

## Female Poets and Female Voices

### **Anonymous Trouvere Lyric (Northern French), late Twelfth-Century**

Old French text from Eglal Doss-Quinby. *Songs of the Women Trouvères*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 184-86.

*Soufrés maris, et si ne vous anuit,  
Demain m'arés et mes amis anuit.  
Je vous deffenc k'un seul mot n'en parlés  
—Soufrés, maris, et si ne vous mouvés.—  
La nuis est courte, aparmains me rarés,  
Quant mes amis ara fait sen deduit.  
Soufrés maris, et ne vous anuit,  
Demain m'arés et mes amis anuit.*

*Suffer in silence husband, be not vexed tonight,  
Tomorrow I will be yours, but I am my lover's tonight.  
I forbid you to speak a single word.  
—Suffer in silence husband, and do not move.—  
The night is short, soon I will be yours again,  
When my lover has had his senses' share.  
Suffer in silence husband, be not vexed tonight,  
Tomorrow I will be yours, but I am my lover's tonight.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)*

### **Na Maria, attributed to a poet named Bietris (or Bieris) de Romans (c. 1200)**

Occitan text from *The Women Troubadours*. Edited by Meg Bogin. (New York: Norton, 1980), 132.

Na Maria, pretz e fina valors,  
e·l joi e·l sen e la fina beutatz,  
e l'aculhir e·l pretz e las onors,  
e·l gen parlar e l'avinen solatz,  
e la dous car' e la gaja cuendansa,  
e·l dous esgart e l'amoros semblan  
que son en vos, don non avetz engansa,  
me fan traire vas vos ses cor truan.

Per que vos prec, si·us platz que fin' amors  
e gausiment e dous umilitatz  
me posca far ab vos tan de socors,  
que mi donetz, bella domna, si·us platz,  
so don plus ai d'aver joi e'speransa;  
car en vos ai mon cor e mon talan,  
e per vos ai tot so qu'ai d'alegransa  
e per vos vauc mantas vetz sospiran.

E car beutatz e valors vos enansa  
sobre totas, qu'una no·us es denan,  
vos prec, si·us platz, per so que·us es onransa,  
que non ametz entendidor truan.  
Bella domna, cui pretz e joi enansa,  
e gen parlar, a vos mas coblas man,  
car en vos es gajess'e alegransa  
e tot lo ben qu'om en domna deman.

Lady Maria, for your esteem and pure worthiness,  
joy, wisdom, and pure beauty,  
graciousness and praise and distinction,  
noble speech and delightful company,  
sweet face and lively charm,  
the sweet glance and the amorous appearance  
that are in you without deception,  
I am drawn to you with nothing false in my heart.

For this, I pray, please, let true love  
Delight and sweet humility  
Give me, with you, the relief I need,  
So you will grant me, beautiful lady, please,  
What I most hope to enjoy.  
Because in you, alas, are my heart and desire  
And for you, alas, are all my joys  
And for you, I go, freely sighing many sighs.

And since beauty and merit advances you,  
superior to all others, for there is no one before you,  
I pray you, please, by all that brings you honor,  
do not love those with false intentions.  
Beautiful Lady, whom praise and joy advances,  
and noble speech, my verses are for you,  
for in you is merriment and all delight,  
and every good thing one could want in a woman.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)

***Estat ai en greu cossirier, Comtessa de Dia (1140-1212)***

Occitan text from Bruckner, Matilda Tomaryn, Laurie Shepard, and Sarah White, eds. *Songs of the Women Troubadours*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000, 10).

Estat ai en greu cossirier  
per un cavallier qu'ai agut,  
e vuoil sia totz temps saubut  
cum ieu l'ai amat a sobrier.  
Ara vei qu'ieu sui trahida  
car ieu non li donei m'amor,  
don ai estat en gran error  
en lieig e quan sui vestida.  
Ben volria mon cavallier  
tener un ser en mos bratz nut,  
qu'el s'en tengra per ereubut  
sol qu'a lui fezes cosseillier;  
car plus m'en sui abellida  
no fetz Floris de Blanche-flor;  
ieu l'autrei mon cor e m'amor,  
mon sen, mos huoiils e ma vida.  
Bels amics avinens e bos,  
cora-us tenrai en mos poder,  
e que iagues ab vos un ser,  
e que-us des un bais amoros?  
Sapchatz, gran talan n'auria  
qu-us tengues en luoc del marit  
ab so que m'aguessetz plevit  
de far tot so qu'eu volria.

I have been in great distress  
About a knight I once had,  
I want it known for all time  
How much I loved him  
But now, I feel betrayed  
Because I did not tell him of my love  
And I am in great torment  
Naked in my bed or fully dressed.  
If only I could hold him  
Naked in my arms until the dawn  
Drunk with my beauty  
He'd feel like he was in paradise  
For I am more in love with him  
Than Floris was with Blanche-flor  
I give him my heart and my love,  
My mind, my eyes, and my life.  
Sweet lover, so charming and so good,  
When will I have you in my power  
To lie with you at night  
And give you all my passionate kisses?  
Know this for certain, I greatly desire  
To have you in my husband's place  
As soon as you will promise me  
To do everything I desire.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)

***En un vergier sotz fuella d'albespi, Anonymous Trobaritz***

Occitan text from Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, Laurie Shepard, and Sarah White, eds. *Songs of the Women Troubadours*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 134.

En un vergier sotz fuella d'albespi  
tenc la dompna son amic costa si  
tro la gayta crida que l'alba vi,  
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.  
"Plagues a Dieu ia la nueitz non falhis  
ni·l mieus amicx lonc de mi no.s partis  
ni la gayta iorn ni alba no vis,  
Bels dous amicx, baizem nos yeu e vos  
aval e·ls pratz on chanto·ls auzellos  
tot o fassam en despieg de gilos,  
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.  
Bels dous amicx, fassam un ioc novel  
yns el iardi on chanton li auzel  
tro la gaita toque son caramelh,  
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.  
Per la doss'aura qu'es venguda de lay  
del mieu amic belh e cortes e gay  
del sieu alen ai begut un dous ray,  
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve."  
La dompna es agradans e plazens  
per sa beutat la gardon mantas gens  
et a son cor en amar leyalmens,  
Oy Dieus! Oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve.

In an orchard under leaves of hawthorn  
the lady holds her lover beside her  
until the watchman cries out the coming of dawn,  
O God! O God! the dawn, it comes too soon.  
Please God, do not let the night end already  
nor let my lover part from my side  
nor let the watchman see the dawn,  
Fair sweet friend, let us kiss, you and I,  
down in the meadow where the songbirds sing,  
let us do all this in spite of that jealous man.  
O God! O God! the dawn, it comes too soon.  
Fair sweet friend, let us play a new game  
in the garden where the songbirds sing  
until the watchman plays his pipe.  
O God! O God! the dawn, it comes too soon.  
For the gentle breeze which comes from there  
from my lover, beautiful, and courteous, and merry,  
of his breath I have drunk a sweet ray of sun.  
O God! O God! the dawn, it comes too soon.  
The lady is delightful and pleasing  
And many admire her for her beauty,  
and for her heart which is true in love.  
O God! O God! the dawn, it comes too soon.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)

### **Under der linden. Walther von der Vogelweide (1170-1230)**

Middle German text from Walther von der Vogelweide. "Under der linden." *In Die Gedichte Walthers von der Vogelweide*. Edited by Karl Lachmann. (Berlin: George Reimer, 1891), 39-40.

Under der linden  
an der heide,  
dâ unser zweier bette was,  
dâ mugent ir vinden  
schône beide  
gebrochen bluomen unde grass.  
vor dem walde in einem tal,  
tandaradei,  
schône sane diu nahtegal.  
Ich kam gegangen  
zuo der ouwe:  
dô was min friedel komen ê.  
dâ wart ich enpfangen,  
hêre frouwe,  
daz ich bin sælic iemer mê.  
kuster mich? wol tûsentstunt:  
tandaradei,  
seht wie rôt mir ist der munt.  
Dô hât er gemacht  
alsô riche  
von bluomen eine bettestat.  
des wirt noch gelachtet  
inneclîche,  
kumt iemen an daz selbe pfat.  
bî den rôsen er wol mac,  
tandaradei,  
merken wâ mirz houbet lac.  
Daz er bî mir læge,  
wessez iemen,  
(nu enwelle got!), sô schamt ich mich.  
wes er mit mir pflæge,  
niemer niemen  
bevinde daz, wan er unt ich,  
und ein kleinez vogellîn,  
tanderadei,  
daz mac wol getriuwe sin.

Under the Linden  
Out on the heath,  
Where our bed for two was,  
You may still find  
Beauty both  
In broken blooms and grass,  
Where, in a field at the forests' edge,  
*Tandaradei!*  
So sweetly sang the nightingale.  
I came walking  
Through the meadow:  
My lover had come before.  
And he greeted me,  
Highest Lady!  
That joy will always stay with me.  
Did he kiss me? A thousand times:  
*Tandaradei!*  
See how red my mouth is.  
He prepared for us a place  
Of riches  
A bed for the night from flowers.  
It made me laugh  
With delight.  
One who comes along the same path,  
At the roses he may well  
*Tandaradei!*  
Recognize where I lay my head.  
That he lay with me,  
If anyone knew,  
God forbid—I would be shamed.  
What there he did with me,  
None must ever know,  
Except for he and I,  
And a little bird,  
*Tandaradei!*  
Who will probably be discreet.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)

## ***Den morgenblic bî wahtaeres sange erkôs. Wolfram von Eschenbach (c. 1170-1220)***

Middle German Text from Wolfram von Eschenbach. *Werke*. Edited by Karl Lachmann. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1879), 3-4.

Den morgenblic bî wahtaeres sange erkôs  
ein froue, dâ si tougen  
an ir werden friundes arme lac;  
dâ von si .... freuden vil verlôs.  
des muosen liehtiu ougen  
aver nazzen. sî sprach 'ôwê tac!  
wilde und zam daz frewet sich dîn  
und siht dich gerne,  
wan ich ein. wie sol iz mir ergên!  
nu enmac niht langer hie bî mir bestên  
mîn vriunt: den jaget von mir dîn schîn.'  
Der tac mit kraft al durh diu venster dranc.  
vil slôze si besluzzen:  
daz half niht: des wart in sorge kunt.  
diu friundîn den vriunt vast an sich dwanc:  
ir ougen diu beguzzen  
ir beider wangel. sus sprach zim ir munt.  
'Zwei herze und ein lip hân wir  
gar ungescheiden:  
unser triuwe mit ein ander vert.  
der grôzen liebe der bin ich gar vil verhert,  
wan sô du kumest und ich zuo dir.'  
Der trûric man nam urloup balde alsus.  
ir liechten vel diu slehten  
kômen nâher. sus der tac erschein.  
weindiu ougen, sûezer frouen kus.  
sus kunden sî dô vlehten  
ir munde, ir brüste, ir arme, ir blankiu bein:  
swelch schiltaer entwurfe daz  
geselleclîche  
als si lâgn, des waere ouch dem genuoc.  
ir beider liebe doch vil sorgen truoc.  
si pflâgen minne ân allen haz.

The morning light shone, and the Watchman sang,  
while a lady secretly  
lay in the arms of her noble lover.  
Because of this, she lost all her joy,  
and her moist though beaming eyes  
filled with tears. She said, 'Alas, day!  
everything that lives, wild and tame, rejoices over you  
and longs to see you,  
except for me. What will become of me?  
Now my beloved can no longer stay here with me,  
for your light chases my lover away.  
The day shone powerfully through the windows,  
and though they bolted many locks,  
they were of no use against sorrow.  
The lady pressed her lover tight,  
and her eye's flowing tears  
made both cheeks wet. She spoke to him with her lips:  
"Two hearts and only one body we have.  
Inseparable,  
we remain connected to each other in fidelity.  
My whole happiness in love is destroyed,  
unless you come back to me and I to you."  
The sorrowful man would soon have departed,  
but their bright, smooth bodies  
came once more very close, although the day already shone.  
With weeping eyes, and the tender lady's kiss,  
they intertwined themselves,  
mouths, breasts, arms and their bright white legs.  
Any painter who wanted to represent  
their companionship  
as they lay beside each other, would be overwhelmed.  
Although their love caused them great care,  
they gave themselves entirely to each other.  
(Trans. M. Bryson)

***Slâfest du, friedel ziere?* Dietmar von Aist (c. 1115-1171)**

Middle German Text from *Des minnesangs frühling*. Edited by Friedrich Vogt. Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1920, 37

"Slâfest du, friedel ziere?  
man wecket uns leider schiere:  
ein vogellîn sô wol getân  
daz ist der linden an daz zwî gegân."

"Ich was vil sanfte entslâfen:  
nu rüefestu kint Wâfen.  
liep âne leit mac niht gesîn.  
swaz du gebiutest, daz leiste ich, friundîn mîn."

Diu frouwe begunde weinen.  
"Du rîtest und lâst mich einen.  
wenne wilt du wider her zuo mir?  
ôwê, du füerest mîn fröude sament dir!"

Do you sleep still, my dearest love?  
Unfortunately, we will both soon awake.  
A songbird so full of beauty  
Has flown into the branches of the tree.

I slept gently in your arms,  
until you called: *child, awake!*  
Love without suffering cannot be:  
What you command, I will do, my love.

The Lady began to cry:  
You ride away and leave me alone.  
When will you return to me again?  
Alas, you take my joy away with you!  
(Trans. M. Bryson)