

AUSIAS MARCH

A KEY ANTHOLOGY

Edited and Translated  
by Robert Archer

1992

THE ANGLO CATALAN SOCIETY

# THE ANGLO-CATALAN SOCIETY OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS

- No. 1 Salvador Giner. *The Social Structure of Catalonia* (1980, reprinted 1984)
- No. 2 Joan Salvat-Papasseit. *Selected Poems* (1982)
- No. 3 David Mackay. *Modern Architecture in Barcelona* (1985)
- No. 4 *Forty Modern Catalan Poems (Homage to Joan Gili)* (1987)
- No. 5 E. Trenc Ballester & Alan Yates. *Alexandre de Riquer* (1988)
- No. 6 Salvador Espriu. *Primera història d'Esther* with English version by Philip Polack and Introduction by Antoni Turull (1989)
- No. 7 Jude Webber & Miquel Strubell i Trueta. *The Catalan Language: Progress Towards Normalisation* (1991)
- No. 8 *Ausiàs March: A Key Anthology*. Edited and translated by Robert Archer (1992)

This edition © 1992 Robert Archer

Produced and typeset by Interleaf Productions Limited, Sheffield  
Printed by The Cromwell Press, Melksham, Wiltshire  
Cover design by Joan Gili

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

March, Ausiàs  
Ausiàs March: Key Anthology  
I. Title II. Archer, Robert  
849.9154

ISBN 0-9507137-7-5

ISSN 0144-5863

## CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	9
A Note on the Translation and Text	19
Summary Bibliography	21

### POEMS

I Així com cell qui en lo somni-s delita	24
II Pren-me enaixí com al patró que en plaja	28
IV Així com cell qui desitja vianda	32
XIII Colguen les gents ab alegria festes	36
XXIII Lleixant a part l'estil dels trobadors	40
XXVIII Lo jorn ha por de perdre sa claror	44
XXIX Sí com lo taur se'n va fuit pel desert	46
XXXII L'home pel món no munta en gran valer	48
XXXIX Qui no és trist, de mos dictats no cur	52
XLII Vós qui sabeu de la tortra-1 costum ( <i>Maldit'</i> )	56
XLVI Veles e vents han mos desigs complir	60
LIII Ab tal dolor com l'esperit s'arranca	64
LXXX Tot llaurador és pagat del jornal	68
LXXXI Així com celi qui-s veu prop de la mort	70
LXXXII Quan plau a Déu que la fusta peresca	72
LXXXIII Sí co-1 malalt qui llong temps ha que jau	74
LXXXVII Tot entenent amador mi entenga	76
XCIV Puis me trop sol en amor, a mi sembla ( <i>Cant de Mort</i> )	100
XCVI La gran dolor que llengua no pot dir ( <i>Cant de Mort</i> )	110
CV Puis que sens tu, algú a tu no basta ( <i>Cant Espiritual</i> )	114

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief anthology with translations is designed to provide both the general reader and the student of mediaeval literature with a representative selection of the major genres of poem written by the Valencian Ausiàs March (c. 1397-1459). It includes a diverse range of pieces concerning love (one of which develops a substantial theory), poems of praise and vilification, two of his six poems on grief (the *Cants de Mort*), and the lengthy composition on his relationship with God (the *Cant Espiritual*).

There is little doubt that an anthology of this kind is needed. Interest in March continues to grow in English-speaking countries, and it is increasingly common to find March included in University courses of mediaeval Hispanic literature. In spite of this, neither of the two previous anthologies of Ausiàs March in English is easily available. The first, with translations and an excellent introduction by Arthur Terry, has been out of print for some time; the second, with verse translations in a highly stylized archaic English by M.A. Conejero, E Ribes and D. Keown, was published in Valencia in a small print run. It is hoped that this volume will meet the existing need.

A number of colleagues and friends have given their time and energies to various drafts of the translations included here. My thanks especially to Arthur Terry, Alan Yates, Aristides Paradissis and Antonio Pagliaro. I am grateful to Lola Badia for her careful reading of the introduction and especially for her stimulating disagreement on several points. I also wish to thank the Spanish Ministerio de Educación y Ciència for funding the period of research in which this volume was completed.

The Anglo-Catalan Society's series of Occasional Publications benefits from the continued financial support of the Fundació Congrés de Cultura Catalana and of the Instituto de España en Londres; publication

of this particular volume has been made possible thanks to a grant from the Institució de les Lletres Catalanes, in its programme of sponsoring foreign-language translations of Catalan literature. I am happy to endorse personally the Society's appreciation of these generous contributions.

R.A., September 1992

## INTRODUCTION

By a simple accident of fate the great Spanish poet Garcilaso de la Vega grew up speaking a language which future politics and demography were to shape into the vehicle of one of the world's most widespread and varied cultures. Clearly, his importance rests not only on the intrinsic worth of his verse, but on its fortunate location at the main point of expansion of what was to become the vast linguistic domain of Castilian. Fate has dealt very differently with the Valencian Catalan poet Ausiàs March whose language, not very long after his death, went into decline as a vehicle for high culture, in favour of Spanish.

March was born in 1397, perhaps a year or two earlier, probably in or near Gandia on the coastal plain south of Valencia. His family had been connected with this region since the Reconquest in the mid-thirteenth century, but had been elevated to the nobility less than forty years before the birth of the poet. He seems to have grown up in Gandia itself, where the Marchs had a house close to the ducal palace, and in the neighbouring town of Beniarjó, where the family kept its new seigneurial residence. The true centre of life in the region, however, was the city of Valencia, its administrative, cultural and political capital. As early as 1415, before he was fully knighted, March is mentioned in a document as a representative of his class at the royal Court held in Valencia that year. Thereafter he appears at many points throughout his life as a resident of the city.

In his late youth and early manhood, March distinguished himself in Alfonso's first military campaigns in Sardinia and Corsica (1420), and was with the army sent to defend the island of Djerba from pirates in 1424. There is evidence that during this period of his life he enjoyed the special esteem both of the king and of Queen Maria. In 1420 he is named by the Queen as one of the parties to be entrusted with the negotiation of a marriage, and in 1425 Alfonso confirms, in consideration of his services to him in battle, the rights and privileges in Beniarjó that had been

conferred on his father a few decades earlier. In the same year he appears in documents as the king's head falconer, thus linked from the first with an activity that was to occupy him all his life, and to which he refers in a late poem. In other documents, however, there are also allusions to March's role in certain incidents of apparent moral impropriety (it has been conjectured that this may have brought him into disfavour with the very devout Maria).

Alfonso left the Peninsula in 1432, never to return. March does not seem to have been a member of the court that Alfonso established in Naples, so that it is quite possible that he did not see the king again, even though Alfonso continues to request his services as a falconer from 1442 to 1446 (whether he was still an official royal falconer is unclear). One of his poems, addressed to *mossèn Borra*—the dwarf jester of both Alfonso and the previous king, and a man of considerable influence—further attests to March's ongoing relationship with the distant court.

It has to be assumed, on present evidence at least, that from about 1425 March lived almost entirely in Gandia, Beniarjó and Valencia. His life there seems largely to have involved the zealous protection of the relatively recent seigneurial privileges of the Marchs. Such privileges he saw diminished in favour of his immediate overlords, while all the time the effective status of the lesser nobility in Valencia continued to shrink before the onslaught of the rich and powerful merchants, many of whom were already 'honourable citizens' (*ciutadans honrats*) and for all practical purposes at the same social level as the nobility. March's entire life seems to have been plagued by lawsuits, many of them instigated by himself. He is known also to have issued two written challenges to other knights over questions of honour. It is inevitably a point of interest—if not necessarily of complete relevance—in a poet who describes in so much of his work a struggle with carnal desire, that he had four acknowledged illegitimate children, the fruit of various liaisons, some of them with his Moorish slaves. His two marriages, on the other hand, brought him no surviving heirs. He seems, on recent evidence, to have been married to his first wife, Isabel Martorell—sister of Joanot Martorell, the author of *Tirant lo Blanc*—for less than a year before she died in 1439. His second marriage in 1443 to Joana Escorna ended with her death in 1454, five years before his own.

A number of other episodes in March's life can partly be reconstructed from documents, but even when these are taken into account all

that is known so far about him adds up to very little. There is no doubt that if further archival research were carried out, like the fruitful work recently undertaken in relation to Joanot Martorell, it would soon fill in the picture further and shed more light on the circumstances in which March was writing.

In the meantime we can make only a few tentative conjectures about the relationship between his life and his writings. The most important concerns his contact with the royal court. Alfonso kept his court continuously in Italy from 1432 until his death in 1458. The surviving Spanish *cancioneros* in which poetry written in the court is collected make it clear that Alfonso favoured a mode of poetry very different from the kind that March was writing. The king's taste was for verse that lent itself to performance, with or without music, the kind that would help produce a brilliant courtly milieu along Italian Renaissance lines. Spanish and Italian were the main languages used. March seems to have made only one attempt (poem LXXXVI) to write in the style of the Spanish *canción*, while only one other (poem XII) is of a style and metre that lend themselves to fifteenth-century music. As far as is known, he wrote only in Catalan.

These circumstances surely favoured his development as a poet with the characteristics that distinguish him from his contemporaries. His geographical and linguistic isolation from the Naples court enabled him to write with a greater measure of artistic freedom than the vast majority of his Castilian contemporaries. It is highly unlikely that March could have written the way he did had he made a career as a courtier. Instead, he evidently developed an audience for his poetry in Valencia—the 'friends' he occasionally refers to—although nothing specific is known about them. By the 1440s he is clearly well known as a poet. The Marqués de Santillana refers to him as a 'gran trovador' in his famous letter to the *Condestable* of Portugal, and he is one of a galaxy of troubadours and later poets whose work is quoted in *Lo Conhort*, written between 1448 and 1449 by the Barcelonese poet Francesc Ferrer. There is no doubt that at some stage during his own lifetime his poems began to enjoy relatively wide circulation, since the number of independent late-fifteenth-to-very-early-sixteenth-century manuscripts in which they are copied is unusually high. In all, some 10,000 lines of verse have survived, in 128 attributed poems.

When seen against the background of earlier Catalan verse, March's



poetry seems to breathe new life, through often brilliant innovation, into the prestigious Provençal-Catalan poetic tradition. While earlier Catalan poets such as Gilabert de Pròixita or Andreu Febrer, or even the contemporaries of his youth such as Jordi de Sant Jordi, wrote in a Catalan that approximated as closely as possible to the language of the Provençal troubadours, March wrote almost entirely in the vernacular. He seems to have been the first Catalan poet in the courtly tradition to do this, using a poetic lexis based in both courtly and popular forms of the spoken language, and new rhymes (discarding the old tools of the trade such as his uncle Jaume March's manual of Provençal rhymes, the *Diccionari de rims*). In the hands of an exceptional poet such as Jordi de Sant Jordi, standard Provençalised Catalan could produce outstanding poetry within certain generic and conceptual limits. But it was these limits that March clearly wanted to transcend, strengthening the power of standard poetic discourse by referring it to moral and philosophical dimensions. His principal reasons for taking this step are self-evident: it was simply not feasible to write the sort of poetry he was striving to create while still tied to the conventionalisms of the troubadours.

March's stylistic innovations are less obvious, but no less substantial. The most remarkable development is his use of the simile and other forms of comparison. While this is a common feature of earlier Provençal-Catalan verse, it was used mainly to clarify an idea or to charge a related statement with emotion. March, using an unusually large number of comparisons, experiments with the process of analogy to achieve new effects. The simile becomes an important tactic in persuasion, introduces an implicit moral dimension, shifts moral responsibility away from the figure of the poet, anticipates a final revealing of the circumstances that have occasioned the poem, or it may have a number of these functions at once. By means of the comparison, March is often able to undermine or contradict the overt discourse of a poem, thus endowing it with great semantic complexity.

And yet, in terms of thematic content, March's poetry may at first seem conventional enough. Much of it still purports to describe the experience of unrequited love that had been the stock-in-trade of the lyric poet for several centuries, and had evolved into a complex of conventionalisms—'courtly love'—in the hands of the troubadours. He uses the standard decasyllabic stanzas in nearly all his work, and most of the love-poetry is addressed to a woman or women endowed with a poetic

pseudonym like those used by the troubadours: 'Lily among thorns', 'Prudent lady'.

Where March differs from his predecessors is in the way he exploits the emotional and ethical complexity latent in these conventionalisms, so that his love-poems are characterised both by a highly developed self-awareness and a constant preoccupation with the moral dimension of the nature of his desires, or—in some poems—of those felt by the lady.

This is not to say that all of March's poems have a similar tone or emphasis. On the contrary, March's use of a wide range of rhetorical tactics ensures great variety even in the scores of poems about unrequited love. In a good number of them there is a striking use of melodrama. In poem XIII, for instance, he depicts himself as someone so foreign to the normal world, where he considers himself to be universally misunderstood, that he feels more at home with the dead. Topical and Classical allusions follow: first to King Lusignan of Cyprus (whose degradation and imprisonment by the Turks shocked all of Christian Europe), then to Tityos. He declares that even Heaven would seem less than blissful unless he could look down and see the addressed lady weeping over his death. For much of the poem the protests of suffering seem outlandishly hyperbolic (especially the reference to Lusignan). Is March parodying the extremes of some of his troubadour predecessors, who, as he declares in another poem, 'per escalf trespassen veritat' ('burn with such passion that they cannot speak without exaggeration')? Or is the melodrama meant quite seriously, as it is, say, in the tragedies of Seneca whose importance, in its late-fourteenth-century Catalan translation is only now coming to be appreciated? A poem such as XXXIX seems to support the idea that some of the poems are playful and ironic. Those who 'have never been sad' are enjoined here not to bother reading March's love-poems since all of them 'speak of frenzied thoughts, and have come gushing out of a madman without the help of art'. As March parades his emotional extremism and makes bold claims for himself as the last of the real lovers on earth, he seems to be at play with an audience that has come to expect such displays of amorous melancholy. On the other hand, it is precisely this same poem, XXXIX, which is used as a kind of prologue to March's work in sixteenth-century collections of his work.

In other pieces the traditional context of courtly love becomes an almost extraneous element in a literary experiment. The most striking example is poem XXXII, in which forty lines of Aristotelian ethics, con-

taining no reference whatever to love, are followed by a final half-stanza concerning the poet's relationship to a lady. The reader is left to work out for himself, with no help from the poet, how these two apparently disparate parts fit together to make a meaningful whole. In a very different poem (XLVI)—one of the most famous—March's skilled use of hyperbole takes a striking turn when he depicts himself creating by sheer force of will the dangerous ordeal he assures the lady that he needs if he is to prove his love for her. In an apocalyptic scene, the sea boils, fish leap out onto dry land and the winds push the poet along a metaphorical course towards the lady.

Some of the poems develop a process of self-analysis in which love as such seems only to be a starting-point for the exploration of what are, in modern terms, widely experienced psychological states. In poem XXVIII, for instance, the context of courtly love is brilliantly transcended by the innovative way (through a clever conceit) in which March describes the kind of self-destructiveness latent in all human beings. He declares himself to be innocent of every kind of crime, except the worst of them all: the offence against himself, the chronic self-doubt that brings defeat. The context in which this image of the self is developed is, of course, mediaeval: March writes at a time when the notion of original sin weighed heavily on the human conscience, and this sense of guilt pervades the poem. It is nevertheless the case that the composition he has left us transcends its original context, striking a deep chord in the reader's inner experience. It is no doubt this that explains in part March's enormous impact on those who approach him, as we do, from a distance of five hundred years.

Another kind of love-poem, which will eventually become the dominant form in his work, is that in which he explores love as a moral dilemma. His frequent assertion, derived from the troubadours, to privileged illumination on matters of love is based on the further claim that he strives to attain a form of love that transcends carnal desire. Failures in the enterprise are attributed either to the overpowering effects of love, or to the weakness of woman (deemed by March and his contemporaries to be a creature unequal to the challenge of spirituality) or, less frequently, to his own failings. Poems such as LIII derive their impetus from the inner struggle which inevitably results from the moral dilemma. Here he declares finally that he does not know whether he wishes the lady to be virtuous or quite the opposite.

A group of long theoretical poems leaves us in no doubt that March had a profound concern with the moral dimensions of the experience of love. Poem LXXXVII, included here, is an elaborate attempt to define the basis on which a form of love that is largely, but not exclusively, spiritual is possible in the relations between man and woman. It is a complex piece in which we see March grappling personally with the problem at close quarters. Ultimately, he rejects the easy way out that a moralist would take: rather than asserting the superiority of the spirit, he affirms the possibility that the 'mixed' love of spirit and flesh could include moments of transcendent spirituality. The poem is a vindication of the kind of love to which he frequently describes himself as aspiring. Once more March writes against the grain of convention and, even more interestingly, shows himself to be clearly conscious of this when, in the penultimate stanza, he makes a veiled apology for affirming his faith in a form of love which 'reason does not praise or condone'. He ends by asserting with special force his vaunted unique authority on matters of love: just as the planets and constellations will cease to exist if the earth—the centre of the mediaeval universe—should end, so love will disappear once the poet has died.

The image brilliantly encapsulates March's basic stance before the world in the bulk of his poetry: the poet himself is the focal point of all he writes. One consequence of this is that the lady addressed or alluded to in the love-poems becomes only one element among many used by March to define this poetic self. Generally speaking, the lady matters only in so far as she is the object of frustrated or conflicting desires.

An important exception is poem XXIII, surely one of the great laudatory poems in European literature, in which March praises above all the *seny*—the prudence and intelligence—of a woman whose name is given as *dona Teresa*. While the spiritual power of her beauty withers the baser instincts of avid males, this is no *donna angelicata*, but an intelligent woman of flesh and blood sent by God to enrich the world by her progeny: 'Verge no sou perquè Déu ne volch casta'.

At the opposite extreme is Poem XLII, in which March shows that his powers of praise are matched only by his skill at vilification. March loads the addressed woman, *Na Monboí*, and her lover, *En Joan*, with carefully chosen and graduated insults. She is accused of unbridled lust and of infidelity and is subjected to a systematic despoiling of all claims to identity as a woman. Interestingly, in marked contrast to the poem

about *dona Teresa*, the poet denies her the ability to rear her offspring: her body, he claims, is full of poison. March finally reduces her to the status of procuress, and actually states her surname—something quite unprecedented in poems of this kind (a genre of their own, known as *maldits*) and proscribed by the troubadour manuals of rhetoric.

Judged even by these kinds of poems alone, March would be an outstanding poet. But there are two other areas of his work in which the sheer urge for self-expression brings him as close as can be expected of any writer of his time to creating new genres. These are the six poems known, since the sixteenth century, as the *Cants de Mart* (poems on death) and the *Cant Espiritual* (the Spiritual Canticle).

The *Cants de Mort* have as their central point of reference the death of a woman. There are reasons for believing that the woman in question is one of March's two wives: she is described at one point as the *muller aimia* ('beloved wife' or 'wife-beloved'), and there is a reference to her future union with the poet on the Judgement Day as 'one flesh' (a concept of biblical origin, fundamental to the sacrament of marriage). Whatever her identity was, it is given little importance. Unlike the *planhs* in which the troubadours lamented the dead, in these poems the traditional praise of the deceased is absent, and there is no reference to public mourning or to the lady's family or lineage. The most striking difference from the *planhs*, however, is the poet's fear that the woman may not have gone to Heaven. In this, of course, they also differ totally from the prime mediaeval model for poems concerning the death of a woman, Petrarch's sonnets *In morte madonna Laura*. March asks the lady's spirit to return and put an end to his anguish about her eternal fate—a fate which he declares in Poem XCVI to be entwined with his. Nevertheless, aside from this concern, the primary importance of the woman's death for March is the effect it has on him. It both changes the terms on which he continues to strive for spiritual love and sets in motion a process of grief. Through death, his love for a woman is at last able to transcend the flesh: the love he feels now necessarily can take only her spirit as its object. He remarks upon the strangeness of his case: a poet who has celebrated in verse *amors -viciosos*, sinful love-affairs, is now able to lay claim to virtuous love (XCVI, 57-64). But this is a short-lived triumph: above all else, death brings grief, and it is the private experience of grief that is described in these poems. The acute self-awareness at an emotional and intellectual level that March had devel-

oped in love-poems equipped him uniquely to forge a new type of poem, centred on personal bereavement, out of elements of the *planh*. The result is a study of grief, full of striking parallels with C.S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, and showing a number of the characteristics of grieving identified by modern psychological studies. Not only does March describe the same sense of absence and longing, and the identification of the loved one with aspects of everyday life, but also the feelings of guilt often experienced by the bereaved, both in so far as he laments that grief has not killed him and with regard to the fate of the woman's soul.

The other poem in which March seems to force a path outside the established parameters of genre, the *Cant Espiritual*, is arguably his greatest achievement, maintaining through its twenty-eight stanzas of unrhymed verse a high emotional pitch quite unmatched by anything in the Iberian Peninsula before the second half of the sixteenth century. It is essentially a prayer, interspersed with confession, concerning the poet's professed lack of the theological virtue of charity. What makes the poem so exceptional is the frankness with which March confronts head-on the reality of his lack of love for God. He does not take up the obvious option of treating the problem as one to be resolved through moral discourse and with an appropriate didactic conclusion. March alludes sporadically to the theological root of the problem—one which still raises fundamental difficulties for twentieth-century thinking Christians—namely, the doctrines of justification and predestination.

Broadly speaking, what troubles March is the belief that if God is omniscient, then he must know the final destiny of each soul. Since he is also omnipotent and since no man can do anything except by God's grace (the premise of the poem stated in line 1), why does he allow some men to use their free will to commit damnable sins? The doctrine taught by the Church held that God never wills the damnation of any man, but passively permits some to condemn themselves while actively extending saving grace to others. God's reasons for doing so cannot be apparent to man.

March's poem ranges over many of the complexities and contradictions of the doctrine, but the theology is kept at all times to a secondary plane. In the foreground is March's anguished examination of the theological problem as it affects him personally, and it is this which explains its non-discursive form. That is, it seems to be structured according to sudden changes in mood or outlook, as the poet confronts new aspects of

his spiritual crisis. The result is a dramatic representation of the twists and turns of March's anguished meditation: we seem to be witnessing the process of self-examination, doubt, anguish, and sporadic exultation that gives rise to the poem even as this process is happening.

There is no poet writing in the Iberian Peninsula before the last decades of the sixteenth century whose work shows such capacity for this kind of innovation or whose voice has comparable strength and conviction. That he is acknowledged today, in spite of the now vastly diminished political and cultural status of his language, as one of the great European poets of the late Middle Ages is testimony to the power of his work to speak for itself—even if it sometimes has to do so with the aid of translations such as those presented in this volume.

## A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION AND TEXT

In producing these translations, I have had different aims from those of previous hands. They are not designed principally as an aid to the text (Arthur Terry), nor are they an attempt to put March into English verse (Conejero, *et al.*). Rather, I have tried to produce prose versions that I hope are readable and completely intelligible in themselves, without the aid of explanatory notes or close comparison with the text. At the same time, since March presents so many difficulties of interpretation, the translations also represent as unequivocal a statement as possible of how this translator interprets the poems.

This has sometimes meant including in the translation elements of meaning that I consider implicit in March's text and essential to its understanding. For the sake of clarity, I have changed where necessary the original (often challengingly complex) syntax or order of ideas. Occasional redundancies (sometimes introduced by March to resolve metrical problems) have been eliminated.

A question of particular difficulty has been the translation of overloaded mediaeval particles such as *e* and *car* which have to perform vital semantic functions for which the modern language has developed a wide range of distinct conjunctions. *E*, for instance, can mean not only 'and', but also 'however', 'although', 'nevertheless', and so on. Another problem is presented by commonplace mediaeval concepts such as *voluntat* by which March sometimes means 'will' and at other times 'desire'. Similarly, March's use of the gerund to express ideas for which modern Catalan and English would use past or future tenses or totally different present-tense constructions, his habit of omitting vital conjunctions, and a tendency to other forms of ellipsis, have produced problems aplenty. In all these cases I have been guided by what seemed to me to be the overall meaning of the poem.



The text is based on my anthology *Ausiàs March: Cinquanta-vuit poemes* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1989); I have incorporated the appropriate corrections and amendments. The numbering of the poems follows the order established by Amédée Pagès in his critical edition, *Les obres d'Auzias March* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1912-14).

## SUMMARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Principal editions of March

- Les Obres d'Auzias March*, edited by Amédée Pagès (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1912-14).
- Ausiàs March: Poesies*, 5 vols.; edited by Pere Bohigas (Barcelona: Barcino, 1952-59).

### Other editions

- Ausiàs March: Antologia poètica*, edited by Joan Fuster; 2nd edition (Valencia: 3i4, 1979).
- Les poesies d'Ausiàs March*, edited by Joan Ferrate (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1979).
- Ausiàs March: Cinquanta-vuit poemes*, edited by Robert Archer (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1989).

### Translations into English

- Conejero, M.A., P. Ribes and D. Keown, *Ausiàs March: Selecció de poemes. Selected Poems* (2 vols.; Valencia, Instituto Shakespeare Fundación, 1986-89).
- Terry, Arthur, *Ausias March: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976).

### Major Studies

- Bohigas, Pere, *Ausiàs March: Poesies*, Vol. I (Barcelona: Barcino, 1959).
- Pagès, Amédée, *Auzias March et ses prédécesseurs: Essai sur la poésie amoureuse et philosophique en Catalogue aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris: Champion, 1912; reprinted Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974).

### **Other Easily Accessible Studies**

- Archer, Robert, *The Pervasive Image: The Role of Analogy in the Poetry of Ausiàs March* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1985), pp. 1-22.
- 'Tradition, Genre, Ethics and Politics in Ausiàs March's *maldit*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 68 (1991), 371-82.
- Badia, Lola, 'Si com lo taur ...', *Els marges*, 22/23 (1981), 169-88.
- Fuster, Joan, 'Vigència d'Ausiàs March' and 'Ausiàs March, el ben enamorat', in *Obres Completes*, I (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1968), pp. 213-47, 249-84.
- Leveroni, Rosa, 'Les imatges marines en la poesia d'Ausies March', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 28 (1951), 152-66.
- Riquer, Martí de, *Història de la Literatura Catalana*, Vol. 3 (Barcelona: Ariel, 1964; reprinted 1980 and 1986).
- Terry, Arthur, *Ausias March: Selected Poems* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp. 1-25.

# POEMS

## I

Així com celi qui en lo somni-s delita  
 e son delit de foll pensament ve,  
 ne pren a mi: que-1 temps passat me té  
 4 l'imaginar, que altre bé no hi habita,  
 sentint estar en aguait ma dolor,  
 sabent de cert que en ses mans he de jaure.  
 Temps d'avenir en negun bé-m pot caure.  
 8 Ço que és no res a mi és lo millor.

Del temps passat me trop en gran amor,  
 amant no res pus és ja tot finit.  
 D'aquest pensar me sojorn e-m delit,  
 12 mas quan lo perd s'esforça ma dolor:  
 sí com aquell qui és jutjat a mort  
 e de llong temps la sap e s'aconhorta,  
 e creure-1 fan que li serà estorta,  
 16 e-1 fan morir sens un punt de record.

Plagués a Déu que mon pensar fos mort  
 e que passàs ma vida en dormant.  
 Malament viu qui té son pensament  
 20 per enemic, fent-li d'enuigs report.  
 E com lo vol d'algun plaer servir  
 li'n pren així com dona ab son infant  
 que, si verí li'n demana plorant,  
 24 ha tan poc seny que no-1 sap contradir.

Fóra millor ma dolor soferir  
 que no mesclar poca part de plaer  
 entre aquells mals qui-m giten de saber.  
 28 Com del pensat plaer me cove eixir,  
 las, mon delit dolor se converteix,  
 dobla's l'afany après d'un poc repòs:  
 sí co-1 malalt que per un plasant mos  
 32 tot son menjar en dolor se nodreix;

1-8. You could compare me to someone who has no other pleasure than to dream foolish fancies, for my imagination is captive to the past, which is the only good it knows, while I can feel pain lurking in wait for me and can count on ending up in its hands. The future can hold no good for me. The best things in my life are those which now are nothing.

9-16. I cherish only the past, loving something which no longer exists, for it is gone for ever. In such memories I linger with pleasure; but when they fade, pain attacks me: just like a condemned man who has spent a long time coming to terms with his death, and is then led to believe that his life will be spared—only to be executed suddenly without a single moment's grace.

17-24. I would to God that my mind were dead and that I could spend my life asleep. He is wretched indeed who can call his own mind his enemy since it reminds him continually of his troubles. Whenever he wants it to bring him something pleasurable, it behaves like the woman who has so little sense that when her child screams to be fed with poison, she gives in to its demands.

25-32. It would be better to endure the pain than to add one scrap of pleasure to the torments that drive me to my wits' end. As soon as I have to leave my imagined pleasure, then, alas! my joy turns to suffering; a brief respite is followed by redoubled anguish: just like the sick man who for the sake of enjoying some tasty morsel turns every meal into agony;

com l'ermità que enyorament no-1 creix  
d'aquells amics que havia en lo món,  
essent llong temps que en lloc poblat no fon:  
36 fortuït cas un d'ells li apareix  
qui los passats plaers li renovella,  
sí que-1 passat present li fa tornar;  
mas com se'n part l'és forçat congoixar:  
40 lo bé com fuig ab grans crits mal apella.

*Tornada*

Plena de seny, quan amor és molt vella  
absència és lo verme que la gasta  
si fermetat durament no contrasta  
44 en creure poc si l'envejós consella.

33-40. or like the hermit who has spent long years away from town and does not miss any of the friends he used to have in the world: then chance disposes that he suddenly comes across one of them, and his old friend reminds him of all the pleasures he on a enjoyed, so that all the past comes vividly back, and when the friend departs, he is filled with regret: when good takes its leave, it cries out loudly for pain to come and take its place.

41-44: *Envoi*. Prudent lady, when love is very old, absence can become a worm that eats away at love unless, while the separation lasts, constancy holds out against it and pays no heed to what the envious might say.



## II

Pren-me enaixí com al patró que en plaja  
 té sa gran nau e pensa haver castell.  
 Veent lo cel ésser molt clar e bell,  
 4 creu fermament d'una àncora assats haja.  
 E sent venir sobtós un temporal  
 de tempestat e temps incomportable.  
 Lleva son jui: que si molt és durable,  
 8 cercar los ports més que aturar li val.

Moltes veus és que-l vent és fortunal,  
 tant que no pot sortir sens lo contrari.  
 E cella clau que us tanca dins l'armari  
 12 no pot obrir aquell mateix portal.  
 Així m'ha pres, trobant-me enamorat,  
 per sobresalt qui-m ve de vós, ma aimia.  
 Del no amar desalt ne té la via,  
 16 mas un sol pas meu no hi serà trobat.

Menys que lo peix és en lo bosc trobat  
 e los lleons dins l'aigua han llur sojorn,  
 la mia amor per null temps pendrà torn,  
 20 sol coneixent que de mi us doneu grat.  
 E fiu de vós que-m sabreu bé conèixer  
 e, conegut, no-m serà mal graïda  
 tota dolor havent per vós sentida.  
 24 Lladoncs veureu les flames d'amor créixer!

Si mon voler he dat mal a aparèixer  
 creeu de cert que vera amor no-m lluny.  
 Pus que lo sol és cald al mes de juny  
 28 ard mon cor flac sens algun grat merèixer.  
 Altre, sens mi, d'açò mereix la colpa.  
 Vullau-li mal com tan humil servent  
 vos té secret per son defalliment.  
 32 Cest és amor que mi, amant, encolpa.

## II

1-8. I am just like the master of some great ship riding at anchor off a stretch of beach, feeling as safe as if he were standing atop a castle, who looks at the sky and, seeing no cloud in sight, is quite convinced that he may trust to a single anchor. And then before he knows what has happened, a storm is raging about him that is too fierce to be weathered out. He makes his decision: since the storm is going to set in, his best course is to seek harbour rather than to stay where he is.

9-16. But sometimes the wind beats so strongly against him that he cannot get clear of the shore unless he has a contrary wind to help. How often have people shut themselves in the closet only to find that the key that has locked them in will not let them out again! Well, beloved lady, that is just the position in which my great pleasure in you has placed me. If I want to stop loving, then I must no longer find you pleasing. But that's one path I'll never tread.

17-24. Fish will spawn in the woods and lions roam the sea before my love will ever wane, as long as I at least do not displease you. But I am sure that when you come to know me better, you will not be ungrateful for all the pain I have suffered on your account. That's when you'll see Love's fire roar!

25-32. If I have kept my feelings to myself, do not think it is because I do not know what true love is. My ailing heart burns hotter than the sun in June, and yet has won no reward. This is another's doing, not mine. It is his fault that you have not been given the least hint that this willing servant awaits your orders. Love, I mean, which makes me love, and then blames me for it!

Ma voluntat ab la raó s'envolpa,  
e fan acord, la qualitat seguint,  
tals actes fent que'l cos és defallint  
36 en poc de temps una gran part de polpa.  
Lo poc dormir magresa al cos m'acosta.  
Dobla'm l'enginy per contemplar amor.  
Lo cos molt gras, trobant-se dormidor,  
40 no pot dar pas en aquesta aspra costa.

*Tornada*

Plena de seny, donau-me una crosta  
del vostre pa qui-m lleve l'amargor.  
De tot menjar m'ha pres gran dessabor  
44 si no d'aquell qui molta amor me costa.

33-40. My desire and my reason have called a truce, and have become as one in their love of the spirit, performing such deeds that in only a short time my body has shed most of its bulk. My flesh is wasted from so many sleepless nights. But this also has sharpened my wits so that I can better contemplate love. An obese body wants only to sleep all day, and could not climb one step up this rugged cliff.

41-44: *Envoi*. Prudent lady, spare me a crust of bread, for it is the only thing that could take this bitter taste away. I have lost all desire for food, unless it is some morsel that I may earn through my great love.

## IV

Així com celi qui desija vianda  
 per apagar sa perillosa fam,  
 e veu dos poms de fruit en un bell ram  
 4 e son desig egualment los demanda,  
 no-1 complirà fins part haja elegida  
 sí que-1 desig vers l'un fruit se decant:  
 així m'ha pres dues dones amant.  
 8 Mas elegesc per haver d'amor vida.

Sí com la mar se plany greument e crida  
 com dos forts vents la baten egualment,  
 u de llevant e altre de ponent,  
 12 e dura tant fins l'un vent l'ha jaquida  
 sa força gran per lo més poderós:  
 dos grans desigs han combatut ma pensa  
 mas lo voler vers u seguir dispensa.  
 16 Io-1 vos públic: amar dretament vós.

E no cuideu que tan ignorant fos  
 que no veés vostre avantatge gran.  
 Mon cos no cast estava congoixant  
 20 de perdre lloc qui l'era delitós.  
 Una raó fon ab ell de sa part  
 dient que en ell se pren aquesta amor,  
 sentint lo mal o lo delit major,  
 24 sí que, ell content, caseu pot ésser fart.

L'enteniment a parlar no venc tard  
 e planament desféu esta raó,  
 dient que-1 cos ab sa complexió  
 28 ha tal amor com un llop o renard,  
 que llur poder d'amar és limitat,  
 car no és pus que appetit brutal.  
 E si l'amant veeu dins la fornal,  
 32 no serà plant e molt menys defensat.

IV

1-8. Like a man whom hunger has brought close to death, and who must eat or perish, but then sees a tree on one of whose branches hang two splendid fruits which he desires equally, but must choose between them, so limiting his desire to one of the fruits before he can eat: this is just what it has been like for me, who love two women at the same time. But I have made my choice and, through love, I shall live.

9-16. Just as we can hear the sea howl and groan when the west wind whips it one way and the east wind another, and the fight ends only when one of them retreats before the other's superior strength; just so, two strong desires have made my mind their battleground, but now I have decided in favour of one of them. It is this, beloved lady: to love you as I ought.

17-24. Do not think I could be so blind as to be unaware of the gifts with which Nature has endowed you. This lewd body has fretted at the thought of renouncing a place which promised such pleasure. But it has advanced only one argument in its favour, declaring that this love I feel occurs in the body, and that it is there that the lover feels both the pain and the great pleasure of love, and that for this reason the body must first be satisfied before either kind of love can flourish.

25-32. The understanding wasted no time in replying, and made nonsense of these ideas. Such, it said, is the nature of the flesh that its concept of love is no better than a wolf's or a fox's, animals which can aspire no higher in love than their bestial appetite permits. That is why, when you see lovers burning in love's furnace, it is quite wrong to pity them, and even more mistaken to find excuses for them.

Ell és qui venç la sensualitat.  
 Si bé no és en ell prim moviment,  
 en ell està de tot lo jutjament.  
 36 Cert guiador és de la voluntat.  
 ¿Qui és aquell qui en contra d'ell reny?  
 Que voluntat, per qui-1 fet s'executa,  
 l'atorg senyor, e si ab ell disputa  
 40 a la perfí se guia per son seny.

Diu més avant al cos ab gran endeny:  
 «Vanament vols, e vans són tos desigs,  
 car dins un punt tos delits són fastigs,  
 44 romans-ne llas: tots jorns ne prens enseny.  
 Ab tu mateix delit no pots haver:  
 tan est grosser que amor no n'és servit.  
 Volenterós acte de bé és dit,  
 48 e d'aquest bé tu no saps lo carrer.

«Si bé complit lo món pot retener,  
 per mi és l'hom en tan sobiran bé.  
 E qui sens mi esperança-1 reté  
 52 és foll o pec e terrible grosser.»  
 Aitant com és l'enteniment pus clar  
 és gran delit lo que per ell se pren.  
 E son pillard és subtil pensament,  
 56 qui de fins pasts no-1 jaqueix endurar.

*Tornada*

Plena de seny, no pot Déu a mi dar  
 fora de vós què descontent no camp.  
 Tots mos desigs sobre vós los escamp.  
 60 Tot és dins vós lo que-m fa desijar.

33-40. Only the understanding can keep our sensuality at bay. Even though it has no part in the first impulses of desire, the understanding alone is equipped with judgement. It is the will's unfailing guide. What is the point of trying to resist it? The will, through which all actions are carried out, recognises the understanding as its master, and while it may argue with it, in the end the will is always governed by the understanding's good sense.

41-48. But the understanding has more to say to the flesh, telling it with great indignation: 'All your hopes and desires are futile, since you no sooner feel your kind of pleasure than you weary of it, and are left feeling all the weaker; the same thing happens every day, but you never learn. Unaided, you are incapable of pleasure, and you are too brutish to be of any use to love. This is because love can be defined as an act of the will directed towards a good; but you have no inkling of where such a good might be found.

49-56. If there is one absolute good in this world, then it is through me that man may attain it. Whoever hopes to reach it without my help is either mad or else a fool and a mindless lout.' The clearer our understanding, the higher the pleasure we may win through it. For the understanding sends subtle thought to gather the spoils of its battles, and this keeps it always supplied with the choicest food.

57-60: *Envoi*. Prudent lady, nothing on God's Earth brings me joy except you. It is on you and you alone that I have cast all my desires, and it is in you that the same desires originate.



## XIII

Colguen les gents ab alegria festes,  
 lloant a Déu, entremesclant deports.  
 Places, carrers e delitables horts  
 4 sien cercats, ab reconte de grans gestes.  
 E vaja io los sepulcres cercant,  
 interrogant ànimes infernades;  
 e respondran, car no són companyades  
 8 d'altre que mi en son continu plant.

Caseu requer e vol a son semblant;  
 per ço no-m plau la pràctica dels vius:  
 d'imaginar mon estat són esquius;  
 12 sí com d'hom mort de mi prenen espant.  
 Lo rei xipré, presoner d'un heretge,  
 en mon esguard no és malaurat,  
 car ço que vull no serà mai finat.  
 16 De mon desig no-m porà guarir metge.

Celi Teixion qui-1 buitre-1 menja-1 fetge,  
 e per tots temps brota la carn de nou  
 e en son menjar aquell ocell mai clou,  
 20 pus fort dolor d'aquesta-m té lo setge,  
 car és un verm qui romp la mia pensa,  
 altre lo cor, qui mai cessen de rompre.  
 E llur treball no-s porà enterrompre  
 24 sinó ab ço que d'haver se defensa.

E si la mort no-m dugués tal ofensa  
 —fer mi absent d'una tan placent vista—  
 no li graesc que de terra no vista  
 28 lo meu cos nu, qui de plaer no pensa  
 de perdre pus que lo imaginar  
 los meus desigs no poder-se complir.  
 E si-m cové mon derrer jorn finir,  
 32 seran donats térmens a ben amar.

XIII

1-8. Let people joyfully celebrate the feast-days, and mix fun with their worship. Let them go and fill the squares and streets and pleasant gardens, and listen to long tales being sung. For I would sooner spend my time among the tombs, plying the damned with my questions—and they would answer me, for there is no one else to share in their constant lamentation.

9-16. Every creature longs for its likeness, and seeks it out; that is why I choose not to follow the ways of the living: they prefer not to think about the state in which I dwell: I frighten them, as if I were a corpse. That king of Cyprus who was kept in prison by an infidel suffered no misfortune at all compared to me, for there is no solution to my longing. There is no physician who could cure me of my desire.

17-24. I am assailed by even greater pain than Tityos as the vulture tears eternally at his ever-replenished liver and never puts an end to its meal, for while one worm gnaws constantly at my mind, another eats at my heart. And nothing can halt their labour except the very thing that I cannot have.

25-32. And if death were not such a heavy blow, forcing me to be absent from the sight of such loveliness as yours, I would have no reason to thank it for not clothing with earth my naked body, since it can count on no other pleasure than the thought of never seeing my desires fulfilled. But if I should have to end my days, then love will have reached its limits.

*E* si en lo cel Déu me vol allogar,  
part veure a Ell, per complir mon delit  
serà mester que-m sia dellai dit  
36 que d'esta mort vos ha plagut plorar,  
penedint-vos com per poca mercè  
mor l'innocent e per amar-vos martre,  
celi qui lo cos de l'arma vol departre  
40 si ferm cregués que us dolríeu de se.

*Tornada*

Llir entre cards, vós sabeu e io sé  
que-s pot bé fer hom morir per amor.  
Creure de mi que só en tal dolor.  
44 No fareu molt que hi doneu plena fe.

33-40. And if God chose to take me up into Heaven, my bliss would not be complete unless, as well as beholding him, I learnt there that you chose to weep over my death, repentant that you allowed an innocent soul to die for lack of compassion, a martyr to his love for you—one who would willingly give up the ghost, if he could really believe that you would take pity on him.

41-44: *Envoi*. Lily among thorns, we both know that a man can easily die of love. Have no doubt, my suffering is as serious as that. The least you can do is to believe me.

## XXIII

Lleixant a part l'estil dels trobadors  
 qui, per escalf, trespassen veritat,  
 e sostraent mon voler afectat  
 4 perquè no-m torb, diré-1 que trop en vós.  
 Tot mon parlar als qui no us hauran vista  
 res no valrà, car fe no hi donaran,  
 e los veents que dins vós no veuran,  
 8 en creure a mi, llur arma serà trista.

L'ull de l'hom pec no ha tan fosca vista  
 que vostre cos no jutge per gentil.  
 No-1 coneix tal com lo qui és subtil:  
 12 hoc la color, mas no sap de la llista.  
 Quant és del cos menys de participar  
 ab l'esperit, coneix bé lo grosser.  
 Vostre color i-1 tall pot bé saber,  
 16 mas ja del gest no porà bé parlar.

Tots som grossers en poder explicar  
 ço que mereix un bell cos e honest.  
 Jóvens gentils, bons, sabents, l'han request  
 20 e, famejants, los cové endurar.  
 Lo vostre seny fa ço que altre no basta,  
 que sap regir la molta subtilea.  
 En fer tot bé, s'adorm en vós perea.  
 24 Verge no sou perquè Déu ne volc casta.

Sol per a vós bastà la bona pasta  
 que Déu retenc per fer singulars dones.  
 Fetes n'ha assats, molt sàvies e bones,  
 28 mas compliment dona Teresa-1 tasta,  
 havent en si tan gran coneiximent  
 que res no-1 fall que tota no-s conega.  
 A l'hom devot sa bellesa encega.  
 32 Past d'entenents és son enteniment.

## XXIII

1-8. Discarding the style of the troubadours, who are so inflamed that they cannot speak without exaggeration, and quelling my fervent desire so that I can write untroubled by it, I shall say what I find in you. All my words will be lost on those who have not seen you, for they will not believe what they hear, while those who have seen you but have not seen within you, will realise that what I say is true, and their spirits will sink.

9-16. Even the most dim-sighted fool could not fail to recognize the nobility of your person. But he does not see it the way the discerning do; he can tell the colour of the cloth, but the texture is lost on him. The ignorant man knows all about the body, except where the spirit has a part in it. He can appreciate your complexion and your figure, but as for your mien, he has nothing much to say.

17-24. And yet, we are all dolts when it comes to extolling adequately the worth of a beautiful and virtuous body. Learned young noblemen have paid court to it, but they have had to suffer unabated hunger. Your mind accomplishes what no other can, for it grasps the greatest subtleties. Since you do every kind of good, in you sloth has gone to sleep. If you are not a virgin, it is only because it was God's desire that you should have progeny.

25-32. When God made you, only the fine stuff he kept back for making exceptional women was good enough for you. He has created many such women, who are most wise and good, but lady Teresa enjoys perfection itself, possessing such wisdom that there is nothing she does not know. Her beauty, even for the most devout man, is blinding. Her mind is food for the enlightened.

Venecians no han lo regiment  
tan pacífic com vostre seny regeix  
subtilitats que l'entendre us nodreix  
36 e del cos bell sens colpa-1 moviment.  
Tan gran delit tot hom entenent ha  
e ocupat se troba en vós entendre,  
40 que lo desig del cos no-s pot estendre  
a lleig voler, ans com a mort està.

*Tornada*

Llir entre cards, lo meu poder no fa  
tant que pogués fer corona invisible.  
Meriu-la vós, car la qui és visible  
44 no-s deu posar lla on miracle està.

33-40. Venice has never known government as peaceful as that of your mind as it commands the subtleties that nourish your understanding and the innocent movements of your beautiful body. Every man of understanding feels such great delight and becomes so absorbed by his efforts to understand you, that the inclination of the body is unable to turn into a base desire, and does not even stir.

41-44: *Envoi*. Lily among thorns, it is beyond my powers to make you an invisible crown. Yet that is what you deserve, for a visible crown would sit ill upon a living miracle.



## XXVIII

Lo jorn ha por de perdre sa claror  
 quan ve la nit que espandeix ses tenebres.  
 Pocs animals no cloen les palpebres  
 4 e los malalts creixen de llur dolor.  
 Los malfactors volgren tot l'any duràs  
 perquè llurs mals haguessen cobriment.  
 Mas io, qui visc menys de par en turment  
 8 e sens mal fer, volgra que tost passàs.

E d'altra part faç pus que si matas  
 mil hòmens justs menys d'alguna mercè,  
 car tots mos ginys io solt per trair-me.  
 12 E no cuideu que-1 jorn me n'excusàs.  
 Ans, en la nit treball rompent ma pensa  
 perquè en lo jorn lo traïment cometa.  
 Por de morir o de fer vida estreta  
 16 no-m tol esforç per donar-me ofensa.

*Tornada*

Plena de seny, mon enteniment pensa  
 com aptament lo llaç d'amor se meta.  
 Sens aturar, pas tenint via dreta.  
 20 Vaig a la fi si mercè no-m defensa.

## XXVIII

1-8. The day fades in terror as the night draws in, spreading darkness before it. Every small creature keeps a wide-eyed vigil, while the sick must bear redoubled pain. Criminals come out under its cover to work their evil, and wish it could last all year. But not me: for I live in such torment as no other man has ever known, and I do no harm to anyone. I cannot wait for it to pass.

9-16. And yet, were I to murder a thousand innocent men in cold blood, it would be nothing compared to what I do each night, for it is then that I summon all my wits to plot my self-betrayal. Believe me, the dawn brings no respite, for I toil all night racking my brains how best to perform the next day's treachery. Death or the prison cell can hold no fears for the man who like me betrays his own self.

17-24: *Envoi*. Prudent lady, I know I have only myself to blame if Love has placed his noose about my neck. Nothing can detain me as I follow this straight and certain course. It will soon be all over with me, unless your pity sends reprieve.

## XXIX

Sí com lo taur se'n va fuit pel desert  
quan és sobrat per son semblant qui-l força  
ne torna mai fins ha cobrada força  
per destruir aquell qui l'ha desert:  
tot enaixí-m cové llunyar de vós  
car vostre gest mon esforç ha confús.  
No tornaré fins del tot haja fus  
la gran paor qui-m tol ser delitós.

XXIX

Whenever a bull meets his match, and is forced into submission by another of his kind, he flees into the wilderness, and returns only when he has built up the strength he needs to destroy the bull which has worsted him. And so with me: I know now that my best course is to keep as far from you as I can—the sight of your beauty has sapped all my strength. I shall not return until I have dispelled this fear that stands between me and all hope of happiness.

## XXXII

L'home pel món no munta en gran valer  
 sens haver béns, bondat, llinatge gran.  
 Mas la del mig val més que lo restant,  
 4 e no val molt sens les altres haver.  
 Per ella-s fan les dues molt prear,  
 car poder val tant com és ministrat,  
 llinatge val aitant com és honrat;  
 8 la valor d'hom ho fa tot graduar.

Mas no serà l'hom sabent de sonar  
 si en algun temps no sonà esturment,  
 car per voler sonar lo nom no-s pren  
 12 mas, l'esturment sonant, bé acordar.  
 Tot enaixí, aquell qui dins si val,  
 pobre de béns e d'avilat llinatge,  
 no té-ls arreus per mostrar gran coratge  
 16 en la virtut que-s nomena moral.

Són e seran molts d'un altre cabal,  
 havents molts béns e d'alta sang favor  
 e, valent poc, han la part no mellor  
 20 car, sens l'hom bo, quant pot haver és mal.  
 E moltes veus ha la colpa natura,  
 car farà bo tal que valer no sap.  
 Negun saber no pot viure en llur cap;  
 24 sens colpa llur, de valer han fretura.

Entre-ls extrems al mig virtut atura,  
 molt greu d'obrar i entre pocs conegut.  
 Per ell saber no és hom per bo tengut,  
 28 mas fets obrant forans dins tal mesura:  
 aitant és llarg l'hom menys de fer llarguesa  
 com és escàs si no fall en dependre.  
 Vicis, virtuts, per actes s'han a pendre;  
 32 après lo fet és llur potença apresada.

XXXII

1-8. No man can achieve great worth in this world unless he has material possessions, goodness, and high lineage. But the second of these is more important than the other two, even if it is of little use without them. Through it the others are highly esteemed, for power has no worth unless it is put to good use, while lineage has to deserve the honour accorded it; it is a man's worth which gives value to everything else.

9-16. Yet no one can call himself a musician if he has never played a note, for you cannot become one merely by wanting to play an instrument, but only by actually playing it well and in tune. In just the same way, anyone who has inner worth, but is poor in possessions and of base lineage, does not have the means to show great zeal in what is known as moral virtue.

17-24. There are others, and there always will be, of a different nature, blessed with riches and noble blood but lacking the most important part since they are of little worth themselves, for unless the man himself is good, all he has is useless. And often Nature is at fault, for it will endow with goodness men who are unable to make any impression upon the world. As for the first, no wisdom can dwell in their heads; as for the latter, if they lack worthiness, it is through no fault of theirs.

25-32. Virtue lies in the mid-place, between the extremes; it is very difficult to achieve this mean, and very few people know what it is like. No one is deemed good merely because he knows that the mean exists: the man who shows no largesse can no more be called generous than he can be accused of meanness if he never stops spending. We can only tell virtues from vices once they have been translated into actions; their potentiality can only be seen after the event.

No-s conquerran virtuts per gran aptesa  
ne les hauran poetes per llur art.  
Han-les aquells metents vicis a part,  
36 obrant virtut per amor de bonesa,  
res no dubtant viciosa vergonya,  
mas solament amant virtuós preu.  
E l'home pec en aquest banc no seu,  
40 e qui n'és lluny lo gran delit se llonya.

*Tornada*

Llir entre cards, tostemps faré ma ponya  
que la dolor jamés de mi-s partesca;  
e no pensau que mon cas enferesca,  
44 car major dan mereix ma gran vergonya.

33-40. No amount of cleverness will make virtue easy to attain, and it is beyond the reach of the poet's art. Only those possess it who lay aside all vices, acting virtuously out of love of goodness, quite free from the fear that any wickedness will shame them, and holding in esteem only honourable virtue. But the brutish man has no place on that bench, and those who are far removed from such virtue are well out of reach of the great delight.

41-44: *Envoi*. Lily among thorns, I will always do my utmost to ensure that pain never leaves me; and don't think that I am exaggerating, for my shameful guilt deserves even worse.



## XXXIX

Qui no és trist, de mos dictats no cur  
 (o en algun temps que sia trist estat!)  
 E lo qui és de mals passional,  
 4 per fer-se trist, no cerque lloc escur:  
 llija mos dits, mostrants pensa torbada,  
 sens alguna art eixits d'hom fora seny.  
 E la raó que en tal dolor m'empeny  
 8 amor ho sap, qui n'és causa estada.

Alguna part e molta és trobada  
 de gran delit en la pensa del trist,  
 e si les gents ab gran dolor m'han vist,  
 12 de gran delit ma arma fon companyada.  
 Quan simplement amor en mi habita,  
 tal delit sent que no-m cuit ser al món,  
 e com sos fets vull veure de pregon,  
 16 mescladament ab dolor me delita.

Prest és lo temps que faré vida ermita,  
 per mills poder d'amor les festes colre.  
 D'est viure estrany algú no-s vulla dolre,  
 20 car per sa cort amor me vol e-m cita.  
 E io qui l'am per si tan solament,  
 no denegant lo do que pot donar,  
 a sa tristor me plau abandonar  
 24 e per tostemps viure entristadament.

Traure no pusc de mon enteniment  
 que sia cert e molt pus bell partit  
 sa tristor gran que tot altre delit,  
 28 puis hi recau delitós llanguiment.  
 Alguna part de mon gran delit és  
 aquella que tot home trist aporta:  
 que, planyent si, lo plànyer lo conforta  
 32 més que si d'ell tot lo món se dolgués.

XXXIX

1-8. Only those who are sad or else have been sad at some time need bother with my works! And anyone who is tormented by his suffering need not seek out some dark place in which to give himself up to sadness: let him read my poems, which speak of frenzied thoughts, and which have all come gushing out of a madman without the help of art. And love knows what has forced such pain upon me, for it is all love's doing.

9-16. Intense delight, and in no small measure, is to be found amidst the thoughts of one who is sad; and even when people have seen me in great pain, my soul has been comforted by this great pleasure. When love dwells within me in its simple form, such is my delight that I forget I am in this world. But as soon as I try to understand love's ways more deeply, it brings me pleasure mixed with pain.

17-24. The time draws near when I shall go and lead a hermit's life, so as better to celebrate love's feast-days. No one need pity me for this strange existence, for love wants me for its court and has summoned me to it. And I, who love love for its own sake, without refusing the gift that it might make me, am happy to give myself up to its sadness and be sad forever.

25-32. I cannot help thinking how very true it is that its deep sadness is much to be preferred to any other delight, since it involves a pleasurable languishing. Part of my great pleasure is the same as that which anyone who is sad may enjoy: when we pity our own plight, our lamentation comforts us more than if the whole world were grieving for us.

Ésser me cuit per moltes gents reprès,  
puis que tant llou viure en la vida trista,  
mas io, qui he sa glòria a l'ull vista,  
36 desig sos mals, puis delit hi és promès.  
No-s pot saber, menys de la esperiença,  
lo gran delit que és en lo sols voler  
d'aquell qui és amador verdader,  
40 e ama si, veent-se en tal volença.

*Tornada*

Llir entre cards, Déu vos don coneixença  
com só per vós a tot extrem posat:  
ab mon poder amor m'ha enderrocant,  
44 sens aquell seu d'infinida potença.

33-40. I dare say I shall be reprimanded by many people for giving such praise to the life that is spent in sadness, but I, who have seen the glory of it with my own eyes, desire the pain it causes, since it holds the promise of pleasure. Unless one has experienced it, one cannot understand the great delight that awaits the true lover who, having determined to love, proceeds to do so, and loves himself for it.

41-44: *Envoi*. Lily among thorns, God help you to realise that because of you I am driven to every extreme: love has overcome me with my own strength, without even drawing on its own infinite power.

XLII (*Maldit*)

Vós qui sabeu de la tortra-1 costum,  
 e si no ho feu, plàcia'l-vos oir:  
 quan mort li tol son par, se vol jaquir  
 4 d'obres d'amor, ne beu aigua de flum,  
 ans en los clots ensutza primer l'aigua,  
 ne-s posa mai en verd arbre fullat.  
 Mas contra açò és vostra qualitat,  
 8 per gran desig no cast que en vós se raiga.

E no cuideu, dona, que bé us escaiga,  
 que, pus hagués tastat la carn gentil,  
 a mercader lliuràs vostre cos vil,  
 12 e son dret nom En Joan me pens caiga.  
 E si voleu que us ne dón coneixença,  
 sa faç és gran e la vista molt llosca;  
 sos fonaments són de llagost o mosca.  
 16 Cert no mereix draps vendre de Florença.

E coneixent la vostra gran fallença,  
 volgué's muntar, en amar, cavaller.  
 E sabent ell tot vostre fet en ver  
 20 en vós amar se tengra a consciència,  
 sabent molt clar la sutzeada vida,  
 prenent públic les pagues del pecat.  
 Vostre cos lleig per drap és baratat;  
 24 vostre servir és bo sol per a dida.

E no cuideu filla us hagués jaquida,  
 vós alletant aquella ab vostra llet,  
 car vostre cos és de verí replet,  
 28 e mostren-ho vostres pèls fora mida:  
 car si us jaquiú vostra barba criada  
 e la us toleu, puis ab los pèls dels braços  
 poran-se fer avantajosos llaços,  
 32 prenints perdius, tortra, o cogullada.

## XLII

1-8. You must have heard about the turtle-dove. Well, if you haven't, listen while I tell you. When death robs her of her mate, she says farewell to love. She prefers puddle-water, fouling it herself before drinking, and never touches the running stream. And she'd never perch on a tree that was young and in leaf. But you and your ways are a different story altogether, for in you a monstrous lust has taken root.

9-16. Just forget it, madam, if you thought you were sitting pretty! You who gave that low body of yours to a merchant after it had savoured noble flesh! What's his name? John, isn't it? You know who I mean: he's the one with the enormous head and the bad squint, and a pair of legs a fly or a locust could be proud of. Beats me how a fellow like that ever came to be selling Florentine cloth for a living.

17-24. Once he had learned about your big weakness, he thought that by mounting you he'd amount to a knight. But if he learned the whole story and heard all the details of your filthy little life, and of how you paid in public the wages of your sins, he'd soon regret loving you. For you've sold your body for a few yards of cloth! You are no use to anyone except as a wet-nurse.

25-32. But don't think you'll be able to put all that milk to good use when John goes off and leaves you with his child (and don't expect a boy). For your whole body is swollen with poison, as anyone can see by those enormous hairs you have growing all over it. Why, if you let your beard grow for a while and then sheared it off, you could knot it with the hair from your arms and make some first-rate hunting snares for catching partridges, turtle-doves, or crested lapwings!

- Quan oireu «Alcavota provada!»,  
responeu tost, que per vós ho diran.  
E puis per nom propi vos cridaran,  
36 ja no us mostreu en l'oir empatxada,  
enterrogant, «Amics, ¿ie què voleu?  
(.En dret d'amor voleu res que fer pusca?  
Tracte semblant jamés me trobà cusca.  
40 Presta seré a quant demanareu.»

*Tornada*

- Tots los qui torb, o cunçament volreu  
en fets d'amor, emprau Na Monboí.  
Ella us farà tot lo que féu a mi.  
44 No-s pot saber l'endreq que hi trobareu!

33-40. And when you hear people shout: 'Hey, you! You old whore-monger!', don't be bashful, because it's you they'll mean. And since they'll call you by your proper name, don't pretend you're deaf, but just ask them: 'So what will it be, my dears? If it's to do with love, you can rely on me to get to work on it right away. Just tell me what you're after, and leave the rest to me.'

41-44: *Envoi*. If any of you are troubled by love, or if you should want a bit of procuring done, give Na Monboí a try. There's nothing she did for me that she wouldn't do for you. You'll soon see what a lift she'll give you!



## XLVI

Veles e vents han mos desigs complir  
 faent camins dubtosos per la mar.  
 Mestre i ponent contra d'ells veig armar:  
 4 xaloc, llevant los deuen subvenir  
 ab llurs amics lo grec e lo migjorn,  
 fent humils precés al vent tramuntanal  
 que en son bufar los sia parcial  
 8 e que tots cinc complisquen mon retorn.

Bullirà-1 mar com la caçola en forn,  
 mudant color e l'estat natural,  
 e mostrarà voler tota res mal  
 12 que sobre si atur un punt al jorn.  
 Grans e pocs peixs a recors correran  
 e cercaran amagatalls secrets.  
 Fugint al mar on són nudrits e fets.  
 16 Per gran remei en terra eixiran.

Los pelegrins tots ensems votaran  
 e prometran molts dons de cera fets.  
 La gran paor traurà al llum los secrets  
 20 que al confés descoberts no seran.  
 En lo perill no-m caureu de l'esment,  
 ans votaré al Déu qui-ns ha lligats  
 de no minvar mes fermes voluntats  
 24 e que tots temps me sereu de present.

lo tem la mort per no ser-vos absent,  
 perquè amor per mort és anul·lats.  
 Mas io no creu que mon voler sobrats  
 28 pusca ésser per tal departiment.  
 lo só gelós de vostre escàs voler  
 que, io morint, no meta a mi en oblit.  
 Sol est pensar me tol del món delit  
 32 car, nós vivint, no creu se pusca fer:

XLVI

1-8. Let wind conspire with sail to give me what I long for, carrying me across the sea's perilous highways! Even now I can see the winds from the West and North-West gathering hostile forces: the Sirocco and the South-Western must hold them back, enlisting the help of their allies, the North-Eastern and the Midi, and humbly imploring the North wind to lend its support, so that all five of them blowing together may bring about my return.

9-16. The ocean will bubble like a pot of stew taken to the baker's oven to cook, changing colour and losing its natural form as it seethes. Anything that ventures upon it, even for a single moment, will feel the force of its rage, and all the fish beneath will rush for shelter to secret hiding-places. But in the end they too will have to abandon the very sea which spawned and nurtured them and, in utter desperation, leap out on to dry land.

17-24. There's not a pilgrim on my ship who will not call upon Heaven, making vows and promises of countless votive offerings of wax. Sheer terror will force out secrets that not even the confessor has learned. But in the midst of this danger, I shall think only of you, and I shall make my vow to that same God who joined us never to weaken in my resolve, and to keep you constantly in my thoughts.

25-40. I fear death only because it would mean absence from you, and because death blots out love. Not that I think that even such a separation could vanquish my desire. Rather, the fear that preys on me is that you do not desire me as you ought, so that, should I die, you would never think of me again. Even though it seems impossible that I should be less than happy while we both live, there is one thought that makes me wretched:

après ma mort d'amar perdau poder  
 e sia tost en ira convertit,  
 e io, forçat d'aquest món ser eixit,  
 36 tot lo meu mal serà vós no veer.  
 O Déu, tper què terme no hi ha en amor,  
 car prop d'aquell io-m trobarà tot sol?  
 Vostre voler sabera quant me vol,  
 40 tement, fiant, de tot l'avenidor.

lo són aquell pus extrem amador  
 après d'aquell a qui Déu vida tol.  
 Puis ió són viu, mon cor no mostra dol  
 44 tant com la mort per sa extrema dolor.  
 A bé o mal d'amor ió só dispost,  
 mas per mon fat Fortuna cas no-m porta.  
 Tot esvetlat, ab desbarrada porta,  
 48 me trobarà faent humil respost.

lo desig ço que.m porà ser gran cost  
 i aquest esper de molts mals m'aconhorta.  
 A mi no plau ma vida ser estorta  
 52 d'un cas molt fer, qual prec Déu sia tost:  
 lladoncs les gents no-ls calrà donar fe  
 al que amor fora mi obrarà.  
 Lo seu poder en acte-s mostrarà  
 56 e los meus dits ab los fets provaré.

*Tornada*

Amor, de vós io-n sent més que no-n sé,  
 de què la part pijor me'n romandrà,  
 e de vós sap lo qui sens vós està.  
 60 A joc de daus vos acompararé.

that you would no longer be able to love me once I was dead, and that you would soon find your love turning to hate. As for me, driven from this world, I would feel no other torment than to be unable to look upon you. Oh God, if only there were bounds to love—for I alone among lovers would have almost reached them by now. Then, instead of being by turns full of fear and hope for all that the future might hold, I would know for sure how much love your heart harbours for me.

41-48. No one has ever taken his love to greater extremes than I—except those who have given their lives for its sake. While I continue to live, I cannot offer as much proof of my heart's suffering as I could by dying. I am prepared for whatever love has in store for me, good or bad. But Fortune has not yet revealed what my fate is to be. When she does, she will find me waiting up, my gates unbarred, ready to do her bidding humbly.

49-56. The very thing I pray will happen could cost me dear, and yet this same hope consoles me in my great suffering. In that fearful event, with which I pray God will provide me soon, I do not want my life to be spared. When that hour comes, people will see the outer signs of love in me, and will not need to take my word alone. Love's potentiality will be revealed in act, and I shall have proved my words with deeds.

57-60. *Envoi*: Love, if only I understood you as much as I feel you! As things are, I'll be left with only that part of you that's no good to anyone. Nobody can know you for what you are until he is free of you. What can I compare you with, except a game of dice?

## LIII

Ab tal dolor com l'esperit s'arranca  
 e dins lo cos comença fer camí,  
 e roman fret lo lloc d'on parteix si,  
 4 la viva carn s'altera en groga i blanca:  
 molt e pus fort dolor mon desig sent  
 com ha partir de la mia esperança.  
 No és del tot, mas en lo camí-s llança:  
 8 ja mon esper demostra alterament.

No-m pens que Déu me done tal turment  
 que-m veja al món si perd lo meu desig;  
 no-m restarà sinó que mude llig,  
 12 car de tot l'als mon esforç és potent.  
 Tots los assaigs que amadors han fets,  
 tots me són pocs, sinó mort acordada:  
 si-m fall amor, no-m fall pensa irada  
 16 per castigar mos passats malifets.

Tan gran amor hauria en desherets  
 que tal afer menys de senyal passàs.  
 De bé o mal, se'n deu mostrar gran cas:  
 20 a amor li plau que-s mostren sos secrets.  
 Tant mon voler amor ha obeït  
 que no-m dolrà sa perillosa plaga  
 si per null temps la fama no s'apaga,  
 24 com sant Francesc de la sua ha jaquit.

Vós, dona, sou mon déu e mon delit.  
 Doncs, no us dolgau si perd lo món per vós.  
 No-rn teniu tort en les mies dolors,  
 28 e, vós dolent, me féu pus dolorit:  
 res no-m dol tant com si de mi us doleu.  
 Llexau a mi acomanat a amor,  
 car de aquell no-m trobe gran paor.  
 32 De ira prec que-m vulla guardar Déu.

LIII

1-8. With pain like that of the soul when it wrenches itself free of the body and begins its journey outwards, leaving in the chill of death the place which it disinhabits, as the once living flesh turns yellow and then pales: even greater pain does my desire feel when it must take leave of my hope. It has not left it entirely, but has struck out along that road: my hope already shows signs of decay.

9-16. I do not believe God could put me to any torment comparable to staying in this world should my desire be thwarted; by then I will have tried everything, short of renegeing on the Faith, for the strength of my desire is capable of all else. Nothing that lovers have ever attempted impresses me, except voluntary death: even if I should lack for love, I shall not want for angry thoughts with which to punish myself for my past misdeeds.

17-24. I would be betraying such great love as mine if I were to allow such a matter to pass unnoticed. Notable examples, whether of good or evil, should not be kept hidden: Love is happy for its secrets to be displayed. My will has obeyed love to such an extent that the dangerous wound it has inflicted will cause me no pain if only my renown will last for ever like that of St Francis and his stigmata.

25-32. Lady, you are my god and my delight. So do not pity me if I should die because of you. In all my suffering you do me no wrong, for if you took pity on me, you would make me suffer even more: nothing would hurt me more than your compassion. Recommend me to love, and leave me be, for of love I have little fear. I only pray that God will protect me from my own ire.

Sí com a l'hom frenètic l'és molt greu,  
quan a fer mal se vol ésser llevat,  
lo fort lligam que li hauran posat,  
36 M mal no sent fins la follia veu,  
ne pren a mi: quan só torbat per ira,  
io-m trop esforç tant que no sent treball;  
quan me jaqueix, si bé tot jorn ho call,  
40 romanç tant llas que sol mon cor sospira.

*Tornada*

Llir entre cards, ma voluntat se gira  
tant que io us vull honesta i deshonest.  
Lo sant aïr—aquell del qual tinc festa -  
44 e plau-me ço de què vinc tost en ira.

33-40. Just as the epileptic in his frenzy, as he tries to get to his feet in order to work some evil, takes great harm from the strong bonds with which he has been secured, but does not feel the pain until he recovers, so it is with me: when anger grips me, I find such strength that I do not notice how much I struggle; when the rage subsides, even if I do not say a word about it all day, I am left feeling so weak that no sound escapes me except the sigh of my heart.

41-44: *Envoi*. Lily among thorns, my desires shift so wildly that I want you to be both virtuous and unchaste. I hate that saint whose feast-day I keep, and I take pleasure in what soon fills me instantly with rage.



## LXXX

Tot llaurador és pagat del jornal  
e l'advocat qui perd lo guanyat plet.  
lo, per servir amor, romanç desfet  
4 de tot quant he, que servir no me'n cal.  
He fet senyor del seny a mon voler,  
veent amor de mon seny mal servit;  
rapaç l'he fet, e Déu a part jaquit.  
8 E són setze anys que lo guardó esper!

*Tornada*

Amor, Amor, poc és vostre poder  
per altre hom com io fer tant amar.  
Anau, anau vostres armes provar  
12 en contra aquell qui vostre no vol ser!

LXXX

1-8. Every journeyman labourer can count on his wages at the end of the day, and the lawyer can expect to be paid even when he loses his case. But if I have served love, it is only to end up completely ruined. All my labours have brought me nothing. Since my reason refused to do love's bidding, I have appointed my desire as its master. I have turned reason into a lowly thrall, and have given no thought to God. Sixteen years of this, and I am still waiting for my reward!

9-12: *Envoi*. Love, love, you would have a hard time trying to make any other man love like me. Be off with you, and pick on someone who doesn't want to be your serf!

## LXXXI

Així com celi qui-s veu prop de la mort,  
corrent mal temps, perillant en la mar,  
e veu lo lloc on se pot restaurar  
e no hi ateny per sa malvada sort:  
ne pren a me qui vaig afanys passant  
e veig a vós bastant mos mals delir.  
Desesperat de mos desigs complir,  
iré pel món vostre ergull recitant.

**LXXXI**

Imagine someone who comes face to face with death as his pitching ship struggles to ride out a storm. Although he can see the shore where safety and comfort wait, fate is against him: he never reaches it. Now think what I must feel who long for you constantly, and must watch you from afar—you who could wipe out all my pain. In despair of ever fulfilling my desires, I shall wander the world, singing of your pride.

## LXXXII

Quant plau a Déu que la fusta peresca,  
en segur port romp àncores i ormeig,  
e de poc mal a molt hom morir veig:  
null hom és cert d'algun fet com fenesca.  
L'home sabent no té pus avantatge  
sinó que-1 pec sol menys fets avenir.  
L'esperiment i-ls juís veig fallir:  
fortuna i cas los torben llur usatge.

LXXXII

Whenever it is God's will that the ship should go under, then even if it is moored in the safest port, it will lose its anchor and its rigging will snap. And I could tell you of many cases where some minor ailment has ended in death. No one can foretell how anything will turn out. The wise are no better off in this respect than are fools, except that fools are more likely to make the wrong guesses. Both our experience and our judgement prove in the end to be unreliable—such things are of little use against Fortune and the events through which it shapes our lives.

## LXXXIII

Sí col malalt qui llong temps ha que jau  
e vol un jorn esforçar-se llevar  
e sa virtut no li pot molt aidar  
ans, llevat dret, sobtament plegat cau:  
ne pren a mi que m'esforç contra amor  
e vull seguir tot ço que mon seny vol.  
Complir no ho pusc perquè la força-m tol  
un mal extrem atracat per amor.

LXXXIII

Consider the plight of the sick man weakened by long confinement to his bed. One day he decides that he must struggle to his feet no matter what it costs. But he simply does not have the necessary strength, and at the first step he crumples up and falls to the ground. That's just the way it is with me: I am always struggling against love, always trying to do what my reason tells me is best. But I cannot do as it bids me: love has thought up an especially fierce illness just for me, to make sure that I never find the strength.



## LXXXVII

- Tot entenent amador mi entenga,  
 puis mon parlar de amor no s'aparta,  
 e l'amador que en appetit se farta  
 lo meu parlar no-m pens que bé comprença.
- 5 Tres amors són per on amadors amen:  
 l'u és honest, e l'altre delitable;  
 del terç me call, que és lo profit amable  
 per què-ls arnats llurs amants no reamen.  
 Los dos units en nós se poden pendre,  
 10 si llurs dos focs han lloc en nós d'encendre.
- Aquests volers a desigs han acórrer,  
 seguint caseu sa pròpia natura.  
 Lo cos, qui és corrupta creatura,  
 als apetits corruptes ha d'acórrer.
- 15 L'arma, qui és per tostemps duradora,  
 béns e virtuts ab llauger peu encalça.  
 L'amor del cos en son delit l'embalça,  
 mas, no trobant son propi, s'entrenyora.  
 Lladoncs, ells junts mesclat voler componen  
 20 que dura tant com d'aquell se consonen.
- Tal voler naix en part per ignorança,  
 e compost és de nostres dos natures,  
 e fa que l'hom, ab tots enginys e cures,  
 vol, e no ha, la fi de sa esperança,
- 25 perquè ell no és bastant l'arma a complaure  
 e menys lo cos, car més dels ops li dóna:  
 puja'l en alt, e natura l'afona;  
 fa que acord jamés pot en l'hom caure.  
 Tot quant és d'hom vol fi de sa natura,  
 30 i aquest voler res del món no l'atura.

LXXXVII

1-10. Every enlightened lover will understand me, for all I am going to say is about love, while I doubt that the sort who thinks only of satisfying his appetite will grasp very much. There are three kinds of love with which lovers love: one of them is chaste, another pleasurable; of the third, profitable love, I will not speak, for in it the loved one does not reciprocate the lover's feelings. The first two kinds may take root jointly in us, if there is room there for their respective fires to be ignited.

11-20. These two manifestations of the will, each following its own nature, have to express themselves through desires. The body, which is a creature of corruption, is necessarily drawn to the corrupt appetites. The soul, which is everlasting, with fleet foot seeks out virtues and good. The body's love plunges the soul into its form of pleasure, but when the soul fails to find its own delight, it grieves. And so the two work together to form a mixed will which lasts for as long as they agree to continue.

21-30. In part this will is born of ignorance and is composed of our two natures. It forces man to want his hope's fulfilment, without ever attaining it, no matter how much thought and trouble he may take, because this will is unable to satisfy the soul, much less the body, since it gives the body more than is necessary: this will thrusts the body upwards, but the body's nature pulls it down. Because of this, harmony can never reign in man. Everything in him desires the fulfilment of its nature, and nothing in the world can stand in the way of this desire.

Lo seu ver nom delitable-s nomena  
 e, desreglat, pren quant l'és agradable.  
 Aquest fa hom falsament ser amable,  
 volent açò que en ser content no-l mena,  
 35 car no vol res que tot l'home contente;  
 per ço en ell l'amador no reposa.  
 E tant en hom aquest voler fa nosa,  
 com als volers cosa equal se presente,  
 si u vol molt ço que poc l'altre aïre,  
 40 no hi ha molt fer que del tot a si-l tire.

D'aquest voler los trobadors escriuen,  
 e per aquest dolor mortal los toca.  
 La racional part de l'arma no-ls broca:  
 del sensual aquests apetits viuen.  
 45 Ésser bé pot que l'hom simplement amè  
 d'arma sens cos e ab lo cos sens arma;  
 amant virtut, hom de tal amor s'arma,  
 i-l cos és cert d'un brut voler brame.  
 Aquests, mesclats, un drap de mescla tixen  
 50 que no-s veu bé les colors que d'ells ixen.

Caseu d'aquests sa natura oblida  
 e, tant com pot, fa que l'altre obeesca,  
 no pas en tant que del tot s'avorresca:  
 son estament és entre mort e vida.  
 55 E quan caseu son apetit treballa,  
 se mostren clar maravellosos actes,  
 faent acord ab amigables pactes.  
 I en semblant cas deuria haver baralla,  
 car l'arma vol ço que raó no dicta,  
 60 i en aquell fet lo cos de mort s'afflicta.

31-40. Appropriately, it is known as pleasurable love, for it makes use indiscriminately of whatever it finds pleasurable. It makes man love falsely and want that which cannot lead him to happiness, for it does not desire what can satisfy the whole man; that is why it makes the lover ever restless. And when the two wills are both attracted to the same thing, this desire so obstructs man that, if one of the wills greatly wants what the other does not despise, almost without effort that will takes complete control of what it desires.

41-50. It is this will that poets talk of, and through it mortal pain afflicts them. It is not the rational part of the soul which spurs them on: such appetites thrive on the sensual will. It is quite possible for man to love simply, with the spirit and without the body, and with the body but without the soul. If a man loves virtue, then it is with such love that he arms himself, while there is no doubt that the body, for its part, groans with a brutish desire. These two wills, when they are mingled, weave a mixed fabric in which it is difficult to distinguish between the colours it displays.

51-60. Each of them forgets its proper nature, while at the same time doing all it can to make the other obey, but it does not succeed in making the other give up completely: the oppressed will lies in a state between life and death. And when they both bring their appetites fully into play, agreeing to a friendly truce, then there are marvellous acts to be seen. And yet, in such circumstances there ought to be a fight, for the soul then wants what is contrary to reason's decree, while the body feels death's affliction.

Tot amador delit no pot atènyer  
 fins que lo cos e l'arma se acorden,  
 car si-ls volers entre aquests se morden,  
 aquest amor no-ns pot a molt empènyer.  
 65 En contra-l cos en sos actes se mostra,  
 tolent-li quant natura li atorga,  
 i a l'arma fa beure amargant porga.  
 De dret en dret no plau natura nostra;  
 l'arma per si contentament no-n tasta;  
 70 sí fa lo cos, mas poc, e tost se gasta.

L'arma per si en tal voler no-s mescla,  
 car no és en res, ne pot ser son objecte,  
 ne al cos és pus que d'un brut son efecte.  
 D'abdós units se compon esta mescla,  
 75 car l'home vol, la voluntat guanyada,  
 seny e saber, de la dona que ama.  
 Ama l'amat, e tol l'honor e fama,  
 i en fets del cos l'arma és delitada.  
 Lo cos jamés, si cansa, bé no-s farta,  
 80 e tant com pot tot lo finit aparta.

Les voluntats se mostren per les obres,  
 d'on se veu clar com la nostra arma-s baixa,  
 e-l nostre cos en alt munta sa raixa,  
 perquè en delit ell e l'arma són pobres.  
 85 L'arma pel cos a son delit s'enclina,  
 lleixant lo seu, e sa natura-s llunya.  
 Lo cos en alt a delitar met punya;  
 no coneix bé sa natura mesquina.  
 La carn volar vol e l'arma s'atterra  
 90 perquè a algú, si toca, no s'aferra.

61-70. No lover can attain delight until the body and soul are in harmony, for the love we feel when the desires of these two clash will not take us very far. This love obstructs the body's actions, robbing it of everything with which Nature has endowed it, while it gives the soul a bitter draught to drink. Nothing that is unadulterated can attract our nature; the soul can never savour contentment of its own accord; in this the body does succeed, but not for long, and its pleasure is soon spent.

71-80. The soul cannot embroil itself unaided in this desire, for the soul is not attached to matter, and cannot be the exclusive object of this desire, whose effects on the body are purely bestial. This mixed desire is composed of both body and soul joined together, for once the man has won the affection of the woman he loves, he wants her mind and her understanding. From his love for the beloved, he derives honour and fame, and the soul thus finds pleasure in the body's deeds. While the body may tire, it is never satisfied, and keeps all that is finite at bay as long as it can.

81-90. Desires are revealed through acts, and from these it is evident that the soul drags itself down while the body's fury swells up, which is why both body and soul are poor in delights. The soul inclines towards its pleasure through the body, neglecting its own delight, and thus forgets its own nature. The body strives to experience its delight on a higher level; it forgets its wretched nature. The flesh tries to ascend while the soul abases itself, which is why this desire will enter men but never hold fast in them.

Les voluntats que de virtut no toquen  
 han moviment en semblant de marea,  
 i en lo començ metrien gran ferea  
 al qui sabés com pugen e-s derroquen.  
 95 De tres cordells Amor deu fer sa corda,  
 car u romp tost, e l'altre molt no dura.  
 Trenc o fluix, d'u en l'altre mort procura;  
 si-l terç no hi és, la corda se descorda.  
 Aquest és ferm, i-ls altres fa que tinguen.  
 100 Ésser no-ls fa, mas té que en baix no vinguen.

No-s pot bé dir com arma i cos pratiquen  
 aquest voler: ne-s plaen o desplaen.  
 U sent content, los poders d'altre caen  
 e, agreujat, les forces multipliquen,  
 105 car moltes veus del cos l'apetit cessa  
 sí que ab lo seu és ops que l'arma-s force,  
 e l'altre veu és ops que-l cos s'esforce  
 per amansar l'arma, qui-s veu opressa.  
 Tots de per si han ops que fam los toque  
 110 o que-l desig de l'u a l'altre broque.

Si l'apetit raonable s'agreuja  
 del cobejós seguir, no és maravella  
 car, tant com pot, per delit aparella  
 que l'arma-l cos en mal hostal alleuja.  
 115 A l'infinit no per si lo cos guarda;  
 l'arma per si de tot excés s'enuja.  
 Junts acordants, en delit caseu puja  
 tant com saber l'errada l'arma tarda.  
 Açò sdevé com del cos volers fluixen:  
 120 lladoncs los tels de sos ulls desengruixen.

91-100. Those desires which have no element of virtue ebb and flow like the tide, and no one could fail to be shocked if he saw for the first time how they rise up and then plunge down again. Love should use all three of its strands together to make its rope, for one of them easily snaps and another does not last for long. If one of these is too taut or too slack, it renders the other useless; unless the third strand is present, the rope unravels. This strand is strong, and it makes the others hold; although they can exist without it, it prevents their undoing.

101-10. It is not easy to tell how body and soul implement this desire: they take neither delight nor displeasure in it. While one is satisfied, the other's strength diminishes as it watches resentfully its opponent's power increase, for often the body's appetite ceases, so that the soul has to assert its own, and on other occasions the body has to strive to subjugate the soul and to dominate it. Each of them in turn has to be stirred by its hunger or goaded by the other's desire.

111-20. It is hardly surprising that the reasonable appetite should resent being led by its lustful counterpart, for the latter does all it can to ensure, for the sake of its own pleasure, that the body will give the soul a poor lodging. The body, on its own, can have no contact with the infinite; the soul by itself abhors all kinds of excess. By mutual consent, however, each strives towards delight for as long as the soul fails to realise its mistake. When the desires of the body weaken, the veils that cover the eyes of the soul begin to clear.



L'arma i-1 cos caseu en l'altre-s delita;  
 delits, dolors, entre ells los se parteixen,  
 les passions d'u en altre-s pareixen  
 —esperiment als pecs trau de sospita—  
 125 mas algú d'ells no és tan suportable  
 que totalment per l'altre s'avorresca.  
 Fastig, oblit, fan que amor d'ells partesca,  
 o al menys no és per igual temps durable:  
 en los molt més per part del cos expira,  
 130 e moltes veus per oblit o per ira.

Per nostres ulls l'hom d'esta amor s'enflama,  
 toc desijant, d'on voler creix o fina.  
 Temprat esper la voluntat afina  
 e, perdut ell, amor de mort se clama.  
 135 Son fill e nét són desig i esperança,  
 mas prop los ve paor, qui-ls fa gran brega.  
 Tals passions amador no les nega.  
 Aquesta amor cau en esta balança:  
 caseu d'aquests a l'altre vençre tempta,  
 140 e si ho compleix, amor e si destempta.

Per nostres senys amor d'arma comença,  
 mas vol per si virtuts e saviesa.  
 Aquesta amor per sol entendre és presa,  
 amant lo bé, del qual ha coneixença.  
 145 Es feta gran segons les parts s'acorden,  
 multiplicant los béns d'on ella-s forma.  
 Del bé honest aquesta amor pren forma,  
 e los volers que-n surten no discorden.  
 Lo qui l'ateny en ser content s'acosta:  
 150 por no acull, ne esperança, de costa.

121-30. Soul and body each finds pleasure in the other; they share pleasures and pains between them, and their passions come to be alike. Experience will teach as much even to fools. But neither of them can endure the other to the extent of completely denying itself. Satiety or neglect soon drives love from them, or at least it does not stay for the same length of time in each: in the great majority of lovers, it takes its leave through the body, very often because of neglect or anger.

131-40. Man becomes inflamed with this love through the eyes, and feels the desire to touch, after which this will grows or dies. Desire tunes and tempers hope, and once this is lost, love bewails its own death. Its son and grandson are desire and hope, but fear follows close on their heels and wages a fierce war against them. No lover will deny that he has these passions. The scales in which this love has been placed work in the following way: each passion tries to outweigh the other, but if it succeeds, it thwarts both love and itself.

141-50. Spiritual love begins in the senses, but makes virtues and wisdom its goal. This form of love is attained only through the understanding, because of which it knows and loves good. Its power depends on the extent to which its constituent parts are in harmony, and it is this harmony which multiplies the forms of good from which it is made. This love takes the form of virtuous good, and there is no disagreement among the desires which spring from it. Whoever achieves such love begins to know what happiness is: it allows neither fear nor hope to come anywhere near it.

¿ Quils són aquells que amor honest los force  
 amar per si virtuts en una dona?  
 Bé són io cert que tots la volen bona  
 perquè-1 delit de l'hom durar s'esforce;  
 155 no-n sé algú que separat lo senta.  
 Menys de saber, senten dins ells sa obra,  
 d'on l'altra amor nom de ferma li'n sobra:  
 de fastig rep, o de oblit, empenta.  
 Aquesta amor és filosofal pedra,  
 160 que lla on cau ço que res no val medra.

Aquella amor on Venus ha sa regna  
 a nostre cos ensems ab l'arma guarda.  
 A molts plaers e dolors no és tarda,  
 e en cor honest moltes vegades regna.  
 165 Torba lo seny, subtilitats enfosca,  
 e sa dolor, dorment hom, ella vetla.  
 Solaços vol e prestament la cetla.  
 Qui n'és plagat la raó té molt fosca  
 perquè no pot honesta amor percebre:  
 170 de ardiment no pot sentir la llebre!

Los apetits sensuels l'arma lliguen;  
 doncs, tots aquells qui del tot Venus tira  
 molt foscament llur enteniment mira  
 per los cecs focs qui l'esperit abriguen.  
 175 Los escolans de qui Venus és mestre  
 lo contemplar jaqueixen, prenints l'acte.  
 Voler no cast, executor sens pacte,  
 domda cos braus, domèstic fa-1 campestre,  
 faent sentir passió molt extrema.  
 180 Jau en dur llit, en hom de vida sema.

151-60. What man was ever compelled by virtuous love to love a woman for her virtues alone? I am convinced that we all prefer the woman to be virtuous, because man always wants his pleasure to last. I do not know of anyone who feels virtuous love for its own sake. Lovers feel the workings of pleasure within them, even without being aware of it, and it is because of this that such love could never be called constant: it is goaded by weariness or neglect. But virtuous love is the philosopher's stone, making precious every worthless thing it touches.

161-70. That form of love over which Venus has her dominion involves the participation of body and soul together. It soon brings many pleasures and many pains, and can often reign over a virtuous heart. It clouds the mind, covers subtle truths with darkness, and keeps watch over a man's pain even while he sleeps. It longs impatiently for the solaces of the bedchamber. It darkens the reason of all those it wounds, and they have no means of knowing what virtuous love is. You cannot expect a hare to know how it feels to be courageous!

171-80. The sensual appetites fether the soul. So it is that the understanding of all those over whom Venus holds complete sway can see only very dimly through the blind fires which shroud the spirit. Those disciples who have Venus as their teacher abandon the contemplative path, and take to action. The unchaste desire, which never stops to negotiate terms before carrying out its will, can tame the savage body and domesticate any wild thing by inflicting the most extreme passion. But it must lie in a hard bed—in a man devoid of true life.

L'amor que-ns ve tota de part de l'arma  
 en les virtuts i en l'entendre s'endreça;  
 aquest voler simple Déu lo adreça  
 e pot ser tant que tot altre-s desarma.  
 185 Però en mi, trobant lloc, tots caigueren,  
 mogut caseu per la sua semblança.  
 Dos colps sentí; donà'ls caseu sa llança.  
 Actes caseu dins en mi cometeren:  
 u donà llum per si, l'altre tenebra,  
 190 e tots justats, salut, delit, e febra.

Déu l'esperit de gran favor abasta:  
 en mers delits passions no-l congoixen.  
 Al cos mesquí sens fastig no l'afloixen;  
 no pot sentir bé si lo mal no tasta.  
 195 Tant com lo cos sa passió gran lleixa,  
 de l'esperit és sa presó pus ampla,  
 e ses virtuts e potences eixampla  
 sí que no veu tras paret mas per reixa;  
 sa pura amor en interès no-s causa.  
 200 E la del cos és curt plaer sa causa.

lo no-m defens que amor mi no tempte  
 d'aquell voler que arma i cos abracen.  
 Aquest voler mes natures l'atracen:  
 per dues parts me vendrà qui-m contente,  
 205 Així com l'hom pot més glòria atènyer  
 quan nostra carn ab l'arma serà junta,  
 amor a mi en delitós grau munta  
 quan dos lligams arma i cos han a estrènyer,  
 car moltes veus u per l'altre-s presona,  
 210 e no és tant fort l'amor de la persona.

181-90. The love which derives from the soul alone is founded on the virtues and on the understanding; it is this simple will that God raises up, and its power can be such that it can make all other kinds of love lay down their arms. But in my case, both kinds of love assailed me, and found a place within me, each of them drawn by its likeness. Two blows I felt, dealt by each with its lance. Both performed their deeds within me: one gave out light, the other darkness, and both together health, pleasure and fever.

191-200. God endows the spirit with great blessings: tormenting passions do not trouble its unmitigated pleasure. But these passions do not loose their grip on the body until it has wearied of its pleasure; it cannot experience good without also tasting the bad. The further the spirit leaves behind the body's great passion, the more spacious does its prison feel, and it extends its strength and power so that it no longer finds itself looking at a wall, but rather begins to see through a grille. It is not interest that moves its pure love. But the love of the body has no other goal except a brief pleasure.

201-10. I do not claim that love does not tempt me with that desire which body and soul both embrace. My dual nature causes such desire: I can be satisfied only by what derives from both sources. Just as a greater glory will be within man's reach when our flesh and soul are again joined, so love lifts me up to a high degree of pleasure when a double bond holds body and spirit, for often one is held captive by the other so that love of the person wanes.

Quant al meu cos, amor lo desempara,  
 perquè-l poder d'aquell ve a son terme,  
 e en pura amor l'esperit meu conferme;  
 en aquell punt resta ma raó clara.  
 215 Tan gran delit sent en aquella hora  
 que los delits del cos en fastig tornen;  
 e quan del cos forces a mi retornen,  
 en lo començ lo meu esperit plora,  
 e si del tot mon cos en força torna,  
 220 en son delit mon esperit sojorna.

Aquella amor per qui ma carn s'enclina  
 compliment sent dels béns que Venus lliura.  
 L'altra major, e d'esta no delliura,  
 lo que mereix no ha, i amar no fina.  
 225 L'honesta amor, però, és qui-m fa viure;  
 l'enteniment d'altres béns no s'alegra.  
 ¿On serà, doncs, una amor tan entegra  
 que, en ella haver, de mals sia delliure,  
 amant a mi per consemblant manera?  
 230 Lo meu delit cau en aquesta espera.

Mon esperit contemplant se contenta,  
 e dintre si una persona forja.  
 D'ella no pens braços, peus, mans ne gorja  
 (car tot semblant altre semblant presenta);  
 235 solament vull d'ella tan clara pensa  
 que res de mi no-l fos cosa secreta,  
 apta i sabent, e d'amor fos estreta:  
 lo contrafer prengué en gran ofensa.  
 De son voler volgués ésser celosa  
 240 e que per mi ves mort fos animosa.

211-20. As for my body—love has abandoned it, because the power of the body has reached its limit, and my spirit has been confirmed in pure love; at this point my reason becomes lucid. I feel such pleasure at this time that the delights of the flesh weary me; and as soon as my body's vigour returns, my spirit weeps, and if my body's strength should be completely restored, my spirit gives itself up to physical pleasures.

221-30. That type of love towards which my flesh is inclined feels in full measure the good which Venus dispenses. The higher kind of love, hampered by the carnal sort, never attains what is worthy of it, and is never fulfilled. But it is virtuous love which gives me life; the understanding will not rest content with any other good. Where, then, will I find a love so complete that I would be loved in like manner, and so would be free of all suffering? It is in this sphere that my pleasure lies.

231-40. My spirit is content with imaginings alone, by which it forges the image of a woman. I do not think of her in terms of arms, feet, hands or throat, even though like will always seek like. All I want of her is a mind so limpid that she would understand me in every way, and that she should be clever and wise—and stern in love: I would be deeply hurt if she behaved otherwise. I would like to guard her love jealously, and to feel sure that she would willingly die for me.



Mas, ¿per què Déu l'arma de carn abriga,  
 los fats volents, contra amor, no ser solta,  
 e per null temps raó no la n'ha tolt,  
 ans tot contrast ha per cosa enemiga?  
 245 Tant és ma carn ab delit enclinada,  
 dona no veig que m'alt que no sospire,  
 i en posseir sens fi aquella mire.  
 De tal desig m'arma és passionada,  
 e ma raó de grat ió la perdria  
 250 si-m fa esment que amor perdre poria.

Sí com aquell de la pensa tan vana  
 que en aquest món lo bé sobiran cerca  
 i ab gran enginy en grans delits fa cerca,  
 e veu molts mals en glòria mundana,  
 255 ne pren a mi, que amor deïfique,  
 sí que d'aquell contentament vull traure,  
 sí que no pot lo que-1 deman bestraure.  
 No troba lloc on sa influença fique:  
 lloc és no ferm on mon desig reposa.  
 260 Desemparar ma esperança no-m gosa.

No conec hom qui sens amar persona  
 conega amor e per déu lo confesse.  
 lo són aquell que per negun temps cesse  
 d'imaginar en ell, e res no-m dóna.  
 265 Desig me fa en l'esperança jaure,  
 dormint tant fort que raó no-m desperta.  
 Assats a mi és causa descoberta  
 que pura amor no pot en dona caure:  
 mon delit és vida contemplativa,  
 270 e romanç trist devallant en l'activa.

241-50. But why does God encase the soul in flesh, and why do the Fates decree, against love's own wishes, that the soul be fettered and that reason never free it, while the flesh declares war every time it attempts resistance? My flesh is so inclined towards pleasure that I cannot look at an attractive woman without sighing and wanting to make her mine for ever. This is the sort of passion that inflames my soul, and I would willingly sacrifice my reason if I thought that I could cast love off.

251-60. Like the man who has the foolish idea of seeking in this world the sovereign good, and employs all his wits in the search for great pleasures, only to find many evils in worldly glory, so it is with me; for I make love into my god and try to wrest contentment from it, only to find that it cannot provide me with what I ask. It finds nowhere for its influence to take root: where my desire is, there can be no stability. But I do not dare give up hope.

261-70. I know of no other man who, without loving a particular woman, knows what love is and declares it to be his god. I am one who never ceases to dream of such a god, and yet he gives me nothing. My desire keeps me to a bed of hope, so soundly asleep that reason cannot wake me. It is patently obvious to me that pure love is not to be found in woman: it is in the contemplative life that delight awaits me. But I sink into the active life, and so continue in sadness.

- Lladoncs lo foc d'amor bé no s'amaga  
e los meus ulls públic lo manifesten,  
e les dolors mes sangs al cor arresten,  
acorrent lla on és donada plaga.
- 275 Los meus desigs de punt en punt cambie,  
e la dolor no-m trop en un lloc certa.  
Ma cara és de sa color incerta;  
cerc llocs secrets e los públics desvie;  
llanç-me en lo llit, dolor me'n gita fora.
- 280 Cuit esclatar mentre mon ull no plora.
- Mos membres flacs sobtós moviment muden;  
lo cap al coll és càrrega feixuga;  
la gran calor dintre mes venes juga;  
perills vinents a mon sentir secuden.
- 285 Perd lo record de les coses passades,  
e lo meu cos me vist sola vergonya;  
la cura gran d'amor tots fets me llonya  
e no s'estén sinó en coses pensades.  
L'executar lo meu desig l'esforça
- 290 e no sé què venç aquesta gran força.
- Així com l'or sobre paper se posa  
segons serà la bona o mala cisa,  
tal semblant cas mon sentiment divisa  
d'aquesta amor, segons en qui reposa.
- 295 Sí com lo foc tots humits li contrasten  
e los secs llocs sa força obeeixen,  
així d'amor ses influences veixen  
a tots aquells on sos poders abasten.  
Tant fa com pot fer la persona amable,
- 300 havent tant lloc en nós com lo diable.

271-80. For then I cannot easily keep the fire of love hidden, and love shows plainly in my eyes, and pain stops the blood reaching my heart, so that it runs to wherever I have been wounded. From moment to moment I change my desires, and I can never tell where the pain will strike. My face constantly changes colour; I seek out hidden places and avoid public ones; I throw myself on to my bed, but pain thrusts me off again. Whenever I stop weeping, I feel that I will burst.

281-90. My feeble limbs jerk; my head becomes a heavy burden to my neck; intense heat courses through my veins; all my senses are buffeted by presentiments of future danger. I cannot remember anything from the past, and I clothe my body in nothing but my own shame; trapped in my own thoughts, love's deep cares keep me far removed from all real events. My fierce desire is the driving force behind all this, and I know of nothing that could stand up to such a mighty force.

291-300. Just as the setting of gold on paper depends on whether the quality of the paper is good or poor, in just such a way this type of love depends on whom it settles in—my special sensibilities reveal this truth. Just as everything that is wet opposes fire, so love extends its influence only over those who cannot resist its powers. It does all it can to make the body disposed towards love, and finds as much scope in us as the Devil.

En lo delit que arma i cos desigen  
 feneix delit si compliment hi basta.  
 Mas los delits que l'arma sola tasta  
 són duradors, car jamés la fastigen;  
 305 e sí com l'hom que la mort lo encorre,  
 l'arma d'ell viu, que és d'infinít eixida,  
 e l'altra part en lo món és delida,  
 car lo finit en tal cas no l'acorre:  
 així lo cos fa mortal amor ésser  
 310 e l'arma ab ell no mostra son dret ésser.

Sí com l'arnès d'acer a colp s'engruna  
 e lo de ferr un petit colp lo passa,  
 quan són units no-ls destru res llur massa  
 (d'aquests mesclats surt molt gran virtut una)  
 315 així amor subtil i en finit tempra  
 la finitat de la del cos, i aviva.  
 En cert cas mor nostra amor sensitiva  
 e l'esperit junt ab ell se destempra.  
 Amen ensems, e l'esperit sols ame,  
 320 perquè tot l'hom no-s trop que en res desame.

Los hòmens llecs qui per amor s'encenen  
 en fets divins, ab infusa ciença,  
 divinal és llur gran intel·ligença,  
 e sos costums a creure tots amenen.  
 325 Doncs, si d'amor algun parlar m'escapa  
 que la raó no-l lloe ne l'aprove,  
 no sia algú que los dits meus reprove.  
 Dels grans secrets que amor cobre ab sa capa,  
 de tots aquells, puc fer apocalipsi.  
 330 lo defallint, amor farà eclipsi.

301-10. The pleasure which body and soul together desire does not last beyond its fulfilment. But the pleasures which the soul experiences independently are without end, for they are such that the soul never tires of them. Just as a man's soul lives on when death seizes him, since its origins are in the infinite, while the other part of him is blotted out from this world, for what is finite in him is of no help at such a time, thus does the body make love mortal, while the soul cannot show its true nature while it is in the company of the body.

311-20. Just as armour made of steel will crumple at the first blow, and the lightest stroke will pierce one made of iron, while nothing can destroy their joint mass—from such amalgams great strength is forged—thus does subtle and infinite love temper the body's finite nature, and fill it with life. At certain times, the love of our senses dies and this tempered state is lost, for the spirit as well as for the body. They love together, but the spirit also loves of its own accord, so that man is never completely untouched by love.

321-30. Laymen who are inspired by love to perform acts of holiness are blessed with deep and divine understanding, through instilled knowledge, while their way of life inspires faith in others. So, when I talk of love, should some word escape me which reason does not praise or condone, let no one reprove me for what I say. I could write my own Apocalypse of all the deep secrets which love keeps hidden beneath his cloak. When I die, love will go into eclipse.

Lo món finit, lo sol e lluna i signes  
no correran per lo cel, ne planetes;  
per ops d'aquell los ha Déu fets e fetes  
i, ell defallint, cessen llurs fets insignes:  
335 tot enaixí, si d'aquest món trespasse,  
aquell poder que en amar nos enclina  
caurà del cel, car pus hom no s'afina  
en ben amar, ans caseu veig que-s llasse.  
Si amor veu que errant sens profit vaja,  
340 envergonyit io creu de son lloc caja.

331-40. When this world comes to an end, sun, moon, planets and constellations will no longer move through the heavens. It is because of the world that God made all these, and once the world ends, all their marvellous operations will cease. In just the same way, if I should take my leave of this world, that power which inclines us towards love will fall from its place in the heavens, for no other man attunes himself to love except me, for they have lost their vigour, all of them. If love sees that all its wandering is profitless, I am sure that, from pure shame, it will drop from its place above us.



XCIV (*Cant de Mort*)

Puis me trop sol en amor, a mi sembla  
 que en mi tot sol sia costum estranya:  
 amor se perd entre gents per absença,  
 4 e per la mort la mia amor no fina;  
 ans, molt més am a vós en mort que en vida,  
 e ió perdon si algú no-m vol creure:  
 pocs són aquells qui altres coses creguen  
 8 sinó semblants d'aquelles que-ls avenen.

Ma dolor fort lo comun cors no serva:  
 tota dolor lo temps la venç e gasta.  
 No dic que en tot a tota altra dessemble:  
 12 en quantitat molt prop d'altres se jutja.  
 En qualitat ab les altres discorda,  
 seguint l'amor d'on ella pren sa forma;  
 gran part del temps seca dolor me dóna,  
 16 i algun delit ab altra dolor dolça.

Dins lo cos d'hom les humors se discorden;  
 de temps en temps llur poder se transmuda,  
 e en un sols jorn regna malenconia,  
 20 'n aquell mateix còlera, sang, e fleuma:  
 tot enaixí les passions de l'arma  
 mudament han, molt divers o contrari,  
 car en un punt per ella-s fan los actes  
 24 e prestament és en lo cos la causa.

Així com l'or que de la mena-1 traen  
 està mesclat de altres metalls sútzeus  
 e, més al foc, en fum se'n va la lliga,  
 28 lleixant l'or pur, no podent-se corrompre:  
 així la mort mon voler gros termena:  
 aquell fermat en la part contrassemble  
 d'aquella que la mort al món l'ha tolta,  
 32 l'honest voler en mi roman sens mescla.

XCIV

1-8. Since I am unique in matters of love, I believe that I am the only lover in whom it takes a form as unusual as this: while absence causes love to wane in ordinary people, through death my love has become boundless. In fact, I love you more in death than in life, and I can forgive anyone if he does not believe me: there are few people who give credit to anything that is different from what they have experienced themselves.

9-16. My deep pain does not follow the normal course: usually time wears pain away, and overcomes it. I do not claim that it is totally different from all other pain: quantitatively, it can be considered to be very like others. But it differs from the others in quality, which derives from the type of love which gives it its form; most of the time this love inflicts upon me an unmitigated pain but, through another sweet pain it also brings some small pleasure.

17-24. Within man's body, the humours are at war; with each new period of the day their power is transmuted, and in a single day melancholy, choler, blood and phlegm predominate. In just this way the spirit's passions are subject to variations of a very different or conflicting kind, because the soul's actions are effected instantly, and their immediate cause is in the body.

25-32. Just as gold is brought up from the mines mixed with base ores and then is exposed to fire to make the alloy dissolve in smoke, leaving pure and incorruptible gold, so death puts an end to my base desire. Since this was held fast by the corresponding part of that woman whom death has taken from the world, the virtuous desire is left within me, unadulterated.

Dos volers són que natura segueixen  
 e caseu d'ells l'hom per natura guien.  
 Si acte ensems fan, mal o bé atracen  
 36 segons qual d'ells en l'altre ha domini;  
 quan la raó l'apetit senyoreja,  
 és natural de l'hom tota sa obra,  
 e lo revers sa natura li torba  
 40 e no ateny la fi que en tots fets cerca.

Quan l'apetit segueix la part de l'arma,  
 l'home va dret—seguint natura mestra,  
 car la major part la menor se tira—  
 44 e vers la fi que va lo camí troba.  
 E l'apetit, volent son necessari,  
 l'home no fall, si no traspassa l'orde;  
 e si s'estén més que natura dicta,  
 48 surt-ne voler fals opinionàtic.

Les voluntats que per natura vénen  
 en certitud e terme són compreses;  
 l'altre voler passa d'hom les natures:  
 52 son senyal cert és que no l'enclou terme.  
 De tots aquests, passions m'atengueren  
 mescladament: sí com mesclats jaïen.  
 Mas bé distints són après de son opte,  
 56 e separats los sent, quasi visibles.

Molts són al món que mos dits no entengueren,  
 e ja molts més que d'aquells no sentiren:  
 ¿ Qui creure pot que entre amors vicioses  
 60 voler honest treball per estar simple,  
 gitant de si meravellós efecte,  
 estant secret per força dels contraris?  
 Dolç i agre ensems, llur sabor no és distinta.  
 64 Ella vivint, mos volers aitals foren.

33-40. There are two driving forces in man, each of which follows nature. If they operate together, they cause good or ill according to which of them has dominion over the other. When reason governs the appetite, reason in all its works becomes natural to man; but if the opposite occurs, it throws his nature into confusion, and he fails to reach the goal for which he strives in all his doings.

41-48. When the appetite is obedient to the soul, man keeps to a straight path—following the dominant nature, for a greater mass attracts a smaller one—and he finds his way to the intended goal. And, as long as the appetite wants only what is necessary to it and does not exceed the natural order, it does not fail man. But if it should reach beyond what Nature decrees, it gives rise to a false and unstable desire.

49-56. The wills that derive from man's nature are restricted to the known and finite. The other desire goes beyond the bounds of man's nature: an unmistakable sign of it is that it has no limits. The passions deriving from all these desires were mixed when they reached me: and so they continued mixed within me. But now that she is dead, they are easily distinguishable and I can feel them separately and almost see them.

57-64. There are many people in the world who have not understood my poems, and many more who have never heard of them. Who could believe that in the midst of sinful loves virtuous desire should have been struggling to break free, working its wonderful effects upon me, driven into secrecy by the power of its enemies? The sweet and bitter tastes of both kinds of love are indistinguishable. This is the form my desires took while she was alive.

Dolre's del mort ve de amor comuna,  
 e de açò io-m sent tot lo damnatge:  
 fugir les gents quisque sien alegres  
 68 i haver despit que jamés lo dol fine.  
 Tot delit fuij com a cosa enemiga,  
 car un bé poc entre grans mals dol porta;  
 e met poder que-m torn dolor en hàbit  
 72 perquè de goig la sabor jamés taste.

Senyals d'amor que en tal cas homens senten  
 io trop en mi que sens dolor se prenen.  
 Si res començ, io-n corromp lo principi,  
 76 per què la fi de res mi no contenta;  
 molt e pus fort, tota amor me da fàstic,  
 e sembla a mi ser cosa abominable;  
 s'algun delit entre mes dolors mescle,  
 80 de fet lo perd, e torn a ma congoixa.

Si-1 pensament per força a altra part llance,  
 d'ella acordant, ab gran sospir lo cobre;  
 en lo començ ab dolor en mi entra;  
 84 no passa molt que més dolor plaïble.  
 Decrepitud ma natura demostra,  
 car tota carn a vòmit me provoca.  
 Grans amadors per llur aimia morta  
 88 són mi semblants en part; al tot no basten.

Si res io veig d'ella, dolor me dóna,  
 e si-n defuig, par que d'ella m'aparte;  
 los temps e llocs ab lo dit la'm senyalen,  
 92 segons en ells delits o dolors foren,  
 e són-ne tals que la'm demostren trista,  
 altres, e molts, mostrants aquella alegra.  
 E pas dolor com jamés li fiu greuge,  
 96 e volgra açò ab la mia sang rembre.

65-72. The grief we feel for the deceased springs from the kind of love common to all men. In me it has done its worst: I flee from everyone who is happy, and loathe the thought that my grief could ever end. I run away from every pleasure as if it were my enemy, for when a small boon comes amidst great ills it brings only sorrow; and I strive to the utmost to make pain a way of life, so that I will never know the taste of joy.

73-80. The fact is, however, that I bore these marks that love leaves at such times on men even before I knew grief. I make sure that every new enterprise fails from the outset, because there is no pleasure for me in seeing any task through to its completion. Love of any kind is particularly revolting and abhorrent to me. As soon as I mingle pleasure with my pain, the pleasure is lost, and anguish overtakes me once more.

81-88. If I am forced to think of other things, I have only to remember her with a heavy sigh for all my thoughts to rush back. They come upon me with pain at first, but before long this pain becomes pleasurable. My body already shows clear signs of decrepitude, since any kind of flesh now turns my stomach. There is some comparison between me and those great lovers who have grieved over their dead beloved; but they do not quite match me.

89-96. It hurts me whenever I come across something of hers, and if I attempt to avoid the pain, it feels as if I were trying to distance myself from her. Times and places point her out to me together with the pleasures or the pains each has held; in some of them I remember that she was sad, but in many more I see her happy. And I feel remorse for all the wrongs I did her, and wish I could redress them with my blood.

Amor és dat conèixer pels efectes;  
 sa quantitat no té mesura certa:  
 gran és, o poc, l'amador segons altre,  
 100 e poder pren amor segons on entra.  
 La qualitat és tal com segons guarda,  
 car de semblants és forçat que s'engendre:  
 la carn vol carn, l'arma son semblant cerca;  
 104 d'ells naix fill bort, als engendrants contrari.

Qui ama carn, perduda carn, no ama,  
 mas, en membrant lo delit, dol li resta.  
 En tot amor cau amat e amable;  
 108 doncs, mort lo cos, aquell qui ell amava  
 no pot amar, no trobant res que ame;  
 amor no viu, desig mort i esperança,  
 i en lo no res no pot haver espera:  
 112 quant és del cos la mort a no res torna.

Si la que am és fora d'aquest segle,  
 la major part d'aquella és en ésser.  
 E quan al món en carn ella vivia,  
 116 son esperit io volguí amar simple;  
 e doncs, quant més que en present res no-m torba:  
 ella vivint, la carn m'era rebel·le.  
 Los grans contrastes de nostres parts discordes  
 120 canten forçats acord, e de grat contra.

De mon voler jutge caseu la causa,  
 e farà poc, veent en mi les obres:  
 la mia amor per la mort no és morta,  
 124 ne sent dolor, veent-me lo món perdre.  
 lo am e tem ab honesta vergonya  
 l'esperit sol de la qui Déus perdone,  
 e res de mi ne del món no cobege,  
 128 sinó que Déu en lo cel la col·loque.

97-104. Love reveals itself through its effects. In quantity it is variable, and does not come in a fixed measure: a lover is great or insignificant according to how he compares with the next man, and love's strength is determined by where it enters. Its quality depends on where it is directed, for love must necessarily be engendered in a union of likenesses. Flesh desires flesh, and the soul seeks its own like; to these a bastard child is born that rebels against both its progenitors.

105-12. Whoever loves flesh ceases to love when the flesh is lost, but is left feeling grief every time he remembers the pleasure it has given him. In all love there is always a lover and a beloved; and so, when the beloved dies in body, the lover can no longer love, since he can find nothing to love. When desire and hope die, love cannot survive, and it cannot reign where there is nothingness: death returns to the void all that is of the body.

113-20. Even though the woman I love no longer inhabits this world, the most important part of her remains here in spirit. And when she lived on this earth as flesh, I tried to love her soul alone. I try even harder now that nothing obstructs me: while she was alive my flesh rebelled. The discordant parts that make up man, caught in their great conflicts, will sing in unison only when they are forced to, but are always willing to sing out of harmony.

121-28. Let each man judge where my love has its origins—something easily done, since he has my actions to go by. Even death has not killed my love, and I feel no regret even though I know I am dying. In purity and virtue I love and revere her spirit for itself, on which may God have mercy. I want nothing for myself—nothing that is of this world—but only that God will take her up into Heaven.



*Tornada*

Mare de Déu, si és en purgatori  
son esperit, per no purgats delictes,  
sí ton fill prec no guard los precs d'on vénen  
132 mas lla on van: mos pecats no li noguen.

129-32: *Envoi*. Mother of God, if she is in purgatory for unexpiated sins, plead with your son that he will take no notice of where these prayers come from, remembering only to whom they are directed: don't let her suffer because of my sins.

XCVI (*Cant de Mort*)

La gran dolor que llengua no pot dir  
 del qui-s veu mort e no sap on irà  
 (no sap son Déu si per a si-1 volrà  
 4 o si en l'infern lo volrà sebollir):  
 semblant dolor lo meu esperit sent,  
 no sabent què de vós Déus ha ordenat,  
 car vostre bé o mal a mi és dat.  
 8 Del que haureu io-n seré sofirent.

Tu, esperit, qui has fet partiment  
 ab aquell cos qual he io tant amat,  
 veges a mi qui só passional.  
 12 Dubtant estic fer-te raonament:  
 lo lloc on est me farà canviar  
 d'enteniment de ço que-t volré dir.  
 Goig o tristor per tu he io complir;  
 16 en tu està quant Déu me volrà dar.

Pregant a Déu, les mans no-m cal plegar,  
 car fet és tot quant li pot avenir:  
 si és e-1 cel, no-s pot lo bé espemir;  
 20 si en infern, en foll és mon pregar.  
 Si és així, anul·la'm l'esperit;  
 sia tornat mon ésser en no res,  
 e majorment si en lloc tal per mi és.  
 24 No sia ió de tant adolorit.

No sé què dir que-m fartàs d'haver dit;  
 si crit o call, no trop qui-m satisfés;  
 si vac o pens, he temps en va despès:  
 28 de tot quant faç, ans de fer me penit.  
 No plane lo dan de mon delit perdut,  
 tanta és la por que-m ve de son gran mal:  
 tot mal és poc si no és perpetual,  
 32 e tem aquest no l'haja merescut.

XCVI

1-8. The inexpressible torment of the man whom death has taken and does not know where he is to be sent (he cannot tell whether God will receive him or whether He will decide to bury him in Hell): this is the sort of torment that racks my soul, not knowing what God has ordained for you, because your fate, whether good or bad, will also be mine. Whichever it is, I will suffer it too.

9-16. You, spirit, who have departed from that body which I have loved so much, see how I suffer! I am afraid to speak to you: I need to know in what place you are before I can decide what to say to you. Through you I will attain joy or sadness; whatever fate God has allotted me lies with you.

17-24. In vain I press my hands together in prayer and plead to God, for everything that could happen to her has already come to pass. If she is in Heaven, her joy is ineffable; if in Hell, all my prayers are pointless. If that is the case, then annihilate my soul; may all my being be returned to nothingness, especially if she is in such a place because of me. Let me not be stricken with such pain as that.

25-32. No words I find seem to be sufficient. Whether I cry out or am silent, nothing seems adequate; whether my mind is empty or full of thoughts, all my time is spent in vain: I repent of everything I do, even before I do it. So great are my fears that she may be in terrible suffering, that I do not even grieve over the pleasure whose loss makes me suffer. All pain is insignificant unless it is eternal, and I fear lest this is what she has earned.

- Lo dan mortal és molt més que temut,  
e tol-ne part ésser a tots egual.  
O tu, dolor, sies-me cominal:  
36 en contra oblit vulles-me ser escut.  
Fir-me lo cor e tots los senys me pren,  
farta't en mi, car no-m defens de tu;  
dona'm tant mal que me'n planga caseu.  
40 Tant com tu pots, lo teu poder m'estén.

*Tornada*

- Tu, esperit, si res no te'n defèn,  
romp lo costum que dels morts és comú:  
torna en lo món, e mostra què és de tu.  
44 Lo teu esguard no-m donarà espavent.

33-40. We feel much more than simple fear for the havoc that death can wreak, but the fact that it does not discriminate between one man and another slightly diminishes our dread. Oh pain, treat me fairly: be my shield against oblivion. Pierce my heart and seize hold of all my senses, spend all your rage on me, for I will offer no defence; hurt me so much that everyone will grieve for me. Make me feel as much of your power as you can.

41-44: *Envoi*. You, spirit, if nothing prevents you, break with the ways of the dead: come back to the world, and let me see what has become of you. I shall fear no terror at the sight of you.

*CV (Cant Espiritual)*

- Puis que sens tu, algú a tu no basta,  
 dona'm la mà o pels cabells me lleva;  
 si no estenc la mia envers la tua,  
 4 quasi forçat a tu mateix me tira.  
 lo vull anar envers tu a l'encontre;  
 no sé per què no faç lo que volria,  
 puis io són cert haver voluntat franca,  
 8 e no sé què aquest voler m'empatxa.
- Llevar mi vull, e prou no m'hi esforce;  
 ço fa lo pes de mes terribles colpes.  
 Ans que la mort lo procés a mi cloga,  
 12 plàcia't, Déu, puis teu vull ser, que ho vullès;  
 fes que ta sang mon cor dur amollesca:  
 de semblant mal guarí ella a molts altres.  
 Ja lo tardar ta ira-m denuncia:  
 16 ta pietat no troba en mi què obre.
- Tan clarament en l'entendre no peque  
 com lo voler he carregat de colpa.  
 Ajuda'm, Déu! Mas, follament te pregue,  
 20 car tu no vals sinó al qui s'ajuda,  
 e tots aquells qui a tu se apleguen  
 no-ls pots fallir, e mostren-ho tos braces.  
 ¿Què faré io, que no meresc m'ajudes,  
 24 car tant com puc conec que no m'esforce?
- Perdona mi si follament te parle:  
 de passió parteixen mes paraules.  
 lo sent paor d'infern, al qual faç via;  
 28 girar-la vull, e no hi disponc mos passos.  
 Mas, io-m record que meritist lo lladre;  
 tant quant hom veu no hi bastaven ses obres:  
 ton esperit lla on li plau espira;  
 32 com ne per què, no sap qui en carn visca.

CV

1-8. Since none can reach you without your help, give me your hand or drag me up by the hair; if I fail to stretch out my hand to meet yours, pull me up to you as if by force. I want to set out towards where you await me; I do not know why I do not do what I wish, since I have no doubt that I have a free will; I do not know what obstructs this desire.

9-16. I want to pull myself to my feet, but my efforts are half-hearted; the weight of my terrible sins sees to that. Please, God, before my case is closed by death, accept me as yours, since that is what I want; let your blood soften my hardened heart: it has cured many others of the same affliction. But I can see already from your delay in granting my wish that you are angry: your mercy finds nothing in me to work upon.

17-24. I do not sin with my understanding as greatly as I have sinned with my will, which I have loaded with guilt. Help me, God! But I beg for your help in vain, for you only help those who help themselves, never failing those who come to you, as you show by your outstretched arms. What is to become of me, who do not deserve your help, since I know that I could try much harder?

25-32. Forgive me if what I say is madness: my words arise from anguish. The fear of Hell grips me, for I have started along the road towards it; I want to retrace my steps, and yet I do not turn in that direction. But I remember that you saved the thief; yet as far as we can see from his works, he did not deserve it. Your spirit breathes wherever it pleases; when or why no living man can tell.



Ab tot que só mal crestià per obra,  
 ira no-t tinc, ne de res no t'encolpe.  
 lo són tot cert que per tostemps bé obres  
 36 e fas tant bé donant mort com la vida:  
 tot és igual quant surt de ta potença.  
 D'on tinc per foll qui vers tu-s vol ireixer;  
 amor de mal, e de bé ignorança  
 40 és la raó que-ls hòmens no-t coneixen.

A tu deman que lo cor m'enfortesques,  
 sí que-l voler ab ta voluntat lligue,  
 e puis que sé que lo món no-m profita,  
 44 dona'm esforç que del tot l'abandone;  
 e lo delit que-l bon hom de tu gusta  
 fes-me'n sentir una poca centilla,  
 perquè ma carn, qui m'està molt rebel-le,  
 48 haja afalac, que del tot no-m contraste.

Ajuda'm, Déu!, que sens tu no-m puc moure,  
 per què-l cos és més que paralític.  
 Tant són en mi envellits los mals hàbits,  
 52 que la virtut al gustar m'és amarga.  
 O Déu, mercè! Revolta'm ma natura  
 que mala és per la mia gran colpa.  
 E si per mort io puc rembre ma falta,  
 56 esta serà ma dolça penitència.

lo tem a tu més que no-t só amable,  
 e davant tu confés la colpa aquesta.  
 Torbada és la mia esperança,  
 60 e dintre mi sent terrible baralla:  
 io veig a tu just e misericorde,  
 veig ton voler qui sens mèrits gràcia;  
 dones e tols de grat lo do, sens mèrits.  
 64 ¿Qual és tan just, quant més io, que no tema?

33-40. Although I am a bad Christian when judged by my works, I bear you no anger, and do not blame you for anything. I am quite sure that everything you do is good and that you do as much good by taking life as by giving it: all that springs from your power is one. And so I hold him to be a madman who would be angry at you: love of evil and ignorance of good are the reasons that men do not know you.

41-48. I ask that you strengthen my heart, so that my desires will become fused with your will, and since I know that the world brings me no benefit, give me the strength to reject it completely; and make me feel a small spark of the delight that a good man enjoys in you, so that my disobedient flesh will be appeased and will give some respite.

49-56. Help me, God, for I cannot move without your aid, because my body is worse than paralytic. Old habits are so ingrained in me that virtue has become bitter to the taste. O God, have mercy! Completely change my nature, which is bad because of my great faults. And if I can redeem my sins through death, let this be my sweet penitence.

57-64. I fear you more than I feel love for you, and I confess this sin before you. My hope totters within me and I can feel a terrible conflict raging there: I see that you are just and merciful, I see your will which dispenses grace even to those who have done nothing to deserve it; you grant the gift of grace, and take it away, regardless of worth. When even the most just of men live in fear, how can I do otherwise?

Si Job lo just por de Déu l'opremia,  
¿què faré io que dins les colpes nade?  
Com pens d'infern, que temps no s'hi esmenta,  
68 lla és mostrat tot quant sentiments temen.  
L'arma, qui és contemplar Déu eleta,  
en contra aquell, blasfemant, se rebel·la:  
no és en hom de tan gran mal estima.  
72 Doncs, ¿com està qui vers tal part camina?

Prec-te, Senyor, que la vida m'abreuges,  
ans que peïjors casos a mi enseguesquen.  
En dolor visc, faent vida perversa,  
76 e tem dellà la mort per tostemps llonga.  
Doncs, mal deçà, e dellà mal sens terme.  
Pren-me al punt que millor en mi trobes;  
lo detardar no sé a què-m servesca.  
80 No té repòs lo qui té fer viatge.

Io-m dolç perquè tant com vull no-m puc dolre  
de l'infinít damnatge, lo qual dubte,  
e tal dolor no la recull natura  
84 ne-s pot asmar e menys sentir pot l'home.  
E doncs, açò sembla a mi flaca escusa,  
com de mon dan tant com és no m'espante:  
si-l cel deman no li do basta estima;  
88 fretura pas de por e d'esperança.

Per bé que tu irascible te mostres,  
ço és defalt de nostra ignorança:  
lo teu voler tostemps guarda clemença,  
92 ton semblant mal és bé inestimable.  
Perdona'm, Déu, si t'he donada colpa,  
car io confés ésser aquell colpable;  
ab ull de carn he fets los teus judicis.  
96 Vulles dar llum a la vista de l'arma!

65-72. If righteous Job was weighed down with the fear of God, what shall I do, floundering in my sins? When I think of Hell, where time has no meaning, I know all the fear that we are capable of feeling. The soul, which is destined to contemplate God, rebels, blaspheming, against the idea of that place; no man can imagine suffering so great. How will he feel, then, who is already on the road to such a destination?

73-80. I beg you, Lord, to end my days before even worse befalls me. I live in pain, leading a life of perversity, and I fear eternal death beyond this life. Suffering here, then, and pain without end that awaits me. Take me when you find me at my best; I do not know what good it can do me to put that moment off. Whoever has a journey to make can have no rest.

81-88.1 grieve because I do not grieve as I want to at the thought of the eternal damnation of which I live in fear, even though comparable pain is not to be found in Nature, and man cannot guess what it is like, much less feel it. And so this seems to me some excuse, though a weak one, for not being as frightened as I ought of the peril I am in: even though I beg to be allowed into Heaven, I do not revere that place as I ought; I am lacking both in fear and in hope.

89-96. Although you seem full of anger, that is only due to your displeasure at our ignorance: your will always shows clemency, and the bad you seem to do us is really an ineffable good. Forgive me, God, if I have blamed you, for I confess that I am the guilty one; I have judged your decisions with eyes of flesh. Only give light to the eyes of my soul!

Lo meu voler al teu és molt contrari,  
 e-m só enemic, pensant-me amic ésser.  
 Ajuda'm, Déu, puis me veus en tal pressa!  
 100 lo-m desesper si los mèrits meus guardes;  
 ió m'enuig molt la vida com allongue  
 e dubte molt que aquella fenesca.  
 En dolor visc, car mon desig no-s ferma,  
 104 e ja en mi alterat és l'àrbitre.

Tu est la fi on totes fins termenen,  
 e no és fi si en tu no termena.  
 Tu est lo bé on tot altre-s mesura,  
 108 e no és bo qui a tu, Déu, no sembla.  
 Al qui-t complau tu aquell déu nomenes;  
 per tu semblar, major grau d'home-l muntés;  
 d'on és gran dret del qui plau al diable  
 112 prenga lo nom d'aquell ab qui-s conforma.

Alguna fi en aquest món se troba;  
 ne és vera fi, puis que no fa l'hom fèlix:  
 és lo començ per on l'altra s'acaba,  
 116 segons lo cors que entendre pot un home.  
 Los filòsofs qui aquella posaren  
 en si mateix són ésser vists discordes:  
 senyal és cert que en veritat no-s funda;  
 120 per consegüent a l'home no contenta.

Bona per si no fon la llei judaica  
 (en paradís per ella no s'entrava),  
 mas tant com fon començ d'aquesta nostra,  
 124 de què-s pot dir d'aquestes dues una.  
 Així la fi de tot en tot humana  
 no da repòs a l'apetit, o terme;  
 mas tampoc l'hom sens ella no ha l'altra:  
 128 Sant Joan fon senyalant lo Messias.

97-104. My will is set against yours, and I am my own enemy, even when I think I am a friend to myself. Help me, God, since you can see me in these straits! I despair when I think that you will judge me by my merits; I loathe the thought that my life should last any longer, and yet I dread its coming to an end. I live in pain, for I have no firmness of intention, and even now my will has changed.

105-12. You are the end in which all ends meet, and there can be no end that does not lead to you. You are the good against which every other good is measured, and no one is good who does not resemble you. On whomever it pleases, you bestow the name of god; by making him like you, you lift him above the level of man; and so it is only just that whoever pleases the Devil should take the name of the one whose ways he follows.

113-20. This world has its own ends; none of them is a true end, since they do not make man happy; the true good begins where worldly good ceases, following the course that all men can understand. But we see that those philosophers who held that the true end was of this world have all given conflicting accounts of what it is. This is a sure sign that earthly good is not based in truth; that is why it cannot make man content.

121-28. The Mosaic Law was not good in itself (it was not the way to paradise), but only in so far as it was the beginning of this Law of ours, because of which it could be said that together they form one Law. Similarly, the end which is completely human gives no rest and sets no limits to the appetite; but without it man cannot reach the higher goal: Saint John was sent to announce the Messiah.

No té repòs qui nulla altra fi guarda,  
 car en res als lo voler no reposa:  
 ço sent caseu, e no hi cal subtilesa,  
 132 que, fora tu, lo voler no s'atura.  
 Sí com los rius a la mar tots acorren,  
 així les fins totes en tu se n'entren.  
 Puis te conec, esforça'm que io t'ame:  
 136 vença l'amor a la por que io-t porte.

E si amor tanta com vull no m'entra,  
 creix-me la por, sí que, tement, no peque,  
 car, no pecant, io perdré aquells hàbits  
 140 que són estats perquè no t'am la causa.  
 Múiren aquells qui de tu m'apartaren,  
 puis m'han mig mort e-m tolen que no visca.  
 O Senyor Déu!, fes que la vida allargue,  
 144 puis me apar que envers tu io m'acoste.

¿Qui-m mostrarà davant tu fer excusa  
 quan hauré dar mon mal ordenat compte?  
 Tu m'has donat disposició recta,  
 148 e io he fet del regle falç molt corba;  
 dreçar-la vull, mas he mester ta ajuda.  
 Ajuda'm, Déu! car ma força és flaca.  
 Desig saber què de mi predestines.  
 152 A tu és present, i a mi causa venible.

No-t prec que-m dons sanitat de persona,  
 ne béns alguns de natura i fortuna,  
 mas solament que a tu, Déu, sols amè,  
 156 car io só cert que-1 major bé s'hi causa.  
 Per consegüent, delectació alta  
 io no la sent, per no dispost sentir-la;  
 mas, per saber, un home grosser jutja  
 160 que-1 major bé sus tots és delitable.

129-36. Whoever seeks any other end but God knows no rest, for the will can find no peace in anything else: we do not need to be clever to know this because in all of us our desires find no end except in you. Just as the rivers all run down to the sea, so does every end merge into you. Since I know what you are, compel me to love you: let love overcome the fear in which I hold you.

137-44. And if not as much love enters me as I wish, increase my fear so that sheer dread will keep me from sin, because once I am free of sin, I will cast aside those habits which have kept me from loving you. Death take those who have estranged me from you, for they have left me half dead and keep me from life! O Lord God, let me live on, for I feel that I am drawing closer to you.

145-54. Who will teach me how to make my excuses before you when I will have to make my disordered reckoning? You have given me an upright nature, but I have turned the straight rule into a sharp-hooked scythe. I want to straighten it, but I can only do so with your help. Help me, God, for I am poor in strength. I want to know to what you predestine me. To you it is the present, for me it is yet to come.

153-60. I do not beg you for health in body, nor for any good of nature or fortune, but only that I may love you, God, alone, because I am certain that the greatest good springs from you. And so, it is because I am not disposed to the deepest of joys that I do not feel it; but, through the understanding, even a fool realises that the highest good will yield a joy above all others.



¿ Qual serà-1 jorn que la mort io no tema?  
 E serà quan de ta amor ió m'inflame;  
 e no-s pot fer sens menyspreu de la vida  
 164 e que per tu aquella io menysprea.  
 Lladoncs seran jus mi totes les coses  
 que de present me veig sobre los muscles;  
 lo qui no tem del fort lleó les ungles  
 168 molt menys tembrà lo fibló de la vespra.

Prec-te, Senyor, que-m fasses insensible  
 e que en null temps alguns delits io senta,  
 no solament los lleigs qui-t vénen contra,  
 172 mas tots aquells que indiferents se troben.  
 Açò desig perquè sol en tu pense  
 e pusca haver la via que en tu-s dreça.  
 Fes-ho, Senyor, e si per temps me'n torne,  
 176 haja per cert trobar ta aurella sorda.

Tol-me dolor com me veig perdre-1 segle  
 car mentre-m dolç tant com vull io no t'ame,  
 e vull-ho fer, mas l'hàbit me contrasta:  
 180 en temps passat me carreguí la colpa.  
 Tant te cost io com molts qui no-t serviren,  
 e tu-ls has fet no menys que io-t demane,  
 perquè-t suplic que dins lo cor tu m'entres,  
 184 puix est entrat en pus abominable.

Catòlic só, mas la fe no m'escalfa  
 que la fredor lenta dels senys apague,  
 car io eleix ço que mos sentiments senten,  
 188 e paradís crec per fe i raó jutge.  
 Aquella part de l'esperit és prompta,  
 mas la dels senys rossegant la m'acoste.  
 Doncs tu, Senyor, ab foc de fe m'acorre  
 192 tant que la part que-m porta fred abrase.

161-68. When will I cease to fear death? It will be when I become inflamed with love of you; but this cannot happen unless I scorn life and hold death in contempt for your sake. Then I shall have put beneath me all those things that I carry on my shoulders; he who does not fear the claws of the strong lion will feel little dread for the sting of the wasp.

169-76. I beg you, Lord, that you deaden my senses and keep me for ever from knowing certain pleasures, not only the ugly ones that offend you but also all those which are indifferently sinful. I want this so that I will think only of you and so that I may reach the road which climbs up towards you. Do this, Lord, and if I ever turn back, may I know for certain that your ears will be deaf to me.

177-84. It grieves me to see my departure from this world approaching, for although I grieve I do not love you as I wish. I want to do so, but habit opposes me: I have loaded myself with so much guilt in the past. I am no more trouble to you than many others who did not serve you, and you have done for them no less than what I ask you, which is why I beg you to come into my heart—for you have entered into some that were more loathsome than mine.

185-92. I am a Catholic, but faith does not warm me enough to melt the lingering cold of the senses, and it is what I feel through these that dictates my every step; I believe in paradise through a faith that reason confirms. The spiritual part of me is in readiness, but the sensual side of me has to be dragged into faith. So, Lord, send faith's fire to my aid and warm the part that chills me.

Tu creïst mi perquè l'ànima salve,  
 e pot-se fer de mi saps lo contrari.  
 Si és així, i per què, doncs, me creaves,  
 196 puix fon en tu lo saber infal·lible?  
 Torna a no res, io-t suplic, lo meu ésser,  
 car més me val que tostemps l'escur career,  
 lo crec a tu com volguist dir de Judes  
 200 que-1 fóra bo no fos nat al món home.

Per mi, segur, havent rebut baptisme,  
 no fos tornat als braços de la vida,  
 mas a la mort hagués retut lo deute,  
 204 e de present ió no viuria en dubte.  
 Major dolor d'infern los hòmens senten  
 que los delits de paraís no jutgen;  
 lo mal sentit és d'aquell altre exemple,  
 208 e paradís sens lo sentir se jutja.

Dona'm esforç que prenga de mi venge:  
 io-m trop ofès contra tu ab gran colpa.  
 E si no hi bast, tu de ma carn te farta,  
 212 ab que no-m tocs l'esperit, que a tu sembla.  
 E sobretot ma fe que no vacil·le,  
 e no trèmol la mia esperança;  
 no-m fallirà caritat, elles fermes.  
 216 E de la carn, si-t suplic, no me n'oges.

¿ O quan serà que regaré les galtes  
 d'aigua de plor ab les llàgremes dolces?  
 Contrició és la font d'on emanen;  
 220 aquesta és clau que-1 cel tancat nos obre;  
 d'atrició parteixen les amargues,  
 perquè en temor més que en amor se funden.  
 Mas, tals quals són, d'aquestes me abunda,  
 224 puix són camí e via per les altres.

193-200. You created me that I might save my soul, while it may be that my fate is to be the reverse. If this is so, then why did you create me, since your knowledge was infallible? Return my being to nothingness, I beg you, for that would be preferable to spending all eternity in the dark dungeon. I believe in you as the God who said of Judas that it were better that man had not been born.

201-208. As for me, if only, once my soul was safe after baptism, I had not been returned to the arms of life, and had paid death his due; then I would not live in this present fear. Men can grasp the pain of Hell more easily than they can imagine the bliss of paradise; the pain we know here gives us some idea of the torments of Hell, but we have to conceive of paradise without feeling anything of it here.

209-16. Give me the strength to take vengeance on myself; I have offended against your will through my great sins, and if I am not equal to that task, do with my flesh as you will, but do not touch my spirit, since this is like you. And above all may my faith not waver, and my hope not tremble; if these are strong, then charity will not fail me. And if I should plead for my flesh, do not listen to me.

217-24. O when will sweet tears bathe my face? Contrition is the fount from which they flow; this is the key which opens the closed door of heaven. These bitter tears I weep spring from attrition, because they are founded more in fear than in love. Yet, such as they are, give me abundance of them, since they are the path and the road to the other kind.