I pray to God his neck might to-break;
He can well in my eye see a stalk,
But in his own he cannot see a balke.'

Forrest Hainline

Good News

Blind don't see; lame limp
The poor still impoverished
Good news nonetheless

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Forrest Hainline

Grace

Keep grace. Savor grace.
All talent is grace, all skill
All drive – all is grace

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Forrest Hainline

Haiku / Prayer

It's years since I've prayed
But maybe that's not so true
Life loved is prayer

Forrest Hainline

Haiku For Bill B

Face lifted too tight
Bleached orange pallor; patina
Of moral decay

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Haiku For David G

Little Fauntleroy
With your whippi dip hair and
Always so foppish

Forrest Hainline

Haiku For Riley

In Spring flowers bloom
Lifting the dark from winter
Just like Riley's smile

Forrest Hainline

Forrest Hainline

Hair

Hair flies as she runs
Her soul, her identity
Bobbing with each stride

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Halo

Atop the marine
Layer, morning light halos
The Golden Gate Bridge

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Harder

No matter how hard
I fell or how much I loved
I love you harder

Forrest Hainline

Head Wind

It's miserable
Running into a headwind
The fog cold and damp

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Forrest Hainline

Heavy

Your hand
Heavy on me
My bones wither away
Until I acknowledge my guilt
And sin

Forgive
Deliver me
Instruct me in your ways
Preserve me, guide me away from
Trouble

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Help

Help me
My troubled heart
Seeks comfort sweet Jesus
In your promise to listen and
Help us

Forrest Hainline

Help Me

Help me, help me Lord
You know what I need, I
Don't. Help me, help me

Forrest Hainline

Holding Hands

You know you love me
But you can't recall my name
So we just hold hands

Forrest Hainline

I Will Hold Your Hand

I will hold your hand
For no good reason at all
Except to touch you

Forrest Hainline

Illumine

My heart was heavy
Darkness held my soul until
You illumined me

Forrest Hainline

Infirmities

Age brings
Infirmities
The nagging reminders
That I'm not done answering death
With life

Forrest Hainline

Internal Journey

I never traveled
So far into me until
I journeyed with you

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Forrest Hainline

Introibo

Introibo ad
Altare Dei – God who
Gives youth to my joy

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Invited Silence

Invited silence
Play me your symphony of
Imagination

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Forrest Hainline

January Frost Delay - Pete Dye Course, Ranch Mirage California

Steam from the bunkers,
Rising from the ponds. Snow-capped
Majestic mountains.

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Forrest Hainline

Jesuit Prayer

If you look for God
Take a long look at the real
For God is all around you

Forrest Hainline

Jesus Prayer

Jesus

Healer heal me

Jesus teacher teach me

Jesus confessor forgive me

My sins

Forrest Hainline

Journey (2)

I never traveled
So far into me until
I journeyed with you

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Forrest Hainline

Kiss Kiss

Kiss kiss kiss I will
Again and again hold you
Touch you taste you kiss

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Forrest Hainline

Knowing The Future

To know the future
Would empty one's life of hope
And all industry

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Lady Of Guadalupe

Virgin

De las Rosas

Eres nuestra un

De las Rosas siempre de

La mi

Forrest Hainline

Last Page

Silence

You can't forget

Like turning the last page

Of a book you love like it's an

Old friend

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Late Summer Michigan Thunderstorm

The sky opens up
And sends a wall of water
To the thirsty earth

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Listen

Listen

To God's heartbeat

in our brothers, sisters,

In our cousin animals, in

The rocks

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Listen (Cinquain)

Listen

To God's heartbeat

In our brothers, sisters

In our cousin animals, in

The trees

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Listen (Fibonacci)

Listen

God

God's heartbeat

Listen to God

God's heartbeat in the trees

Listen to God in our brothers, sisters, cousins

In our cousin animals, in the rocks, in the streams, listen to God

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Look Up At The Stars

Look up at the stars
If God did not order them
Then order is God

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Love

Although
I speak in tongues
Of women and angels
I'm just sounding brass and cymbals
Without
Love, love
That has in mind
No evil, and sees as
A child sees, with faith to move the
Mountains

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Love - Defined

When I
Say I love you
I mean I'll let you see
My secret heart and share with you
My dreams

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Love Sign

Make me holy Lord
Let me walk in righteousness
A sign of your love

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Loving Again

Love lost

Loving again

In the middle of life

A surprise gift of finding each

Other

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Make Straight (John 1: 23)

Make straight
The Lord's highway
Don't meander about
Missing God as you wander to
And fro

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Marriage

Marriage

Lifts the spirit

A subtle work of art

That incarnates the human heart's

Desire

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Marriage (For Joe And Emily)

Marriage
Lifts the spirit
A subtle work of art
That incarnates the human heart's
Desire
Comfort
One another
In sadness and trials
Be together in dreaming all
Your dreams

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Marriage Kiss

Marriage
Deserves a kiss
Each morning and again
No matter how much stress you face
At night

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Meander

Was Isaiah wrong
Don't we find God best if we
Meander about

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Merciless Beauty, Geoffrey Chaucer (Forrest Hainline's Minimalist Translation)

I. CAPTIVITY

Your two eyes will slay me suddenly
I may the beauty of them not sustain,
So wounded, hit throughout my heart keen.

And but your word will heal hastily
My heart's wound, while that hit is green,
Your two eyes will slay me suddenly
I may the beauty of them not sustain,

Upon my truth I say you faithfully,
That you've been of my life's death the queen;
For with my death the truth shall be seen.
Your two eyes will slay me suddenly
I may the beauty of them not sustain,
So wounded, hit throughout my heart keen.

II. REJECTION

So has your beauty from your heart chased
Pity, that it avails me not to complain;
For Danger holds your mercy in his chain.

Guiltless my death thus have you purchased;
I say you truly, I need not to faint;
So has your beauty from your heart chased
Pity, that it avails me not to complain.

Alas! that nature has in you compassed
So great beauty; that no man may attain
To mercy, though he starves for the pain.
So has your beauty from your heart chased
Pity, that it avails me not to complain.
For Danger holds your mercy in his chain.

III. ESCAPE

Since I from love escaped am so fat,
I never think to be in his prison lean;
Since I am free, I count him not a bene.

He may answer, and say this or that;
I do not force, I speak right as I mean.

 Since I from love escaped am so fat,
 I never think to be in his prison lean;

Love has my name stricken out of his slate,
And he is stricken out of my books clean
For evermore; there's no other mean.

 Since I from love escaped am so fat,
 I never think to be in his prison lean;
 Since I am free, I count him not a bene.

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Metanoia

Metanoia. Change
Your heart, your mind, your spirit.
Your soul now reborn.

(2009)

Forrest Hainline

Monsters

When you fight monsters
You become the monster fought
The abyss beckons

(2009)

Forrest Hainline

Morning

Against the Eastern
Sky, morning light springs Westward
New day, renewed hope

(2009)

Forrest Hainline

Morning After Snow

Morning after snow
The world is quiet except
For one crow cawing

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Morning Fog

Damp gray morning fog
Lies heavy on the City
Pushing back the sun

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Morning Hope

Darkness does not last
There is always the morning
Bringing light and hope.

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Morning Kiss

Morning lifts the fog
Kiss by kiss as the sun warms
The waking City

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Morning Light

Sun just low enough
To shine beneath my bill cap
Morning light, bring peace

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Morning Run

Early morning run;
Dawn breaking. Breath taking life
For a time from death

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My I

My I
Should be an eye
That opens to the world
Not the I solipsisticly
Enclosed

Forrest Hainline

My Light (Psalm 27)

My light
My salvation
Lord, the strength of my life
There is no one of whom I am
Afraid
Though war
Rise against me
I put my trust in God
The Lord's goodness gives comfort to
My heart

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New Year

Welcome the New Year.
Are we forgiven the past?
Act as if we are.

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Old Coins

There is wisdom in
Old coins - touched by much sorrow
And some happiness

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Open

Open our eyes to
See your signs and open our
Hearts to follow them

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Open Your Eyes

Open your eyes
Signs are there to see
Open your heart
Signs are there to follow

Open your ears
For the Word that is before any word
For the Word that is after every word
For the Word that is within every word

For the silent Word heard over forty days and nights
In the desert
For the Word in the wind
For the Word before the wind and after the wind
For the sound of the Word spoken in silence
Before the beginning

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Peaches

Peaches in a bowl
Too tempting not to eat, but
I saved one for you

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Pelicans

Water smooth as glass

Pelicans in formation

Morning on the Bay

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Perfect Enemy

Perfect

Is enemy

Of the good, stealing our

Enjoyment of life's multitude

Pleasures

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Pinch Yourself

When we're
Used to something
We're exiled from our life
So don't go to sleep - pinch yourself
Awake

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Poem For My Mother

Mother

You shaped my life

Gave me your gift of faith

Forged ties of family, loving

And strong

(2007)

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Poetry

Poetry is the
Divination of spirit
In the things of sense

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Prayer (Cinquain)

Dear God
Years since I've prayed -
Yet birds and light and love
Are holy - life lived fully is
Prayer

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Prayer For Health

God our Mother - God
Of healing and renewal
Restore us to health

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Prayer For Help

Help me. Help me Lord
I don't know what I need. You
Do. Help me. Help me.

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Presence

Live in the present
Enjoy life as you live it
Not in retrospect

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Presidio Parrots

Parrots noisily
Screaming from the tops of the
Presidio trees

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Promise

Jesus

You promised us

The ear of Your Father

When we use Your Name to ask for

His help

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Prophets

There are no prophets
There's human wisdom only
God does not write rules

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Psalm 001

Happy
Not to be chaff
That the wind blows away
But to delight in the Lord's law
Upright

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Psalm 002

Be wise
All you rulers
Tremble before the Lord
Your nations are in an uproar
Be warned

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Psalm 003

Rise up
God set me free
Protect me as a shield
Deliver me Lord, answer me
Bless me

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Psalm 004

Answer

When I call You

Oh God, my defender

You gladden my heart with peace and

Safety

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Psalm 005

Give ear
To my words Lord
Gladden me with refuge
Defend with your favor as with
A shield

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Psalm 006

Rebuke

Me not O Lord

I am weak; pity me

Hear my weeping supplication

Save me

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Psalm 008

Little

Less than angels

And adorned with glory

You gave us mastery of all

Your works

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Psalm 009

Rejoice
With your whole heart
The Lord maintains your cause
Hears your cries, and remembers the
Oppressed

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Psalm 010

Why stand
So far from me
In my time of trouble
When will you listen Lord and give
Justice

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Psalm 011

Wicked

Men bend their bows

Fit arrows to the string

They shoot from ambush at the true

Of heart

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Psalm 012

They prowl
On ev'ry side
The boastful and wicked
Ev'ry one speaks falsely with his
Neighbor

Cut out
Their proud false tongues
So the poor can be heard
As they cry out in misery
Hear them

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Psalm 013

Psalm 13

How long?

Did you forget?

Why do you stay hidden?

Look and answer me because I

Trust you

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Psalm 014

The fool
Says there's no God
As if we made all this
Or it's here by chance under our
Control

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Psalm 015

No guile
Upon his tongue
No evil to his friend
In your holy tabernacle
Blameless

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Psalm 016

I take
Refuge in you
My Lord, my good, my cup
And portion. Night after night you
Teach me.

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Psalm 017

Weigh me
Melt my heart down
Summon me and judge me
My footsteps shall not stumble in
Your path

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Psalm 018

Let me
Stand firm on high
Sure-footed like a deer
The Lord's words my rock, my shield, my
Refuge

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Psalm 019

Perfect
Is the Lord's law
It revives the spirit
And to the innocent imparts
Wisdom

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Psalm 020

The Lord
Will answer us
In our day of trouble
Send help from his holy place when
We call

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Psalm 021

Blessings

Prosperity

Crown us as with rare gold

Our honor and victory your

Splendor

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Psalm 022

My God
Why forsake me
Why do you not answer
Trouble is near and there is none
To help

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Psalm 023

Shepherd

I shall not want

You give me green pastures

In which to graze, and still waters

To drink

Evil

I shall not fear

Even in death's shadow

For you, your rod and your staff are

With me

Anoint

My head with oil

And overflow my cup

Follow me with your goodness and

Mercy

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Psalm 024

The earth
Is the Lord's home
We dwell here as his guest
Lift up O gates to the King of
Glory

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Psalm 025

To you
I lift my soul
I put my trust in You
Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me
Your paths

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Psalm 026

Your love
Before my eyes
My hands are innocent
That I may proceed around Your
Altar

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Psalm 027

My light

My salvation

Lord, the strength of my life

Facing wars and armies I'm not

Afraid

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Psalm 028

My rock
I call to You
Dance with me when I dance
Sing with me when my heart sings songs
Of joy

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Psalm 029

Worship

God's holiness

God upon the water

God in the forests, stripping bare

The trees

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Psalm 030

I will
Exalt you Lord
Because you lift me up
And do not let my enemies
Triumph

I cried
You restored me
You brought me from the dead
Lit life's light in the darkness of
Despair

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Psalm 031

Be my
Rock and Castle
Be my crag and stronghold
When my life is wasted with grief
Hear me

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Psalm 032

Your hand
Heavy on me
My bones wither away
Until I acknowledge my guilt
And sin

Forgive
Deliver me
Instruct me in your ways
Preserve me, guide me away from
Trouble

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Psalm 033

Rejoice

Play a new song

A fanfare for the Lord

Whose voice brought forth earth and heaven

Singing

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Psalm 034

Proclaim

The Lord's Greatness

Taste and see His goodness

The Lord is near to the broken

Hearted

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Psalm 035

Take up
Shield and armor
Draw your sword; bar the way
Against all those who pursue me
Save me

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Psalm 036

Your folk
Take their refuge
Under your wings' shadow
They drink from the river of your
Delight

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Psalm 037, Part I

Be still
Before the Lord
Wait patiently for him
Refrain from anger, leave rage
Alone

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Psalm 037, Part II

The Lord
Directs our steps
We shall not fall headlong
Even though we are awkward and
Stumble

(2011)

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Psalm 038

Soundness

Left my body

There's no health in my flesh

My wounds fester because I'm

Foolish

O Lord

Don't forsake me

Do not stay far from me

With sorrow, I will confess all

My sins.

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Psalm 039

Put a
Mouth muzzle on
Don't offend with rash words
We are all - both good and wicked -
Wind puffs

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Psalm 040

I wait
Upon the Lord
He makes my footing sure
Upon a high cliff I will sing
His song

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Psalm 041

The Lord
Will deliver
Those who help the needy
He will preserve them in time of
Trouble

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Psalm 042

As deer
Long for water
My soul longs for you God
My tears are my food as I search
For God

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Psalm 043

Defend
My cause against
An ungodly people
Send out your light, lead me to your
Dwelling

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Psalm 044

Awake

Are you sleeping?

Have you hidden your face?

For the sake of your steadfast love

Arise

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Psalm 045

Grace flows
From your sweet lips
Our enemies lose heart
Ride and conquer in the cause of
Justice

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Psalm 046

God is
Refuge and strength
When waters rage and foam
And mountains topple into the
Sea's depths

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Psalm 047

Clap hands
Shout to your God
Sing praises to God, sing
For the Lord is King over all
The earth

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Psalm 048

Your praise,
Like your Name, God
Reaches to the world's end
The cities rejoice because of your
Judgments

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Psalm 049

We can
Never ransom
The price of our life. God
Alone will snatch me from the grasp
Of death

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Psalm 050

I know
Every bird
And creature of the fields
Call upon me in the day of
Trouble

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Psalm 051

Mercy

On me, O God

In your loving kindness

Purge me from my sin and I shall

Be pure

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Psalm 052

Your tongue
A sharp razor
Your words hurt - Would that God
Root you out of the land of the
Living

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Psalm 053

The fool
Says in his heart
There is no God. And yet
God looks down from heaven upon
Us all

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Psalm 054

For you
Have rescued me
From every trouble
My eyes have seen the ruin of
My foes

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Psalm 055

Hear my
Prayer O God
Listen and answer me
O God, bring me safely back from
Battle

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Psalm 056

I put
My trust in you
Whenever I'm afraid
You rescue me and keep me from
Stumbling

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Psalm 057

Psalm 57

O God
Be merciful
I take refuge in you
Until this time of trouble has
Gone by

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Psalm 058

Break their
Teeth in their mouths
Pull the fangs of lions
We will bathe in the blood of the
Wicked

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Psalm 059

To you
O God my strength
My stronghold, my refuge
I will sing to you in time of
Trouble

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Psalm 060

O God
You cast us off
You broke us in anger
Forgive us; save those who are dear
To you

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Psalm 061

O God

Listen to me

From the ends of the earth

I call you with heaviness in

My heart

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Psalm 062

My soul
In silence waits
For God alone - my rock
Safety, honor, salvation and
Refuge

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Psalm 063

O God
You are my God
Eagerly I seek you
My soul thirsts for you as in a
Dry land

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Psalm 064

They shoot
Without warning
They ambush the blameless
Protect my life from fear of the
Wicked

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Psalm 065

You still
The roaring waves
You provide for the earth
You soften the ground and bless its
Increase

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Psalm 066

Take joy
In God you lands
All the earth praises you
Bows down before you and sings out
Your name

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Psalm 067

May God
Be merciful
May God give his blessings
And may all the earth stand in awe
Of him

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Psalm 068

Let the
Righteous be glad
And rejoice before God
God of wonder in the holy
Places

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Psalm 069

They gave
Me gall to eat
And when I was thirsty
They gave me only vinegar
To drink

Hide not
Your face from me
Be swift and answer me
I am in distress sinking in
Deep mire

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Psalm 070

Let those
Who would kill me
Be ashamed and dismayed
Those who gloat on my misfortune
Disgraced

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Psalm 071

My God
Deliver me
From the evildoer
From the hands and clutches of the
Wicked

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Psalm 072

For he
Shall deliver
And defend the needy
The poor and oppressed who have no
Helper

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Psalm 073

I am
Always with you
You hold me by my hand
Whom have I in heaven but you
But you

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Psalm 074

There are
No signs for us
There is no prophet left
Yet yours is the day and also
The night

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Psalm 075

We give
you thanks O God
We call upon your name
And all your wonderful deeds we
Declare

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Psalm 076

O God
At your rebuke
Horse and rider lie stunned.
Who can stand before you when you're
Angry

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Psalm 077

I cry
Aloud to God
I cry and God hears me
In my day of trouble I seek
The Lord

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Psalm 078

He split
Open the sea
Made water stand like walls
All night He led them with a glow
Of fire

He rained
Manna on them
Gave them grain from heaven
So God gave mortals the bread of
Angels

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Psalm 079

Spare those
Condemned to die
Remember not our sins
Let your compassion be swift to
Meet us

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Psalm 080

Restore

O God of hosts

So we never turn away

Show the light of your countenance

Save us

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Psalm 081

With joy
To God our strength
Raise song, timbrel and lyre
Open our mouths wide and you will
Fill us

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Psalm 082

How long
They do not know
Nor do they understand
All the foundations of earth are
Shaken

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Psalm 083

O God
Hold not your peace
They destroy your people
They plot to destroy those whom you
Protect

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Psalm 084

The Lord
Is sun and shield
Giving grace and glory
And water to the desolate
Places

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Psalm 085

Show us
Your mercy, Lord,
And grant us salvation
Forgive your people and wipe out
Our sins

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Psalm 086

In my
Time of trouble
I will call upon you
For you, O LORD, give me help and
Comfort

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Psalm 087

On the
Holy Mountain
Stands the City of God
Where singers sing and dancers dance
Refreshed

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Psalm 089

You rule
The raging sea
And still the surging waves
Yours are the heavens and the earth
Also

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Psalm 090

Before
Mountains were raised
Or the land and earth born
From ages you are our God and
Refuge

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Psalm 091

He shall
Give his angels
To keep you in your ways
Lest you should dash your foot against
A stone

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Psalm 092

Give thanks
It's a good thing
Lord your acts make me glad
The works of your hand make me shout
For joy

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Psalm 093

Waters

Have lifted up

Have lifted up their voice

Lifted their pounding waves to praise

The Lord

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Psalm 094

Often

My foot has slipped

But your love upheld me

Cares fill me but your comfort cheers

My soul

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Psalm 095

Let us
Sing to the Lord
The Rock of Salvation
In His hand are the earth's caverns
And hills

The sea
For He made it
His hands molded dry land
Let us bow before the Lord our
Maker

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Psalm 097

Rejoice

The Lord is King

Righteousness and justice

Are the foundations of his throne

Give thanks

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Psalm 098

Shout with
Joy to the Lord
Lift up your voice in song
All you lands and seas and rivers
Rejoice

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Psalm 099

Proclaim
The Lord's greatness
Upon his holy hill
Proclaim the greatness of the Lord
Our God

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Psalm 100

Joyful

Be in the Lord

Serve the Lord with gladness

And come before his presence with

A song

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Psalm 101

I will
Sing of mercy
I will sing of justice
Walk with me that my course will be
Blameless

Forrest Hainline

Psalm 102

O Lord
Hear my prayer
Hear my cries before you
Hide not your face in my time of
Trouble

Forrest Hainline

Psalm 103

Psalm 103

Know that
We are but dust
Our days are like the grass
We flourish like a flower of
The field

But the
Lord's good mercy
Will endure forever
And righteousness on my children's
Children

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Psalm 104

Springs flow
And bring forth food
Wine to gladden our hearts
Oil to cheer us - manifold are
Your works

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Psalm 105

They asked
And quails appeared
You gave them heaven's bread
And made water flow from the dry
places

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Psalm 106

He dried
Up the Red Sea
He led them through the deep
The good Lord's mercy endures for
Ever

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Psalm 107

Cry out
In your trouble
The Lord's mercy endures
And will deliver you from your
Distress

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Psalm 108

For your
Loving kindness
Is greater than heaven
And your faithfulness reaches to
The clouds

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Psalm 109

Fight me
Without a cause
Repay evil for good
Despite their hatred I will pray
For them

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Psalm 110

Like dew
From morning's womb
Have I begotten you
Princely state has been yours from your
Birthday

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Psalm 111

I give
Thanks to the Lord
Who's full of compassion
And whose righteousness endures for
Ever

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Psalm 112

Happy
Who fear the Lord
Wealth will be in their house
And their righteousness will last for
Ever

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Psalm 113

Let the
Name of the Lord
Be blessed for evermore
From the rise of the sun until
It sets

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Psalm 114

Tremble

At God's presence

Who turned rock to water

And turned flint-stone into a spring

Flowing

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Psalm 115

The Lord
Is help and shield
Earth's maker and heaven's
May the Lord increase you and your
Children

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Psalm 116

I love
The Lord who has
Heard my supplication
Who inclines his ear to me when
I call

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Psalm 117

Praise God
All you peoples
For his loving kindness
And faithfulness that endures for
Ever

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Psalm 118

The Lord
Is at my side,
Therefore I will not fear
Give thanks for strength and song for he
Is good

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Psalm 119

Happy
Are they who walk
In the law of the Lord
Whose law delights me more than all
Riches

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Psalm 120

Troubled

I called the Lord

I called and he answered

Save me from my enemies - bring

Us peace

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Psalm 121

The Lord
Watches over
Your going out and coming
And gives shade so the sun will not
Strike you

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Psalm 122

Peace be
Within your walls
And quietness within
Your towers. I will seek to do
You good

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Psalm 123

To you
I lift my eyes
Have mercy upon us
We have had more than enough of
Contempt

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Psalm 124

Our help
Is in the Lord
Who made heaven and earth
He will keep us from the raging
Waters

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Psalm 125

Those who
Trust in the Lord
Are like mountains unmoved
Show your goodness Lord to those true
Of heart

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Psalm 126

The Lord
Has done great things
And we are glad indeed
Those who go out weeping return
With joy

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Psalm 127

Children

Are the Lord's gift

Build your home with the Lord

Stand watch with the Lord over your

City

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Psalm 129

Greatly
They oppressed me
But they have not prevailed
The Lord has cut the cords of the
Wicked

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Psalm 130

Out of
The depths I call
Heed my supplication
Hear my voice and redeem me from
My sins

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Psalm 131

O Lord

I am not proud

I am still and quiet

Like a child upon its mother's

Warm breast

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Psalm 132

Go to
God's dwelling place
Let us fall on our knees
And let God's faithful people sing
With joy

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Psalm 133

How good
And pleasant when
Brothers live together
In unity - like fine oil or
Fresh dew

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Psalm 135

Praise the
Name of the Lord
For the Lord gives justice
And shows compassion to all his
Servants

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Psalm 136

To the
God of heaven
Give thanks for he is good
And his mercy will endure for
Ever

He made
The sun for day
The moon and stars for night
And his mercy will endure for
Ever

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Psalm 137

We wept
Sat down and wept
By Babylon's waters
How can we sing the Lord's song on
This soil

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Psalm 138

When called
You answered me
O Lord I sing your praise
Though I walk in trouble you keep
Me safe

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Psalm 139

You know
My sitting down
You know my rising up
Darkness and light to you are both
Alike

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Psalm 140

Keep me
From the wicked
From violent evil
And from those determined to trip
Me up

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Psalm 141

O Lord
I call to you
Hear my voice when I call
Let my prayer be as incense in
Your sight

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Psalm 143

I spread
My hands to you
My soul like thirsty land
I trust You to show me the road
To walk

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Psalm 144

Why should
You care for us
We are but mere mortals
Like a puff of wind or passing
Shadow

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Psalm 145

Uphold

All those who fall

Lift those who are bowed down

Give us the food we need in due

Season

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Psalm 146

The Lord
Opens blind eyes
Sets the prisoners free
And gives justice to those who are
Oppressed

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Psalm 148

Praise him

You shining stars

Angels, sun, moon, waters

Fire, sun, snow, fog, tempest wind - doing

His will

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Psalm 149

Praise his
Name in the dance
Praise with timbrel and harp
Hallelujah! Sing the Lord a
New song

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Psalm 150

Praise God
In his temple
With timbrel, strings and pipe
Let everything that has breath
Praise him

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Quicken

The phosphorescence
Of chaos will quicken your
Imagination

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Radiant

Sun shines radiant
Beams through the marine layer
Hosanna morning

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Rain

Interminable

Rain saturating the ground

Dampening the soul

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Ranger Rick

Un-man

Me now Dear God

I will whine, crab and cry

Dissemble and invent, posture

And lie

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Recalling Reading Thomas Hardy As A Young Man

Thomas Hardy -
so touched me when I was young
I took my copy of Jude the Obscure
and threw it against a wall so hard
the pages all exploded off the spine.
How passionate that young man. And now.
Remembering. Not a bad idea for a poem. . . .

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Reflection

Left myself behind
To find myself reflected
In eyes that see me

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Rejoice

Rejoice

Play a new song

A fanfare for the Lord

Whose voice brought forth earth and heaven

Singing

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Reluctant Sunrise

Mist shrouds the morning
In sepulchral gray. Sunrise
Hidden. Reluctant.

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Remake The World

Knowing God is love
Remake the world in God's image
Filling earth with joy

By: Forrest Hainline

Forrest Hainline

Remembering My Wife's Pregnancy

Your belly swollen
With new life. Your breasts swollen
With God's abundance.

Forrest Hainline

Re-Seeing Starlings In Winter

Never
Thought of starlings
As acrobats swinging
Just as noisy dirty vagrants
Fouling
The air
Spoiling the ground
Then Mary Oliver
Saw in their winter roost something
Noble

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Restless

My heart is restless
Until it rests in you Lord
Restless until then

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Resurrection

The resurrection
Places Jesus forever
In our living world

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Revelation

The revelation
Of God's love has not ended
Daily a new thing

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Running With Friends

Running with two friends
On Sunday mornings. Seasons
Ripen with our steps.

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Sacrament

Lips like holy wine
I taste you and I believe
You're my sacrament

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Salt

I'm not ev'ry one's
Grain of salt. You must know how
To take me with one.

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San Francisco Angelus

At six the winds rise
Snapping flags, holding sails taut
Nature's angelus

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Sated

I am sated, gorged
With you. You make my life full
Entire, plump, perfect.

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Saving Grace

I'm merely human
And can avoid sin only
With your saving grace

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Sea Lion

In the pier's elbow
A sea lion turns in time
To the wave's rhythm

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Seek God

Seek God to find God
God is always a surprise
Find God to seek God

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Shadow

Light without shadow
Is unrelenting, brutal
Darkness gives light life

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Signs

Open our eyes to
See Your signs and open our
Heart to follow them

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Silent Word

In the beginning
The Word. Silent. Unspoken.
No ears to hear it.

(2009)

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Sinner

I am a sinner
Whom The Lord has looked upon
To save me from sin

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Snowfall

I like the snowfall
How it envelopes the world
And muffles its sounds

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So What (For My Son Forrest)

Music fills your life
Your soul your identity
So what to all else

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Soothe Me

Holy Spirit Soothe
My bent heart with your warm breast
And radiant wings

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Strangers

Loneliness was home
We were strangers together
Blank eyes; no touching

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Strong When I'm Able (For Jim Davis)

Strong when I'm able
Hopeful until then, counting
On the Lord's healing

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Sword Peace

When the world's at peace
Keep your sword sheathed at your side
And so keep the peace

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Take Me

Take me now Dear Lord
Unless You have more for me
More for me to do

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Teaching The Young

Sense joy in all things
Empty your heart of anger
When teaching the young

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The Baptist

John in his anger
Did not see the Pharisees
Come to the river

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The Boat

The boat
Anchored in fog
Rocking gently to waves
Rhythmically calming my troubled
Spirit

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The Desert God

I am
The desert god
Without father or son
I am alone - jealous, angry,
Vengeful

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The Garden God

I am
The garden god
Fecund, fruitful, fertile,
Alive; I am blessed with many
Children

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The Kingdom

Believe
In the holy
That the Lord gives us life
The Kingdom is within us with
Out end

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The Knowing Universe

Teaching and learning
The universe knows itself
This is its purpose

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The Zealot

I'm burning with God
And I will kill you because
Your God is not mine

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Thirteen Ways Of Looking At A Blackberry

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye on the blackberry.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a room
In which there are three blackberries.

III

The blackberry whirled under autumn thumbs.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackberry
Are one.

V

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackberry vibrating
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackberry
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood

Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackberry
Wraps around the fingers
Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackberry is involved
In what I know.

IX

When the blackberry tucked out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

X

At the sight of blackberries
Glowing in a green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackberries.

XII

The river is moving.
The blackberry must be posting.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackberry sat
In their fingers.

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Through Jesus' Eyes

Walk with me Jesus
Side by side me so I see
The world through your eyes

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Time

God created time
To overcome the boredom
Of eternity

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Trolls

Under ev'ry bridge
A woman crosses trolls lurk
Trying to look up her dress

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Trouble

Trouble

Me with your cares

Trouble me with your fears

Let me be the bearer of your

Burdens

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Truth In Anger

There's truth in anger
Your words unsheathed to cut me
Open your soul's shade

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Unbelief

Dear God I believe
Even in moments of doubt
Help my unbelief

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Vengeance Prayer

Waste them
My enemies
Destroy their families
Let their names be forgotten for
Ever

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Walk With Me Jesus

Walk with me Jesus;
Jesus, take my hand. Show me
The world through your eyes.

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Walk With Me Lord

Strengthen
Love and guide me
Oh Lord, walk beside me
Hear me as I pray; be near me
My God

(2007)

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Warm Day

Thick blanket of fog
Beneath the bridge disappears
As the warm day breaks

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Waste

I looked to earth and saw a formless waste
I looked to heaven and saw no light
I looked to mountains and saw them crumbling

I looked at cities and saw no one
I looked for the birds but they had fled
I looked to the fields and saw a wilderness

I listened
And heard the screams
Of women in labor
Of women having lost the children born of labor
Of children shot down

No one is left there
No one is left here
No one is left
No one

I hear the screams
I hear the screams
I despair
I faint
Murders surround me

(2007)

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Wasteful Beauty

Wasteful

All this beauty

Creation's abundance

Spilling over ev'rything with

God's love

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White Wine

What are the chances
Jesus chose white wine to serve
At the last supper?

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Winter Sun – San Francisco

Blazing sun after
Weeks of rain and gray restores
My restive spirit

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Winter's End

Winter is ending
And I regret the loss of
Its cold clarity

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Wonder

As I get older
I find ever more wonder
In a world passed through

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Word

What was it Jesus you heard
In the desert?
The Devil's voice only
For 40 days?
Did you go to listen to Satan?
What of God did you hear?

Did you whisper God's name?
Did you hear it
When that Devil wasn't
Making deals?

What was God's name in the beginning?
What did the word sound like
Before flesh
Before there were ears to hear?

Did the silence enrich you?

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