



# The TABLEAUX

A NEW VERSE TRANSLATION

*Translated by NATHANIEL E. DUBIN*

*Introduction by R. HOWARD BLOCH*



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nequedent il li châi bien—

mais tel .c. meller s'en peissent

qui en la fin honiz en fussent!—

mais Fortune, a qui il servi,

380

l'en dona ce qu'il deservi.

L'en dit pieça: Qui va, il lesche,

& qui toz jors se siet, il seche.

## 60. L'ESCUIRUEL

Ci vous vueil conter d'une fame

qui fu une molt riche dame;

de Röem fu, si com l'en conte,

& bien le nous dist & racconte

5  
qu'ele avoit une fille bele

qui estoit molt gente pucelle,

molt avenant & molt bien fete,

quar Nature l'avoit portrete

& si ot mis toute s'entente;

10  
en former si bele joyrente

avoit mis trestoute sa cure.

Ele estoit bele a desmesure;

son pere & sa mere l'amoient,

a lor pooir la chierisoient

plus que toz lor autres enfanz.

15  
La pucele avoit .xv. anz.

Sa mere forment le chasticie

& dist: « Fille, ne soiez mie

ne trop parlant ne trop nonciere

ne de parler trop constumiere,

quar a mal puet l'en atorner

fame quant l'en l'or trop parler

autrement que el ne doit.

Por ce chascune se devoir

still, he came out of it okay.

(A hundred better men who earned  
their bread this way would have been burned,  
but Fortune, whom he served on earth,

380

made sure he got what he was worth.)

The saying goes: Get out and use it!

Who sits around all day will lose it.

## 60. THE SQUIRREL

The story I want to relate  
tells of a woman of estate,

a Rouennaise, by all accounts,

and likewise our story recounts

5  
that the woman was also blessed  
with a fair daughter of the best

breeding, comely and well proportioned.

Nature, who formed her, had apportioned

all of the graces one can find

in young girls and had set her mind

to lavish on her all her care.

Her beauty was beyond compare.

Her father's and her mother's love

was such that they put her above

10  
their other children, truth be told.

The girl was now fifteen years old.

Her mother lectured her and taught her

and said, "Don't let yourself, my daughter,

be too outspoken or loquacious,

20  
nor, when you do speak, too audacious.

People won't readily forgive

a woman who's too talkative

and says things that are unbecoming,  
and for this reason every woman

garder de parler follement,  
& une chose vous desfent

sor toutes autres molt tres bien:

que ja ne nommez cele rien  
qui cil homme portent pendant.»

30 Icelle respont, qui ot tant  
escouté qu'il li auuiot

quant el plus tere ne se pot:

« Mere, dist ele, dites moi  
comment il a a non & quoi.

35 — Tais toi, fille! Je ne l'os dire.  
— Est ce la riens que a mon sire  
entre les jambes li pent, dame?

— Tesiez, fille! Ja nule fame,  
s'ele n'est trop de male teche,  
ne doit nommer cele peesche  
qui entre les jambes pendeville  
a ces hommes. — & quel merveille  
est ore de nommer peesche?

40 Est ce ore ce dont l'en pesche?  
— Taisiez, fille! vous estes folie.

45 Ne dites pas cele parole;  
peesche n'a ele pas non.  
Ja nous fames ne le devon  
nommer en nis une maniere,  
ne au devant ne au derriere.

50 — Celle deable pendeloch,  
ma bele mere, est ce dont loche  
ou plonjon qui se set plongier  
& set noer par le vivier  
55 & par la fontaine mon pere?  
— Nenil, fille, ce dist la mere.  
— Que est ce dont? Dites le moi.  
— Bele fille, dirai le toi...  
— Oïl, foi que vous mi devez!

60 — ...ja soit ce qu'il soit deveez,

ought to refrain from idle speech.  
There's one thing more I want to teach  
you most insistently of all:

Don't speak the word by which we call  
that thing that hangs in a man's britches."

30 The girl says in reply—she itches  
to have her say, these fine orations  
having severely tried her patience—

"Be quiet, girl. I wouldn't dare."  
"Mother," she answers, "tell me now  
exactly what it's called and how."

35 "Be quiet, girl! None but the dregs  
lady, between my father's legs?"

"Be quiet, girl! None but the dregs  
of womankind who know no shame  
would ever make so bold to name  
that snippet which hangs dangling under  
men's abdomens." "Is it a wonder  
to speak aloud a word like *snippet*?"

40 Tell me, do they go fishing with it?"  
"Be quiet, girl! Don't be absurd  
45 or utter such a wicked word!  
A snippet isn't what it's called.  
We women mustn't be so bold  
as call it by its right name nor  
refer to it by metaphor."

50 "That little hanging devil, mother,  
is it some kind of fish or other?  
Is it some kind of loon or duck  
that likes to swim around and duck  
its head in father's streams and ponds?"

55 "No, child, no," her mother responds.  
"What is it, then? Don't keep it secret!"  
"Since you insist, daughter, I'll speak it—"  
"Yes, mother, tell me as I've bidden."  
"—although to name it is forbidden.

& qui droit & reson le dit,  
je te di bien que ce est vit. »

Quant la pucele ce öi,

si s'en rist & si s'esjor:

65

« Vit! dist ele, Dieu merci, vit!

Vit dirai je, cui qu'il anuit!

Vit Chetivel!—vit dist mon pere,

vit dist ma suer, vit dist mon frere,

& vit dist nostre chanberiere,

70

& vit avant & vit arriere

nomme chascuns a son voloir.

Vous meisme, mere, por voir,

dites vit, & je, toute lasse,

qu'ai torfet que vit ne nommaise?

75

Vit! me doinst Diez que je n'i faille! »

Quant la mere or que se travaille

en vain & que pas une bille

ne vaut quanqu'ele dit sa fille,

d'iluec s'en part, vait s'en plorant.

80 Demanois ez vous acorant

i. vallet: Robins avoir non,  
granz ert & de bele façon,

quar il ert niez a i. prior;

de michez ot vescu maint jor,

85 & si manoit dedenz la ville;

de barat sor molt & de guile.

D'un leu secré ou il estoit

or où quanques dit avoit

la preude fame a la pucele

90 & tout ce que la damoisele

or a sa mere respondu;

grant joie en ot & liez en fu.

Li pauteoniers fu granz & gras,

si tint sa main desoz ses dras,

95 son vit commence a paumoier

tant qu'il l'avoit fet aroidier,

To name it rightly, just between us,  
it properly is called a penis."

As soon as the girl heard its right

name, she laughed loudly in delight.

"Penis!" she cried. "Pens, God bless it!

Like it or not, I shall express it!

Penis! My father and the other

children say penis. Sister, brother

say penis, and our chambermaid

says penis. Nobody's afraid

to say penis if they so choose.

You yourself, mother, even use

the penis word! What crime so heinous

have I done that I can't say penis?

Penis! Please God I'm not denied it!"

Her mother sees that she has chidled

her all to no avail, that what

she tells her daughter counts for squat,

and goes away from her in tears.

80 Just then there suddenly appears

a young man. Robin was his name,  
his manners gallant, large his frame,

raised on white bread and dainty buns,

one of the prior's siblings' sons,

85 and he resided in Rouen.

He was a master of the con.

He'd overheard them from a hiding

place how her mother had tried guiding

her daughter's moral education

90 and the effect of her oration

and how her daughter had responded,

and liked the way her answer sounded.

He was a big and strapping fellow.

He took his hand and slipped it below

95 his clothing and fondled his rod

until it was aroused and hard,

Puis est venuz a la pucele  
qui tant ert avenant & bele,  
& dist: « Dieus vous saut, bele amie!  
— Ha, Robert! Dieus vous beneiel!

100 Dites moi, se Dieus vous ait,  
que vous tenez. » & il li dist:  
« Dame, ce est .i. escuruel.  
Volez le vous? — Oïl, mon vuel

105 aus mains le tenisse je ore.  
— Amie, non ferez encore,  
de ce parlez vous ore en vain,  
mes tendez ença vostre main

110 tout souavet que nel bleciez.  
S'il vous plest, si l'achatisiez. »  
La pucele la main li tent,  
& cil tout maintenant la prent,

115 se li a mis le vit el poing,  
que de tel mes avoit besoing.  
« Robin, fet ele, il est tout chaut.

— Douce amie, se Dieus me saut,  
il se leva or de son cruet.

120 — Par les membres dont il se muet,  
en non Dé, quar il est toz vis,  
voire! dist ele. Li chetis,  
comme il tressaur & se tremuel! »

Ele avoit la couille vetie:

125 « Robin, fet ele, qu'est ce ci?  
— Bele, fet il, ce est son ni.

— Voire, fet el, je sent .i. oef.  
— Par foi, il le punst or tout nuef.

130 — En non Dieu, .i. autre j'en sent.  
— Douce amie, que il n'en rent  
nul mois de l'an que .ii. ensamble.  
— Voire, fet ele, ce me sanble  
que il est de molt bone orine.

A il a nule riens mecene?

and then insouciantly strolled  
toward the fair fifteen-year-old.

qui tant ert avenant & bele,  
& dist: « Fair lass, God be with you! »  
— Ha, Robert! God be with you, too.

100 Dites moi, as you hope for God's aid,  
just what you're holding there. » He said,  
“A squirrel, lass. Do you aspire

to have your own?” “How I desire

to hold it in my hands and pet it!”

“No way, my lass, better forget it;

you speak of that to no avail.

Still, if you like, the beast's for sale.

Come, slip your hand beneath my shirt,

but gently; so he won't get hurt.”

110 The girl extends her hand; he reaches

out, takes and puts it in his breeches,

and nestles his dick in her fist.

Now, there's a treat it can't resist!

115 “Robin,” she said, “he feels so warm!”

“Sweet lassie, God keep me from harm,

he just now climbed out of his niche.”

“Just feel the little critter twitch!

In Jesus' name, he sure is codky!”

she ventured. “How the poor unlucky

fellow jumps up and down and butts!”

Her eye had caught sight of his nuts.

“Robin,” she says, “what is this here?”

He says, “Why, it's his nest, my dear.”

“You're right! I feel an egg, I do!”

“He only laid it now. It's new.”

“And here's another one,” she says.

“Know, lassie, that he only lays

two eggs a month—no more, no less.”

“Indeed,” she says. “What's more, I'd guess

that he's of worthy ancestry.

Are they a potent remedy?”

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— Oil, voir, aus cœs enter  
est bons, & aus plaies tener,  
& si garist de lent pissier.  
135 — Tant l'ai je, fec ele, plus chier.  
Robin, amis, que menjue il?  
Menjue il nois? — Par foi, oil.  
— Ah! lasse maleüree!

tant fis ore ier que forsenee  
quant j'en menjai tout plain mon poing!  
Molt les amaisse a cest besoing,  
si s'en dignast a cest matin.

140 — Ne t'en chaut, bele, dist Robin,  
quar voir il les querra molt bien!  
Ja mar vous en chaudra de rien.  
— & ou? — Par foi, en vostre ventre.

— Je ne sai par ou il i entre.  
— Or ne t'en chaut, quar, par ma foi,  
il en prenda molt bien controil.

145 — Par our? Ja n'i entra il onques.  
— Par vostre con. — Or l'i met donques.  
Se m'aît Deus, j'en sui molt lie!

A tant Robins l'a embracie,

150 si la gete soz soi enverse,  
puis li lieve la cote perse,  
la chemise & le peligron,  
son escuiruel li mist el con.  
Li wallés ne fu pas vilains:  
155 il commence a mouvoir des rains,  
de retrere & de bien empaindre—  
ne se voloit il mie faindre!—  
& cele, cui il molt plesoit,  
en riant dist: « Que Deus i soit,  
160 sire escuruel! or del cerchier!  
Bones nois puissiez vous mengier!  
Or cerchiez bien el plus parfont,  
jusques iluec ou eles sont,

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145

150

155

160

165

est bons, & aus plaies tener,  
a tail, and can be used to patch  
a wound, and speed up urination.”

quar, par la foi que doi ma teste,  
170 molt a ci savoreuse beste!  
Ainz mes tel escuiruel ne vi  
ne de si bon parler n'oï;  
quar il la gent mie ne mort;  
il ne me blece mie fort.  
175 Or del cerchier, biaus amis chfiers!»  
Certes jet vueil molt volent[iers]!»  
En dementiers qu'ainsi parloit  
la pucele & cil queroit  
les nois, que de riens ne se faint,  
180 tant a bouté & tant enpaint  
que (ne sai par quale aventure—  
je ne sai se ce fu nature)  
prist mal au cuer a l'escuiruel,  
si commence a plorer de l'uel,  
185 & puis apres a escopi  
& a vonchié & a vomi.  
Tant a vonchié, le fol, le glout,  
que cele senti le degout  
aval ses nages degouter.  
190 « Estal fer ele, ne bouter!  
Ne ferit, Robin, ne ferit  
Tu as hurté de tel air  
& tant feru & tant hurté  
que .i. des oës est esquaté.  
195 Ce Poise moi, c'est granz domages—  
l'aubun m'en cort par mi les nages!»  
A cest mot s'est cil levez sus,  
qu'il n'i avoit que fere plus,  
joianz s'en va en son afere;  
200 n'a mie failli a bien fere.  
Par cest fablel vueil enseignier  
que tels cuide bien chastier  
sa fille de dire folie,

where all those walnuts are and treat your-  
self royally, delicious creature!  
170 I never heard of, never saw  
a squirrel quite like this before,  
for he is tame and doesn't bite,  
the hurt he gives me very slight.  
175 Go for the nuts, friend! Their removal  
meets with my heartiest approval!"  
While she cheers him on and he puts  
his squirrel in up to the nuts  
in earnest, not toying or joking,  
180 with all his prodding and his poking,  
by some mischance the animal  
(I'm not sure—was it natural?)  
starts feeling queasy. By and by  
his eye, filled with tears, starts to cry,  
185 he's seized by a spasmotic hiccup,  
and afterward begins to chuck up.  
He vomited so much, the glutton,  
that she felt running down her bottom  
the trickle of the overflow.  
190 "Stop pumping!" she implores him. "Whoa!  
Stop pumping, Robin, stop your pumping!  
You've gone about it with such thumping  
and with such vigor beat and pushed  
that now one of the eggs is squooshed.  
195 What a great loss this is! Alas,  
there's egg white running down my ass!"  
Robin then got back on his feet,  
his business there at last complete,  
and happily went on his way.  
200 Hed had quite a successful day.  
My fabliau will demonstrate  
that though a man may educate  
his daughter to control her tongue,

205 & quant plus onques le chaste  
tant le met l'en plus en la voie  
de mal fere, se Dieus me voie.

61.

LA DAMOISELE QUI N'OÏT  
PARLER DE FOTRE QUI  
N'AÜST MAL AU CUER

En iceste fable novelle

ws conte d'une damoisele  
qui molt par estoit orgoüeuse  
& felonesse & desdaigneuse,  
que par foi, je dirai tor oultre,  
ele n'ouïst parler de foute  
ne de lecherie a nul fuer  
que ele n'aüst mal au cuer  
& trop en faisoit male chiere;  
& ses peres l'avoit tant chiere  
Por ce que plus enfanz n'avoit  
q'a son voloir tresot fasoit.  
(Plus ert a li que ele a lui.)  
Tuit sol estoient embedui,  
n'orent beasse ne sergent,  
& si estoient riche gent.  
& savez por quoi li prodrom  
n'avoit sergent en sa maison?  
La damoisele n'avoit cure,  
por ce qu'ele ert de tel nature,  
que en nul sen ne sofrist mie  
sergent qui nomast lecherie,  
vit ne coille ne autre chose,  
& por ce ses peres ne ose  
avoir sergent un mois entier,

205 it only pushes her along  
the road to sin, the more he tries,  
may I find favor in God's eyes.

61.

THE MAIDEN WHO COULDN'T  
ABIDE LEWWD LANGUAGE

Now here's a fabliau that's new  
and tells us of a maiden who

was by her temperament so haughty,  
Perverse and scornful, spoiled and naughty  
that, on my oath, it was so shocking  
to her to hear folks talk of fucking  
or lewdness, sh'd not tolerate it;  
she grew extremely aggravated  
and became physically ill.  
10 Her father catered to her will;  
he doted on the girl like mad,  
she being the only child he had.  
(You'd almost think she was the parent.)  
They couldn't keep a maid or servant,  
but lived together, just those two  
alone, though they were well-to-do.  
And do you know just what impeded  
his taking on the help he needed?  
The young lady had no intent,  
because such was her temperament,  
of having household help so coarse,  
they'd even mention intercourse  
or cock or balls, et cetera,  
and her father, because of her,  
25 did not dare keep one on for long.

s'an aust il molt grant mestier  
a ses blez batre & a vener  
& a sa charrue mener  
& a faire s'autre besoigne,  
mais sargent a prandre resoigne  
30 tant c'uns vallez par avanture  
(qui molt savoit barat & guile)  
herbergeiez fu en cele vile,  
qui aloit gueaignier son pain;  
or parler de ce vilain  
35 & de sa fille qui aloit  
les homes & cure n'avoit  
ne de lor faiz ne de lor diz.  
Icil vallez ot non Daviz,  
40 si aloit toz seus par la terre  
comme preuz, avanture querre.  
Quant il sot veraike novelle  
de l'orgoilleuse danoisele  
qui estoit de si mal endroit,  
45 a la maison en vint tot droit  
o ele estoit avec son pere.  
(O li n'avoit secor ne frere  
ne clo ne droit ne mu ne sort.)  
Li vilains estoit en la cort:  
50 ses bestes atire & atorne,  
& sa busche au soloil retorne;  
de sa besoigne s'antremet.  
A tant estes vos Davier,  
qui lo vilain a salitié,  
55 si li a l'ostel demandé  
por Deu & por saint Nicolas.  
Li vilains ne l'escondist pas  
ne othroier ne li par ose,  
ainz li demande au chief de pose  
60 queus horne il est & de coi sert.

30

porta sa fille que trop endure,  
tant c'uns vallez par avanture  
(qui molt savoit barat & guile)  
herbergeiez fu en cele vile,  
qui aloit gueaignier son pain;

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ainz li demande au chief de pose  
queus horne il est & de coi sert.

Nevertheless, his need was strong:  
H'd wheat to thresh, stock to be fed,  
a team of oxen to be led,  
and all the other farmyard chores,  
but he forgoes hired help because  
of what his suffering daughter wants.  
At length it happened that by chance  
a young man found lodgings in town,  
a con man who went up and down,  
working at random jobs. This charmer  
soon came to hear about the farmer  
and of his daughter, how she hated  
men and how she repudiated  
both what they did and what they said.  
This young man, David, earned his bread  
following Fortune all around  
the world, a worthy vagabond.  
Hearing men speak in every quarter  
about the farmer's snooty daughter  
and of her loathsome temperament,  
the youth immediately went  
to the house where they lived together  
with no one else—not sister, brother,  
healthy or mute or deaf or lame.  
He found the farmer, when he came,  
seeing to his beasts in the yard  
and toting firewood, working hard  
in the hot sun, doing his tasks.  
Here's our friend Davy boy, who asks,  
after he's said how do you do,  
for God and Saint Nicholas, too,  
if he could have a place to stay.  
The farmer's not willing to say  
he can nor give a flat denial,  
but asks instead after a while  
who he is and what work he does.

Davie li dist en apert  
que molt volantiers servirloit  
i. prodome s'il lo trovoit,  
que bien set ater & semer  
80 & bien batre & bien vaner  
& tot ce que vallez doit faire.  
« J'aūsse bien de toi afaire,  
fait li vilains, par saint Aloise,  
ne fust sanz plus por une chose:  
j'ai une fille donjereuse  
qui vers homes est trop honteuse  
qant parolent de lecherie.  
Onques n'oi sergent en ma vie  
75 qui longue me poist durer,  
que des que ma fille or nomer  
foultre, si li prant une gote  
qui encontre lo cuer la bote  
que de morir fait grant sanblant,  
80 & por ce n'os avoir sergent,  
biau ffere, qu'il sont lecheor  
& trop sont vilain parlor  
que ma fille crainbroie perdre. »

Davie prist sa boche a terdre,  
& puis crache autresi & moche  
com s'il astet mangiee moche;  
au vilain dist: « Ostez, biaus sire!  
Si vilain mot ne devez dire!

Taisiez, por Deu l'esperitable,  
que ce est li moz au deiable!  
N'en parlez mais la o je soie—  
por .c. livres je ne voldroie  
veoir home qui en parlast  
ne qui lecherie nomast,  
que grant dolor au cuer me prant. »

Qant la fille au vilain [ ] antant  
lo vassal qui dist tel raison,

65 i. prodome s'il lo trovoit,  
que bien set ater & semer  
85 & bien batre & bien vaner  
& tot ce que vallez doit faire.  
« J'aūsse bien de toi afaire,  
fait li vilains, par saint Aloise,  
ne fust sanz plus por une chose:  
j'ai une fille donjereuse  
qui vers homes est trop honteuse  
qant parolent de lecherie.  
Onques n'oi sergent en ma vie  
75 qui longue me poist durer,  
que des que ma fille or nomer  
foultre, si li prant une gote  
qui encontre lo cuer la bote  
que de morir fait grant sanblant,  
80 & por ce n'os avoir sergent,  
biau ffere, qu'il sont lecheor  
& trop sont vilain parlor  
que ma fille crainbroie perdre. »

Davie began to gag and grimace,  
snorted repeatedly and spat  
like choking on a fly or gnat.  
“For shame, good gentleman!” he spluttered.  
“A word like that must not be uttered!”

Shun, as you would avoid the very  
90 Devil, the Fiend’s vocabulary,  
for God’s sake, when I am nearby!  
Not for a hundred pounds would I  
be with the kind of person whod  
mention or name anything lewd.

95 My heart aches at the very word.”

The farmer’s daughter overheard  
the man express this point of view.

Davy loudly proclaimed he was  
a man ready to earn a wage  
from any good man whod engage  
his services. He plowed, he planted,  
threshed, winnowed . . . whatever was wanted  
of him, he was prepared to do.

“I’m sure I could make use of you,”  
the man replies, “by Saint Aloysius.  
There’s one thing, though: Hired help annoys us.  
I have a domineering daughter,  
whose temperament will not support a  
man if he speaks of bedroom matters.

I’ve never had a servant—that is,  
75 I never had one who could stay  
here long before she’d hear him say  
‘fuck’ and get so distressed, the smart  
would rise and press against her heart  
and she looked as if she would die.  
80 I can’t keep servants, sir. Here’s why:  
They’re all a vulgar lot, who utter  
the kind of words heard in the gutter  
and leave my daughter in extremis.”

si issi fors de la maison,  
a son pere maintenant dit:  
100 « Sire, fait el, se Deus m'ait,  
cestui vallet retandroiz wos,  
que il sera boens avoc nos.  
Cist a tresore ma meniere.  
Se vos m'amiez ne tenez chiere,  
105 retenez lo, gel vos commandant.  
— Doce fille, a vostre talant, »  
fait li vilains, qui molt ert beste.  
Ensi retindrent a grant feste  
Daviet, & molt l'orent chier.  
110 Qant il fu ore de couchier,  
li vilains sa fille en apeit:  
« Or me dites, ma damoisele,  
o porra Daviez gesir?  
— Sire, s'il vos vient a plaisir,  
115 il puet bien gesir avoc moi.  
Molt me sanble de boene foi  
& que en bon lou ait esté.  
— Ma fille, a vostre volonté  
faites do rot », fait li prodon.  
120 Pres do feu en mi la maison  
se cocha li vilains dormir,  
& Daviez s'ala gesir  
en la chanbre o la damoisele,  
qui molt ert avenanz & bele:  
125 blanche or la char com flor d'espine—  
s'ele fust fille de rainé,  
si fust ele bele a devise!  
Daviez li a sa main mise  
sor les memelotes tot droit  
& demanda ce que estoit.  
Cele dit: « Ce sont mes memeles,  
qui molt par sont blanches & belles,  
N'en i a nule orde ne sale. »

She left the house and hurried to  
her father and made this request:  
100 "Father," she says, "the Lord be blessed!  
Do by all means employ this youth.  
He'll fit right in with us, in truth,  
so hire him. His nature conforms  
to all our usages and norms,  
so, if you so wish it, let it be."  
105 "If you so wish it, let it be,"  
the farmer says. (He's none too bright.)  
Much taken with him, they invite  
Davy to stay and earn his keep.  
110 When it comes time to go to sleep,  
the farmer consults with his daughter.  
"Now tell me, missy, where we ought to  
set up a bed for Davy here."  
115 "If you are willing, Father dear,  
let's let him share my bed with me.  
He seems a man of quality,  
in all things worthy of our trust."  
"Dear daughter, if you think that's best,"  
the man said, "do as you desire."  
120 In the main room beside the fire  
the farmer lay down for the night,  
and Davy and the girl went right  
to bed together in her room.  
She was so fair, a hawthorn bloom  
125 were she the daughter of a queen,  
her beauty would be no less rare.  
Davy placed his hand on her bare  
bosom and wanted to be told  
exactly what those things were called.  
130 The maiden answered him, "Why, they're  
my breasts, so very white and fair,  
in no way shameful or unclean."

& Daviez sa main avale  
135 droit au pertuis desoz lo vatre  
par o li viz el cors li entre,  
si santi les paus qui cressoient;  
sous & coliz encor estoient.  
140 Puis demande que ce puet estre.  
« Pax fo, fait ele, c'est mes prez,  
Daviet, la ou vos tastez,  
mais il n'est pas encor floriz.  
— Par fo, fait dame, ce dit Daviz,  
145 n'i a pas d'erbe encor planté ...  
& que est ce en mi cest pré,  
cest fosse soeve & plaine?  
— Ce est, fait ele, ma fontaine,  
qui ne sort mie tot adés.  
150 — & que est ce ici après  
fait Daviez, en ceste engarde?  
— C'est li cornerres qui la garde,  
fait la pucele, por verte.  
Se beste entroit dedanz mon pré  
155 por boivre en la fontaine clere,  
tantost cornerrooit li cornerre  
por faire li honte & peor.  
— Ci a deiable corner,  
fait Daviez, & de put ordre,  
qui ensi vialt les bestes mordre  
160 por l'erbe qui ne soit gaste!  
— Tu m'as ore bien portatee,  
fait la pucele, Daviet. »  
Tantost sor lui sa main remet,  
165 qui n'estoit mal faite ne corte,  
& dit qu'ele savra qu'il porte.  
Lors li reprist a demander  
& ses choses a detaster  
tant qu'el l'a par lot vit saisi

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& que est ce en mi cest pré,  
cest fosse soeve & plaine?  
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165 qui n'estoit mal faite ne corte,  
& dit qu'ele savra qu'il porte.  
Lors li reprist a demander  
& ses choses a detaster  
tant qu'el l'a par lot vit saisi

Davy slides his hand down between  
135 her legs below the abdomen,  
the hole one puts one's penis in,  
and felt the first hairs newly growing,

all soft and silky, barely showing.  
Exploring with his right hand, he

140 again asks what that thing might be.  
She tells him, "Davy, that's my pasture,  
it truly is, where you have placed your

hand, but it's not much overgrown."  
"Id say it hasn't yet been sown,"

145 says David. "And here in the middle  
of your fine meadow, what's this puddle,  
this slippery-soft, ditchlike thing?"

"Davy," she answers, "it's my spring,  
which right now isn't overflowing."

150 Then Davy asks her, "Are you going  
to tell me what's ensconced down here?"  
"Why, that's the bugler, Davy dear,"  
the maiden says, "who's standing sentry.  
If man or beast sought to gain entry

155 and try to drink from my clear spring,  
the sentry would start trumpeting  
and strike his heart with fear and shame."

"That scury bugler's much to blame,"  
Davy observes, "for seeking strife  
and heckling poor, harmless wildlife

160 just so it won't walk on the grass!"

"Now, Davy dear," replies the lass,  
"you've given me a thorough feel!"  
She says, reaching for him, that she'll

165 use her long-fingered and unblemished  
hand to find out how he is furnished,  
and so she questions him and starts  
to feel about his body parts,  
and grasps him firmly by the prick

170 & demande: « Que est ici,  
Daviet, si roide & si dur  
que bien devroit percer .i. mur?  
— Dame, fait il, c'est mes polains,  
qui molt est & roides & sains,  
mais il ne manja des ier main. »  
175 Cele remest aval sa main,  
si trove la coille velue;  
les .ii. coillons taste & renue,  
si redemande: « Daviet,  
que est or ce en ce sachet?  
fait ele. Sont ce .ii. luisiaus? »  
180 Daviz fu de respondre isiniaus:  
« Dame, ce sont dui mareschal  
qui ont a garder mon cheval  
qant pest en autrui compagnie.  
185 Tor jorz sont en sa conpeignie;  
de mon polain garder sont mestre.  
— Davi, met lou en mon pré pestre,  
ton biau polain, se Deus te gart! »  
190 & cil s'an torné d'autre part,  
sor lo paignil li met lo vit,  
puis a a la pucelle dit  
qu'il ot tornée desoz soi:  
« Dame, mes polains muert de soi;  
195 molt en a ait grant poine.  
— Va si l'aboivre a ma fontaine,  
fait cele. Mar avras peor!  
— Dame, je dor lo corneor,  
fait Daviz, que il n'en groçast  
200 se li polains dedanz entrast. »  
Cele respont: « Si'l en dit mal,  
bien lo barent: li mereschall! »  
Daviz respont: « Ce est bien dit. »  
A tant li met el con lo vit,  
205 si fait son boen & son talant

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Daviet, si roide & si dur  
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qu'il ot tornée desoz soi:

« Dame, mes polains muert de soi;

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— Va si l'aboivre a ma fontaine,

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qu'il ot tornée desoz soi:

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molt en a ait grant poine.

— Va si l'aboivre a ma fontaine,

fait cele. Mar avras peor!

— Dame, je dor lo corneor,

fait Daviz, que il n'en groçast  
se li polains dedanz entrast. »

Cele respont: « Si'l en dit mal,  
bien lo barent: li mereschall! »

Daviz respont: « Ce est bien dit. »  
A tant li met el con lo vit,

si fait son boen & son talant

170 and asks him, "Dayy, what's this thick  
and rigid thing so hard and all  
that it could batter down a wall?"  
"Lady," he tells her, "that's my pony,  
who isn't listless, weak, and scrawny,  
though he's not eaten for two days."  
175 She moves her hand still down a ways,  
finds two balls in a hairy scrotum,  
and moves her fingers all about 'em.

175 "Do tell me, Davy," she goes on,  
"are what I feel two balls of yarn  
that you are keeping in your sack?"  
David is quick to answer back,  
180 "Why, they're two stable hands, of course,  
whose business is to watch my horse  
when grazing in another's field.  
They're experts, always there to shield  
him and stay close by when he strays."

185 "Do put your pony out to graze  
here in my pasture, Davy, please."  
He sidles up against her; she's  
right there; he presses up his penis  
against the maidens' mound of Venus,  
and rolling on top of her first, he  
says, "Lady, my pony's so thirsty,  
he's parched and really suffering."  
190 "Go water him there in my spring,"  
she says. "No need to be afraid." He  
answers her, "But the bugler, lady!  
I fear the anger of your sentry  
if we allow my pony entry."

200 She answers him, "Your stable boys  
can beat him up if he makes noise."  
David replies, "Yes, I approve."  
He has his way and goes to shove  
his cock up her cunt; his attacks

si qu'ele nel tient pas a lant,  
que .iii. foiz la retorna,  
& se li cornierres groça,  
si fu batuz de .ii. jumaus.

210

A icest mot faut li fabliaus.

## 62. LES .IV. SOHAIZ SAIN<sup>T</sup>

### MARTIN

Un vilain ot en Normendie  
dont bien est droiz que je vous die  
.i. fabblel merveilleus & conte.  
Toz jors avoit il a acointe  
5 saint Martin, que toz jors nommoit  
a ses oeuvres que il fesoit;  
ja si liez ne dolenz ne fust  
que saint Martins n'amementeüst.  
Toz jors nommoit il saint Martin  
10 Li vilains aloit un matin  
en son labor si comme il seut;  
saint Martin oublier ne veut:  
« Saint Martin! dist il, Or avant! » ...  
& sains Martins li vint devant.  
15 « Vilains, fist il, tu m'as molt chier.  
Ja ne voudras rienne commencier  
que toz jors au commencement  
ne me nommes premierement.  
Je t'en rendrai ja la deserfe:  
20 lesse ton travail & ta herete,  
si t'en reva tout liement!  
Je te di bien tout vraiment  
ce qu'a .iiii. soubais diras  
saches tu bien que tu l'avras,

redouble; she won't find him lax!  
Four times in all he redirected  
his siege. The trumpeter objected  
and so got beaten by the twins,  
and on that word this story ends.

## 62. SAINT MARTIN'S FOUR WISHES

In Normandy there lived a peasant  
of whom is told so quaint and pleasant  
a fabliau that I've a notion  
to tell you. Such was his devotion  
5 to Saint Martin that he'd invoke  
him in all things he undertook;  
whether elated or depressed,  
it was Saint Martin he addressed;  
every day he called on Saint Martin.  
10 The peasant set out on a certain  
morning, as was his wont, to plow.  
He'll not forget Saint Martin now.  
"Saint Martin!" he cried out, "Geyup!"  
and that's when Saint Martin showed up.  
15 "Peasant," he said, "you have been loyal  
to me, and never start to toil,  
no matter what your task may be,  
without first calling upon me.  
You have well earned my special favor.  
Now leave your harrow, drop your labor,  
20 and get you home with a light heart,  
for I will truly do my part  
and herewith promise I will grant  
whatever four wishes you want,

nous avons .ii. souhais perduis;  
Souhaidez que vous vit n'avez  
ne je con. Ainsi le laiez,

s'en avrez .i. de remenant:  
& si serommes riche gent. »

170 & li vilains souhaide & dist  
qu'ele n'ait con ne il n'ait vit.

Donques fu ele molt marie  
quant de son con ne trova mie,  
& li preudom, quant il revit  
que il n'ot mie de son vit,

refu de l'autre part iriez.

175 « Sire, dist ele, souhaidez  
le quart souhait qu'encore avon  
qu'avez .i. vit & je .i. con,

si ert ausi comme devant  
& si n'avrons perdu noiant. »

180 & li preudom resouhaida,  
que ne perdi ne gaigna,

que son vit li est revenuz  
& ses souhais a il perduz.

185 Par cest fablēl pōez savoir  
que cil ne fet mie savoir  
qui mieus croit sa fame que lui:

190 sovent l'en vient honte & anui.

That makes two wishes thrown away,  
and now you must use one to fix  
us and remove these cunts and pricks.

You'll still have one left out of four,  
and we'll be rich forevermore."

The peasant wishes thereupon  
that all their cunts and pricks were gone,

but she was anything but cheered  
to find her cunt had disappeared,

175 and he, too, had an awful shock  
to find himself without a cock.

Both of them were extremely wroth.

"Husband, it's time to make the fourth  
wish we have left to us," said she;

180 "one prick for you, one cunt for me.  
We'll return to our former state

no poorer off, at any rate."

He wished the wish that still remained;  
and thus he neither lost nor gained:

185 he got his prick back at the cost  
of the four wishes, which he lost.

This fablēl clearly explains  
that a man doesn't use his brains

when his wife's judgment sways his views.

190 Calamity often ensues.

## 63. LA SORISETE DES ESTOPES

Après vos cont d'un vilain sot  
qui fame prist & rien ne sot  
de nul deduir q'apartenist  
a fame se il la tenist,  
c'onques entremis ne s'en fu;  
mais sa fame avoit ja scū

Next I'll tell of a stupid peasant  
who took a wife, but of the pleasant  
things that pertain to married life  
which men can do who have a wife  
he didn't know (he'd never tried),  
but in those things men do his bride

## 63. THE LITTLE RAG MOUSE

tot ce que home sevent faire,  
que, a la verité retraine,  
li prestes son boen en faisoit  
10    quant il voloit & li plaisoit  
& que tant vint a icel jor  
q'ele asenbla a son seignor.  
Lors dist li prestes: « Doce amie,  
15    je voil a vos, ne vos poist mie,  
avoir a faire, s'il vos loist,  
ainz que li vilains vos adoist. »  
& cele dit: « Volantiers, sire,  
que je ne vos os escondire,  
20    mais venez rost & sanz demore  
quant vos savroiz qu'il sera ore,  
ainz que mes sires lo me face,  
que perdre ne voil vostre grace.  
Ensi fu enpris li afaire.

Après ice ne tarda gaire  
25    que li vilains s'ala cochier,  
mais ele ne l'ot gaieres chier  
ne son deduit ne son solaz;  
& il la prant entre ses braz,  
si l'anbraça molt duremant,  
30    que il nel sot faire autrement,  
& l'a molt soz lui estandue,  
& cele s'est molt desfandue  
& dist: « Qu'est ce que volez faire?  
— Je voil, fait il, vit avant traire;  
35    si vos forrai se j'onques puis,  
se vostre con delivre truis.  
— Mon con, fait ele emeslopas,  
mon con ne troveroit vos pas.  
— O est il donc? Nel me celez.  
40    — Sire, quant savoir lo volez  
jel vos dirai o est, par m'ame:  
muciez as piez do lit ma dame,

10    li prestes son boen en faisoit  
15    quant il voloit & li plaisoit  
ainz que li vilains vos adoist. »

already had much expertise,  
because, in fact, she used to please  
the priest, who slept with her at will  
and went on doing so until  
10    the day she left her parents' house  
and gave the man her marriage vows.  
"My sweetest love," then said the priest,  
15    if you don't mind and will permit it,  
before you let your husband get it,"  
and she replied, "Most gladly, Father—  
could I refuse you?"— but I'd rather  
you came by soon and didn't wait,  
20    or you may find that it's too late  
and he's already played his part.  
I'd not lose my place in your heart."  
Thus they arranged their little game.  
Not too long after the time came,  
25    and when the peasant got in bed,  
she wished it was her priest instead  
and had no liking for his charms,  
and when he took her in his arms  
30    and hugged her hard with all his strength  
and rolled on top of her full length  
(for he had no experience),  
she put up a valiant defense  
and said, "What do you think you're doing?"  
"To take my prick out and start screwing  
35    you," says he, "as much as I want,  
as soon as I can find your cunt."  
"My cunt," she says, cutting him short,  
"you will not find it where it ought  
to be." "Then where? Don't keep it hidden."  
40    "I'll tell you, husband, since you've bidden,  
just where I put it. By my head,  
I left it by my mother's bed

o jehui matin lo laissai.

— Par saint Martin, & je irai,  
fait il, ançois que je ne l'aie. »

45 De l'aler plus ne se delais,

ainz va querre lo con lo cors,

mais la vile, [o] estoit li bors

o sa fame avoit esté née

50 loin d'iluec [fu] plus d'une lee.

Endemartres que li vilains

fu por lo con, li chapelains

s'ala couchier dedanz son lit

a grant joie & a grant delit

55 & fist qanque li plot a faire,

mais ne fait pas tot a retraire

com li vilains fu deceüz.

Onques plus fous ne fu veit!

Quant vint chies la mere sa fame,  
si li a dit: « Ma chiere dame,

vostre fille m'anvoie ça

por son con que ele muça,

ce dit, as piez de vostre lit. »

La dame parsa i. petit

60 & en pansant s'aparcevoit

que sa fille lo decevoit

por faire aucune chose male.

A cest mot en la chambre avale

& trove i. penier plain d'estopes:

70 « Qui q'an ait, fait ele, les copes,

cest panier li bailleroz ci. »

Lors a cil lo panier saisí,

mais es estopes ot tornee

& bien s'i fu enveloppee

75 une soriz, sanz nule dote.

Cele li baille, & il lo bore

tot maintenant desoz sa chape

this morning, neatly tucked away."

"I'll fetch it back without delay,"

he said, "sooner than go without,

by Saint Martin!" and he set out

to seek the body part she lacked,

but his wife's native town, in fact,

where her folks still resided, lay

50 well over a full league away.

Now, while the peasant went to hunt

for and retrieve the woman's cunt,

the chaplain gladly took his place,

indulged himself in her embrace,

and did exactly what he'd meant . . .

But why expose the full extent

of how the man was cuckolded?

Nobody weaker in the head

ever lived! At her mother's home

60 he said, "Good woman, I have come,

sent by your daughter, to retrieve

her cunt, which she left, I believe,

somewhere by the foot of your bed."

The woman got it in her head,

65 once she had thought a little while,

her child had sent him there by guile

and had some wickedness in mind,

so she went to her room to find

a basket filled with scraps of cloth.

70 "Someone's been careless, sure enough!

Here, give her this; it's what she wants."

He grabbed the basket from her hands.

(A little mouse had climbed inside

and made itself a place to hide

75 nestled among the rags, so goes it.)

She gives the basket, and he stows it

right then and there beneath his cape,

& au plus tost qu'il puet s'esshape  
de li por revenir arriere,

80

quick as he can makes his escape,  
because he's anxious to be back in  
bed.

80

While he's walking through the bracken,  
he says what one would least expect.

& dist une molt grant marvoille:  
« Ne sai, fait il, se dort o voille  
li cons ma fame, par saint Pol,  
mais molt volantiers, par saint Vol,  
lo fortisse ainz que je venisse  
a l'ostel, se je ne crenisse  
qu'il m'eschappast a mi ces voies...

85

"Is it asleep? or has it waked,  
my wife's cunt? I'm not sure at all,  
but I am eager, by Saint Paul,  
to fuck it while I'm still out here  
before I get home, though I fear  
that it may try to run away.

85

So what? I'll fuck it anyway  
to find out if they're true or not,  
que l'an dit, que il a en con  
molt docë & molt söef beste. »

90

Maintenant de son vit la teste  
li lieve & fu droiz comme lance  
& enz es estopes s'elance,  
si commandë a parpiller,  
& la soriz saut del penier,  
si s'an torné par mi les prez.

90

After the peasant chased it through the fields  
at top speed and with giant strides,  
thinking it's out of fun it hides  
from him. "God! What a lovely critter!  
I do believe my member did her  
just now in for a nasty turn.  
She looks like something newly born:

95

Just see how small she is, how tender!  
To God the Father I commend her  
and to the Son and Holy Ghost!  
I do believe that she was most  
afraid of my prick, which came smack  
in front of her, God's eyes, all black,  
with a red muzzle sticking out.

95

Aprés est li vilains alez  
grant aleüie & [a] grant pas,  
si cuide qu'ele face en gas  
& si dit: Deust si bele beste!  
Je cuit certes que de la teste  
soit ele pas encor irree.  
Si n'a gaires qu'ele fu neee—  
je voi bien que molt est petite—  
a Deu & a Saint Esperite  
la command & au Sauveur!  
Je cuit certes qu'ele ait peor  
de mon vit. Si ot el por voir,  
par les iauz Deu, que le vit noir  
& roige le musel devant.  
Las! or me vois aparcevant

105

Alas! Now there's no room for doubt.

que ele en or peor a certes.

Lasse, com recevré granz pertes

se ele muert! Sainte Marie!

Ele iert ja noitez & perie

en la fosse se ele i antre!

Ele en a moillié tot lo vantre

& tor lo dous & les costez.

Ostez, biau sire Deus, ostez!

Que ferai je se ele muert? »

Li vilains ses .ii. poinz detuert

por la sorriz qui braint & pipe:

qui li veist faire la lipe

au vilain & tordre la jöe

manbrer li poist de la möe

que li singes fait quant il rit.

Li vilains tor belenant dit:

« Biaus cons, doz cons, tost revenez!

Tote ma fiance tenez

que mais ne vos adeserai

devant que a l'ostel serai

& tant que vos avrai livré

a ma fame, si delivré

vos puis avoir de la rosee.

Faite en sera molt grant risee

s'an set qui'eschapez me soiez!

Ahil vos seroiz ja noitez,

biaus cons, en la rosee grant!

Venezl si entrez en mon gant;

je vos metrai dedanz mon sain. »

Tot ensi se travaille en vain,

qu[e] il ne set tant apeler

que ele voille retorne,

ainz se pert en l'erbe menue.

Qant il voit que il l'a perdue,  
si devient mornes & pansi.

She's terrified, most certainly.  
What a loss it would be for me  
if she died! Mary, holy Mother!

115 She will be drowned or else will smother  
if she should stumble in a hole!  
Now she's completely drenched, her whole  
belly, both her sides, and her back....

120 May the Lord help me now! Alack,  
what shall I do if her cunt dies?"

125 The peasant wrings his hands and cries  
for the poor mouse that squeals and pules;  
to see the face the peasant pulls  
and how he twists his jaw about,

130 you'd be reminded of the pout  
a monkey makes when racked with laughter.  
The peasant calls out softly after,  
"Dear cunt, sweet cunt, return to me!

135 I give my word in surety  
you'll not be touched, but left alone  
until the two of us get home  
and I can give you to my wife,

if only I may save your life

140 from the night dew, so damp and chill.  
Folks will laugh heartily, they will,  
if they learn how you wriggled free!  
Good cunt, alas, then must it be  
that you drown in the heavy dew?

Let my glove be a nest for you.

Come, and I'll place you in my breast."

In vain the peasant tries his best.

For all that he may plead and call,

the mouse won't come to him at all,

but disappears into the grass.

145 When he sees what has come to pass,  
his heart is sad and filled with pain.

Atant s'est a la voie mis,  
n'aresta jusq'an sa maison,  
tot sanz parole & sanz raison  
s'estoit sor i. banc deschauciez  
(sachez qu'il n'estoit mie liez),  
& sa fame li dist: « Biau sire,  
qui est ce? — je ne vos oi mot dire.  
155 Don n'estes vos haitiez & sains?  
— Je non, dame, » fait li vilains,  
qui totes voies se deschauce  
& despoille, & elle li haue  
la coverture & lieve en haut,  
& li vilains joste li saut  
& se coche trestoz envers,  
ne ne dist ne que uns convers  
cui li partlers est desfanduz,  
ençois se gist roz estanduz,  
Cele lo vit mu & taisant,  
165 si li a dit demaintenant:  
« Sire, donc n'avez vos mon con?  
— Je non, dame, je non, je non!  
Mar l'alasse je onques querre,  
qu'il m'e[s]t la hors cheoiz a terre,  
si est ja noiez en cez prez!  
— Hal fait ele, vos me gabez!  
— Certes, dame, fait il, non faz. »  
Elle lo prant entre ses braz:

175 « Sire, fait ele, ne vos chaille!  
Il ot de vos peor sanz faille  
por ce qu'il ne vos connoissoit,  
& chose qui li desplaisoit,  
au mien cuidier, li faisiez...  
180 & se vos or lo tenoiez,  
qu'an feroiez? Dites lo moi.  
— Je lo foutroie, par ma foi,  
& voir en l'oil li boteroie

He set off down the road again,  
not stopping till he reached his house.  
150 Not one word came out of his mouth,  
and he sat down to take his shoes  
off. (You can tell he has the blues.)  
And his wife asks him, "Sir, what's wrong?  
Why so silent? And such a long  
face! Aren't you well? Don't you feel glad?"  
"I'm not and don't," the peasant said,  
taking his shoes off all the time,  
and his clothes, too. So he can climb  
in next to her, she lifts the cover,  
160 and he gets in and just turns over  
and lies facing the other way.  
Just like a novice who can't say  
a word unless given permission,  
he lies there in a prone position.  
165 She sees him silent and withdrawn,  
and turns and asks him therupon,  
"Well, husband, don't you have my cunt?"  
"Lady, I don't! I don't! I don't!"  
I'm sorry that I went to fetch it!  
170 I dropped it out there, and the wretched  
thing must have drowned there in the wet."  
"You want to make a joke, I bet."  
"Indeed, I don't, lady," says he.  
She hugs her husband soothingly  
175 and says, "My dear, don't be put out.  
It was afraid of you, no doubt,  
and didn't know just who you were,  
and you attempted, I infer,  
to do something against its wish.  
180 What if you had it now in reach?  
What would you do? Do let me know."  
"I'd fuck it hard, of course, and so  
I would, and poke it in the eye

ensi que je lo creveroie  
por lo coroz que il m'a fait. »

185 & ele li dist entrasait:

« Sire, il est ja entre mes jambes,  
mais ne vosisse por Estanpes  
que il fust si mal atornez,

190 com il est en voz mains tornez  
tot soavet & bellement. »

& li vilains sa main i tant,  
sel prant & dic: « Gel *tem* as mains!

195 — Or l'aplaigniez don tot as mains,  
fait ele, qu'il ne vos estorde,  
& n'aiez peor qu'il vos morde.

Tenez lo qu'il ne vos eschat. »

— Voire, fait il, por nostre chat,  
faire li vilains, s'il l'anconnoiroit—

200 ja Deus a merci nel m'otroit  
qu'il nel manjast, au mien cuidier! »

Lors lo commanda a aplaignier,  
si sant molt bien qu'il est moilliez:

« Ha las! encor est il soilliez

205 de la rosee o il chaï,  
li vilains dit. Ahi, ahi,  
con! vos m'avez hui corecie;

mais ja par moi n'en iert grocie  
de ce que il est arosez.

210 Or vos dormez & reposez,  
que ne vos voil huimais grever—  
las estes de core & d'alei. »

Enseignier voi por ceste fable

que fame set plus que deiable,  
& certeinement lo sachiez.

215 Les iauz embedeus me sachiez  
se n'a esciant dit voir!

Qant el viaut om[e] decevoir,  
plus l'an deçoit & plus l'afole

185  
190  
195  
200  
205  
210  
215

and pop it good," was his reply,  
"for all the anguish it has caused."

She answered him and never paused,

"Between my legs it's set up camp,

but, husband, nor for all Élampes

would I wish it to be mistreated,

since it came back to you and heeded

your summons, docile, tame, and meek."

He reaches out his hand to seek

it, takes it, and says, "I can touch it!"

"With both your hands now gently brush it,"

she says, "so that it won't take flight."

Don't be afraid; it doesn't bite.

Hold it so it won't get away."

"Yes," says the peasant, "our cat may,

if it should catch it, just devour

the poor thing. God's eternal power

against this risk keep and protect it!"

Then he begins to stroke and pat it,

and he can feel that it's all wet.

"Alas, the tiny thing is yet

damp from when it fell in the dew,"

the peasant says. "Oh, naughty you,

cunt, for distressing me tonight!

But I won't scold it out of spite

for having got drenched to the bone.

Take your repose, sleep like a stone,

for I won't bother you again.

You've run around; you're all done in."

From this exemplum may be gleaned

a woman knows more than the Fiend,

as you're aware, I have no doubt,

and you may pluck my two eyes out

if my words can't be justified.

When she wants a man mystified,

with just one word a woman can

220 tot solemant par sa parole  
que om ne feront par angin.  
De ma fable faz tel defin  
que chascuns se gart de la söe  
qu'ele ne li face la cöe.

## 64. LE JUGEMENT DES CONS

Cist fabliaus nous dist & raconte  
qu'il ot jadis desouz le conte  
de Blois .i. homme qui avoit  
iii. filles, dont molt desirloit  
qu'elles venissent a honor.  
5 Eles amoient par amor  
.i. bachelier molt bel & gent  
qui estoit de molt bone gent,  
mes il n'estoit mie molt riches,  
& si n'estoit avers ne chiches.  
10 Toues .iii. lor fet bon samblant:  
a chascune avoir couvenant  
que il les prendra a moillier;  
toutes .iii. l'orent forment chier.  
15 Or vous dirai de lor afere.  
Lainsnee ne se pot plus tere,  
ainz dist a sa suster qu'ele amoit  
.i. bachelier qui biaus estoit.  
L'autre respond: « Qui est il dont?  
20 — C'est Robines d'outre le pont.  
— Lassel dist ele, mar fui nee  
quant ma suer est ainsi derreeve  
qu'ele aime celui qui m'amoit!  
— La male passions te loit!  
25 dist la mainsnee. Il aime moi! »

## 64. TRIAL BY CUNT

This fabliau gives an account  
about a subject of the Count  
of Blois in bygone days, who had  
three daughters and would have been glad  
5 to see them rise to high estate.  
All three girls felt a passionate  
love for a handsome, fine young buck  
who came of respectable stock.  
All three enjoyed the man's attentions,  
10 and he'd told each that his intentions  
were to make her his lawful wife,  
and all three loved him more than life.  
I'll tell you now what came about.  
The eldest let her secret out  
and told her sister heart and hand  
were promised to a fine young man.  
She answers, "So, who is your lover?"  
15 "It's Robin from across the river."  
"Oh, woe is me," she said, "for it's  
clear that my sister's lost her wits  
and loves the man in love with me!"  
"May some atrocious malady,"  
25 the youngest said, "throttle your life!"

220 trick us more than the best-laid plan  
of any man, however able.  
I say to finish up my fable:  
Let every man watch his wife close,  
or she will lead him by the nose!