

Thourgh yow have I seyde fully in my song
Theffect and loye of Troilus servyse, 1815
Al be that ther was som disese among,
As to myn auctor listeth to devyse.
My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse;
And Troilus in luste and in quiete
Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete. 1820

Explicit Liber Tercius.

BOOK IV. Incipit Prohemium Liber Quartus.

But al to litel, weylaway the whyle,
Lasteth swich Ioye, y-thonked be Fortune!
That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
And can to foles so hir song entune,
That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune; 5
And whan a wight is from hir wheel y-throwe,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

From Troilus she gan hir brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
But caste him clene out of his lady grace, 10
And on hir wheel she sette up Diomedes;
For which right now myn herte ginneth blede,
And now my penne, allas! With which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

For how Criseyde Troilus forsook, 15
Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,
Mot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
As wryten folk through which it is in minde.
Allas! That they sholde ever cause finde

To speke hir harm; and if they on hir lye, 20
Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye.

O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three,
That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone;
Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne, 25
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
So that the los of lyf and love y-fere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit prohemium.

Incipit Quartus Liber.

Ligginge in ost, as I have seyde er this,
The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye toun, 30
Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is
Up-on the brest of Hercules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte. 35

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente;
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,

Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente; 40
And in the herd, with-oute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anoon hem mette.

The longe day, with speres sharpe y-grounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde, 45
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle.
But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hem-selven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they fledden.

At whiche day was taken Antenor, 50
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Troian daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo.
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye 55
Dredden to lese a greet part of hir Ioye.

Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete. 60
This thing anoon was couth in every strete,

Bothe in thassege, in toune, and every-where,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone 65
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him there-as he was wont to done;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,
For love of god, to don that reverence,
To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience. 70

Thanne seyde he thus, `Lo! Lordes myne, I was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And, if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede. 75
For dredelees, thorough yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye y-brend, and beten doun to grounde.

`And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse; 80
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com my-self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done;

ˆHaving un-to my tresour ne my rente 85

Right no resport, to respect of your ese.

Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,

Wening in this you, lordes, for to plese.

But al that los ne doth me no disese.

I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I loye, 90

For you to lese al that I have in Troye,

ˆSave of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!

Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.

O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!

How mighte I have in that so hard an herte? 95

Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!

For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,

But-if ye lordes rewe up-on my sorwe.

ˆFor, by that cause I say no tyme er now

Hir to deliver, I holden have my pees; 100

But now or never, if that it lyke yow,

I may hir have right sone, doutelees.

O help and grace! Amonges al this prees,

Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,

Sin I through yow have al this hevinessel! 105

ˆYe have now caught and fetered in prisoun

Troians y-nowe; and if your willes be,
My child with oon may have redempcioun.
Now for the love of god and of bountee,
Oon of so fele, allas! So yeve him me. 110
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?

‘On peril of my lyf, I shal nat lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
I have eek founde it be astronomye, 115
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
And thus shal Troye turne to asshen dede.

‘For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe, 120
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.
By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre, 125
The toun of Troye shal ben set on-fyre.’

Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyen tweye

Ful faste ronnen doun by eyther cheke. 130

So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.

But who was glad y-nough but Calkas tho?

And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde 135

On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen hoom king Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his save-garde sente,
Thembassadours to Troye streyght they wente. 140

The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde

Pryam the king ful sone in general

Let here-upon his parlement to holde,

Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.

Thembassadours ben answered for fynal, 145

Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede

Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,

Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,

For which ful sone chaungen gan his face, 150

As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.

But nathelees, he no word to it seyde,

Lest men sholde his affeccoun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

And ful of anguisssh and of grisly drede 155
Abood what lordes wolde un-to it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Theschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges tweye,
First, how to save hir honour, and what weye
He mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde; 160
Ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
'With-oute assent of hir ne do not so, 165
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorough thy medling is y-blowe
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe.'

For which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente, 170
He wolde lat hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyde him hir entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve. 175

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
For Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrelly answerde: --
`Sires, she nis no prisoner,' he seyde;
`I noot on yow who that this charge leyde, 180
But, on my part, ye may eft-sone hem telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.'

The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw y-set on fyre;
For infortune it wolde, for the nones, 185
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
`Ector,' quod they, `what goost may yow enspyre
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor? -- a wrong wey now ye chese --

`That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun, 190
And we han nede to folk, as men may see;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun;
O Ector, lat tho fantasyes be!
O king Priam,' quod they, `thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to for-gon Criseyde;' 195
And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

O Iuvenal, lord! Trewe is thy sentence,

That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence;
For cloud of errour let hem not descerne 200
What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!

For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye; alas! They quitte him out to rathe; 205
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe;
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toune,
And she shal out; thus seyden here and howne. 210

For which delibered was by parlement
For Antenor to yelden out Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president,
Al-theigh that Ector `nay' ful ofte preyde.
And fynaly, what wight that it with-seyde, 215
It was for nought, it moste been, and sholde;
For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, with-oute wordes mo,
Un-to his chaumbre spedde him faste allone, 220

His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to confounde. 245

His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him refte, unnethes mighte he seye,
`O deeth, allas! Why niltow do me deye? 250
A-cursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!

But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somewhat gan asswage, 255
Up-on his bed he leyde him doun to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

Than seyde he thus, `Fortune! Allas the whyle! 260
What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde away, for that thou wilt?
Allas! How maystow in thyn herte finde 265
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

ˆHave I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro Ioye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle 270
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
In-to miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, allas! Til that the breeth me fayle?

ˆAllas, Fortune! If that my lyf in Ioye
Displeased hadde un-to thy foule envye, 275
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
By-raft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre-world, that may of no-thing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve? 280

ˆIf that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me stere;
And hir, allas! Than hastow me biraft.
But ever-more, lo! This is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere, 285
To preve in that thy gerful violence.
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!

ˆO verray lord of love, O god, allas!

That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas 290
If I for-go that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought
In-to your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! It be repeled?

What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure 295
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, y-wis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse 300
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

O wery goost, that errest to and fro,
Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurking in this wo, unneste, 305
Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte, 310
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,

Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In veyn fro-this-forth have I eyen tweye
Y-formed, sin your vertue is a-weye. 315

ˆO my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to the peyne?
Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so un-to yow hyeth, 320
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;
For-thy no fors is, though the body sterve.

ˆO ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of Fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel, 325
And longe mot your lyf in loye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

ˆO olde, unholsum, and mislyved man, 330
Calkas I mene, allas! What eyleth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?
O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!

As wolde blisful love, for his loye, 335
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!

A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
For which his woful teres never stente; 340
And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente,
And wex so mat, that loye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde, 345
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente. 350

A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it him anoon;
And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
In-to the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softely to goon, 355
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chere and loking al to-torn,
For sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn, 360
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte 365
His freend Pandare y-comen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendreliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye, 370
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore, 375
'Lo! Pandare, I am deed, with-outen more.
Hastow nought herd at parlement,' he seyde,
'For Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?'

This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,

Ful pitously answerde and seyde, `Yis! 380
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, god, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
Fortune our loye wolde han over-throwe? 385

`For in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorough cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe, or al devyne?
Swich is this world; for-thy I thus defyne, 390
Ne trust no wight to finden in Fortune
Ay propretee; hir yeftes been comune.

`But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had, 395
So that, by right, it oughte y-now suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an ye,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

`And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve, 400
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve

As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute.
For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother, 405
If she be lost, we shal recovere another.

What, god for-bede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light; 410
And this is fayr, and that can good a-right.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,
Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,
"The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde;" 415
And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.
Thenk eek, thy-self to saven artow holde;
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
For sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce. 420

For al-so seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affeccious alle over-go.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho 425

To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.'

This wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.

For douteles, to doon his wo to falle, 430

He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde.

But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,

Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;

Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:

But at the laste answerde and seyde, `Freend, 435

This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,

Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,

To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!

I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee;

But do me rather sterve anon-right here 440

Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

`She that I serve, y-wis, what so thou seye,

To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,

Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.

For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight, 445

I wol not been untrewe for no wight;

But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,

And never other creature serve.

ˆAnd ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde
As she, lat be, make no comparisoun 450
To creature y-formed here by kinde.
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche,
So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche. 455

ˆThow biddest me I sholde love an-other
Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!
It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro, 460
Netle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?
Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

ˆThow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bi-goon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus, 465
"Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon."
Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

ˆThe deeth may wel out of my brest departe 470

The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out never-mo; but doun with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternaly compleyne 475
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde a lasse peyne be
Criseyde to for-goon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitee. 480
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That "him is wors that is fro wele y-throwe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele y-knowe?"

But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro, 485
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love an-other lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete? 490

If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce

With hir as mucche as creature on-lyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve? 495
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

ˆNay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
For which, for what that ever may bifalle,
With-outen wordes mo, I wol be deed. 500
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle,
For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte y-cleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

ˆWel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete, 505
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I no-thing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou outhur do me anoon yn teres drenche, 510
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

ˆSin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
Do me, at my requeste, this servyse,
Delivere now the world, so dostow right, 515
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight

That ever was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.'

This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambyk ful faste; 520
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen doun he caste.
But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste,
`What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I som-what more un-to him seye:' 525

And seyde, `Freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this game?
Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame! 530
And outhur lat hir out of toune fare,
Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.

`Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
To take a womman which that loveth thee,
And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent? 535
Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be,
And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.'

To this answerde him Troilus ful softe, 540
And seyde, `Parde, leve brother dere,
Al this have I my-self yet thought ful ofte,
And more thing than thou devyest here.
But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here;
And whan thou me hast yeve an audience, 545
Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.

`First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravissing of wommen so by might,
It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne doon so gret unright. 550
I sholde han also blame of every wight,
My fadres graunt if that I so withstode,
Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.

`I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
To aske hir at my fader, of his grace; 555
Than thenke I, this were hir accusement,
Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchase.
For sin my fader, in so heigh a place
As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
He nil for me his lettre be repeled. 560

`Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe

With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste been disclaundre to hir name.
And me were lever deed than hir defame, 565
As nolde god but-if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see;
For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
I moste hir honour levere han than me 570
In every cas, as love re oughte of right.
Thus am I with desyr and reson twight;
Desyr for to destourben hir me redeth,
And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.'

Thus wepinge that he coude never cesse, 575
He seyde, `Allas! How shal I, wrecche, fare?
For wel fele I alwey my love encresse,
And hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare!
Encressen eek the causes of my care;
So wel-a-wey, why nil myn herte breste? 580
For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.'

Pandare answerde, `Freend, thou mayst, for me,
Don as thee list; but hadde ich it so hote,
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me;

Though al this toun cryede on this thing by note, 585

I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote.

For when men han wel cryed, than wol they roun;

A wonder last but nyne night never in toune.

Devyne not in reson ay so depe

Ne curteysly, but help thy-self anoon; 590

Bet is that othere than thy-selven wepe,

And namely, sin ye two been al oon.

Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon;

And rather be in blame a lyte y-founde

Than sterve here as a gnat, with-oute wounde. 595

It is no shame un-to yow, ne no vyce

Hir to with-holden, that ye loveth most.

Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce

To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost.

Thenk eek Fortune, as wel thy-selven wost, 600

Helpeth hardy man to his enpryse,

And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,

Thou shalt thy pees ful wel here-after make,

But as for me, certayn, I can not leve 605

That she wolde it as now for yvel take.

Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?

Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love; and why shaltow not have another?

And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere, 610
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nil nat take a-greef,
Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef.
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe, 615
Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel the lasse.

For-ty tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe.
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thy-self, for any awe. 620
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and sevene;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.

I wol my-self be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, up-on a stounde, 625
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
Thourgh-girt with many a wyd and bloody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde.
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
A-dieu, the devel spede him that it recche! 630

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken,
And seyde, `Freend, graunt mercy, ich assente;
But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken,
Ne peyne noon ne may me so tormente,
That, for no cas, it is notmyn entente, 635
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it wolde.'

`Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, `al this day.
But tel me than, hastow hir wil assayed,
That sorwest thus?' And he answerde, `Nay.'
`Wher-of artow,' quod Pandare, `than a-mayed, 640
That nost not that she wol ben y-vel apayed
To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
But-if that love tolde it in thyn ere?

`For-thy rys up, as nought ne were, anoon, 645
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wende,
Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.
Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende;
Or, up-on cas, he may after thee sende
Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere, 650
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

`For I shal shape it so, that sikerly

Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som manere,
Com speke with thy lady prevely,
And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere, 655
Thou shalt ful sone aperceyve and wel here
Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste;
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste.'

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe, 660
Was thorough-out Troye y-fled with preste winges
Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe,
At parlement, with-oute wordes more,
I-graunted was in chaunge of Antenore. 665

The whiche tale anoon-right as Criseyde
Had herd, she, which that of hir fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,
Ful bisily to Iuppiter bisoughte
Yeve hem mischaunce that this tretis broughte. 670
But shortly, lest these tales sothe were,
She dorste at no wight asken it, for fere.

As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
On Troilus y-set so wonder faste,
That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde, 675

Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste;
She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.
And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
So that she niste what was best to rede.

But as men seen in toune, and al aboute, 680
That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
For pitous loye, and wenden hir delyte;
And with hir tales, dere y-nough a myte,
These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle, 685
They sette hem doun, and seyde as I shal telle.

Quod first that oon, `I am glad, trewely,
By-cause of yow, that shal your fader see.'
A-nother seyde, `Y-wis, so nam not I,
For al to litel hath she with us be.' 690
Quod tho the thridde, `I hope, y-wis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde!'

Tho wordes and tho wommanisshe thinges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were; 695
For, god it wot, hir herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there.
Hir advertence is alwey elles-where;

For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte;
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte. 700

These women, that thus wenden hir to please,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende;
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese,
As she that, al this mene whyle. brende
Of other passioun than that they wende, 705
So that she felte almost hir herte deye
For wo, and wery of that companye.

For which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,
That yaven signes of the bitter peyne 710
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle;
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.

And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute 715
Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Depart, and never pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde y-knowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse, 720
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir destresse;

And bisily they gonnen hir conforten
Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte;
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte. 725

But swich an ese ther-with they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele!

But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle. 730
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,
In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse. 735

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale, 740
Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte;
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

`Alas!' quod she, `out of this regioun

I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun, 745
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
Wo worth, allas! That ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two 750
Doun fille, as shour in Aperill ful swythe;
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot for-goon; for which disaventure 755
She held hir-self a forlost creature.

She seyde, `How shal he doon, and I also?
How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne? 760
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyvel!

`To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish with-oute water dure? 765
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?

How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, with-oute his kinde noriture?
For which ful oft a by-word here I seye,
That "rotelees, mot grene sone deye." 770

¶ I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me 775
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

¶ And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon, 780
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

¶ Myn herte and eek the woful goost ther-inne 785
Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
Eternally, for they shal never twinne.
For though in erthe y-twinned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,

That hight Elysos, shul we been y-fere, 790
As Orpheus and Erudice, his fere.

Thus, herte myn, for Antenor, allas!
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,
How shal youre tendre herte this sustene? 795
But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene,
And me also; for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.'

How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse? 800
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevinesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therefore I it pace. 805

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Un-to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse, 810
Ther-as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message,

And fond that she hir-selven gan to trete
Ful pitously; for with hir salte teres
Hir brest, hir face, y-bathed was ful wete; 815
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon 820
Hir tery face a-twixe hir armes hide,
For which this Pandare is so wo bi-goon,
That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,
As he that pitee felte on every syde.
For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore, 825
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde,
`Pandare first of loyes mo than two
Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde,
That now transmuwed been in cruel wo. 830
Wher shal I seye to yow "wel come" or no,
That alderfirst me broughte in-to servyse
Of love, allas! That endeth in swich wyse?

`Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!

And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me. 835
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see,
That my-self hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
Feling alwey, fro wikke I go to worse. 840

`Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse. 845
I trowe, y-wis, from hevene teres reyne,
For pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne! '

`And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,'
Quod Pandarus, `what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport, 850
Why woltow thus thy-selve, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.'

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge 855
So greet that it a deeth was for to see: --
`Allas!' quod she, `what wordes may ye bringe?

What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede never-mo to see?
Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende? 860
I have y-nowe, if he ther-after sende!

She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al y-chaunged in another kinde. 865
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
On hir, and eek hir loyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hir eyen two a purpre ring
Bi-trent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne, 870
That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
For which Pandare mighte not restreyne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde
From Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde. 875

Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
But how this cas doth Troilus moleste, 880

That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
For verry wo his wit is al aweye.

For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That in-to litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally, 885
He somewhat is fro weping now with-drawe.
And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With yow to been al night, for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

This, short and pleyne, theeffect of my message, 890
As ferforth as my wit can comprehende.
For ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
May to no long prologe as now entende;
And her-upon ye may answer him sende.
And, for the love of god, my nece dere, 895
So leef this wo er Troilus be here.'

Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte sore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love him bet than he him-self, I gesse. 900
Allas! For me hath he swich hevinesse?
Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
Y-wis, his sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

‘Grevous to me, god wot, is for to twinne,’
Quod she, ‘but yet it hardere is to me 905
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be;
And deye I wol in certayn,’ tho quod she;
‘But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost which in myn herte beteth.’ 910

Thise wordes seyde, she on hir armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus, ‘Allas! Why do ye so,
Syn wel ye woot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastely, 915
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol have him wood out of his minde!

‘For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde him-selve slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here 920
For al the good that Pryam may despende.
For to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,
That knowe I wel; and for-thy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

‘And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge, 925

And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynte? 930
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

‘I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went. 935
Wommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.’

‘Go,’ quod Criseyde, ‘and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne 940
From weping in his sighte, and bisily,
Him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to this soor ther may be founden salve,
It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.’ 945

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fond him allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughte;

But to the pitouse goddes everichone
Ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone, 950
To doon him sone out of this world to pace;
For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye. 955
For right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
`For al that comth, comth by necessitee;
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

`For certaynly, this wot I wel,' he seyde, 960
`That for-sight of divyne purveyaunce
Hath seyn alwey me to for-gon Criseyde,
Sin god seeth every thing, out of doutaunce,
And hem disponeth, thourgh his ordenaunce,
In hir merytes sothly for to be, 965
As they shul comen by predestinee.

`But nathelees, allas! Whom shal I leve?
For ther ben grete clerkes many oon,
That destinee thorough argumentes preve;
And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon; 970
But that free chois is yeven us everichoon.

O, welaway! So sleye arn clerkes olde,
That I not whos opinion I may holde.

For som men seyn, if god seth al biforn,
Ne god may not deceyved ben, pardee, 975
Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn,
That purveyaunce hath seyn bifore to be.
Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede. 980

For other thought nor other dede also
Might never be, but swich as purveyaunce,
Which may not ben deceyved never-mo,
Hath feled biforn, with-outen ignoraunce.
For if ther mighte been a variaunce 985
To wrythen out fro goddes purveyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thing cominge;

But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;
And certes, that were an abusioun, 990
That god shuld han no parfit cleer witinge
More than we men that han doutous weninge.
But swich an errour up-on god to gesse
Were fals and foul, and wikked corsednesse.

ʼEek this is an opinioun of somme 995
That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore;
They seyn right thus, that thing is not to come
For that the prescience hath seyn bifore
That it shal come; but they seyn that therefore
That it shal come, therefore the purveyaunce 1000
Wot it biforn with-outen ignoraunce;

ʼAnd in this manere this necessitee
Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.
For needfully bihoveth it not to be
That thilke thinges fallen in certayn 1005
That ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn,
Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that falle,
That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.

ʼI mene as though I laboured me in this,
To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be; 1010
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayn cause of the necessitee
Of thinges that to comen been, pardee;
Or if necessitee of thing cominge
Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge. 1015

ʼBut now ne enforce I me nat in shewinge

How the ordre of causes stant; but wel wot I,
That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist biforen certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by 1020
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.

For if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be, 1025
That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And ferther-over now ayenward yit,
Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; (now herkne, for I wol not tarie):

I seye, that if the opinioun of thee 1030
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he mot sitten by necessitee;
And thus necessitee in either is.
For in him nede of sittinge is, y-wis,
And in thee nede of sooth; and thus, forsothe, 1035
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.

But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinioun of sitting soth is;
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,

Therefore is thyn opinioun sooth, y-wis. 1040
And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this
Comth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.

Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me, 1045
My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel y-see,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle. 1050

For al-though that, for thing shal come, y-wis,
Therefore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is:
Yet nathelees, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyed, trewely; 1055
Or elles, thinges that purveyed be,
That they bityden by necessitee.

And this suffyseth right y-now, certeyn,
For to destroye our free chois every del. --
But now is this abusion, to seyn, 1060
That fallinge of the thinges temporel
Is cause of goddes prescience eternel.

Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thing to come sholde cause his prescience.

‘What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought, 1065
But that god purveyth thing that is to come
For that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,
That whylom been bifalle and over-come,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce, 1070
That for-wot al with-outen ignoraunce.

‘And over al this, yet seye I more herto,
That right as whan I woot ther is a thing,
Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so;
Eek right so, whan I woot a thing coming, 1075
So mot it come; and thus the bifalling
Of thinges that ben wist bfore the tyde,
They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.’

Than seyde he thus, ‘Almighty Iove in trone,
That wost of al this thing the soothfastnesse, 1080
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse.’
And whyl he was in al this hevinesse,
Disputinge with him-self in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here. 1085

‘O mighty god,’ quod Pandarus, ‘in trone,
Ey! Who seigh ever a wys man faren so?
Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a-go! 1090
Why list thee so thy-self for-doon for drede,
That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?

‘Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
With-outen hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artow for hir and for non other born? 1095
Hath kinde thee wroughte al-only hir to plese?
Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese.
That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love, ther come and goon plesaunces.

‘And yet this is a wonder most of alle, 1100
Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost not yit,
Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
Ne if she can hir-self distorben it.
Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
A man may al by tyme his nekke bede 1105
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

‘For-thy take hede of that that I shal seye;

I have with hir y-spoke and longe y-be,
So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.
And ever-mor me thinketh thus, that she 1110
Hath som-what in hir hertes prevetee,
Wher-with she can, if I shal right arede,
Distorbe al this, of which thou art in drede.

For which my counseil is, whan it is night,
Thou to hir go, and make of this an ende; 1115
And blisful Iuno, thourgh hir grete mighte,
Shal, as I hope, hir grace un-to us sende.
Myn herte seyth, "Certeyn, she shal not wende;"
And for-thy put thyn herte a whyle in reste;
And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.' 1120

This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore,
Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so;
And what him liste, he seyde un-to it more.
And whan that it was tyme for to go,
Ful prevely him-self, with-uten mo, 1125
Un-to hir com, as he was wont to done;
And how they wroughte, I shal yow telle sone.

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete, 1130

But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
Wher that he was, ne mighte o word out-bringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.

Tho woful teres that they leten falle 1135
As bittre weren, out of teres kinde,
For peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle.
So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde,
The woful Myrra through the bark and rinde.
That in this world ther nis so hard an herte, 1140
That nolde han rewed on hir peynes smerte.

But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been ther-as hem oughte dwelle,
And that som-what to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle 1145
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With broken voys, al hoors for-shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

ˆO Iove, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!' And ther-with-al hir face 1150
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche;
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace.

And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene. 1155

This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,
Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for deed,
With-oute answeere, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed),
This sorwful man can now noon other reed, 1160
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste;
Wher him was wo, god and him-self it wiste!

He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde;
For signe of lyf, for ought he can or may,
Can he noon finde in no-thing on Criseyde, 1165
For which his song ful ofte is `weylaway!
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful voys and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world y-fare!

So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned, 1170
His hondes wrong, and seyde that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teris wypen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, `O lord, that set art in thy trone, 1175
Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!

She cold was and with-outen sentement,
For aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon;
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon; 1180
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere
As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd a-noon out of his shethe he twichte, 1185
Him-self to sleen, how sore that him smerte,
So that his sowle hir sowle folwen mighte,
Ther-as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Sin love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he lenger liven sholde. 1190

Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
`O cruel love, and thou, Fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,
Fy on your might and werkes so diverse! 1195
Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne;
Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

`For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,

Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye;
Shal never lover seyn that Troilus 1200
Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye;
For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-fere.

And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo, 1205
And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al y-fere,
And thou, my moder, farwel! For I go;
And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
Receyve now my spirit! wolde he seye, 1210
With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye

But as god wolde, of swough ther-with she abreyde,
And gan to syke, and `Troilus' she cryde;
And he answerde, `Lady myn Criseyde,
Live ye yet?' and leet his swerd doun glyde. 1215
`Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!
Quod she, and ther-with-al she sore sighte;
And he bigan to glade hir as he mighte;

Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,
And hir to glade he dide al his entente; 1220
For which hir goost, that flikered ay on-lofte,

In-to hir woful herte ayein it wente.
But at the laste, as that hir eyen glente
A-syde, anoon she gan his swerd aspye,
As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye, 1225

And asked him, why he it hadde out-drawe?
And Troilus anoon the cause hir tolde,
And how himself ther-with he wolde have slawe.
For which Criseyde up-on him gan biholde,
And gan him in hir armes faste folde, 1230
And seyde, `O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!
Allas! How neigh we were bothe dede!

`Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn your-self anoon?' quod she.
`Ye, douteless;' and she answerde, `Allas! 1235
For, by that ilke lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,
After your deeth, to han been crouned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene.

`But with this selve swerd, which that here is, 1240
My-selve I wolde han slayn!' -- quod she tho;
`But ho, for we han right y-now of this,
And late us ryse and streight to bedde go
And there lat ys speken of oure wo.

For, by the mortar which that I see brenne, 1245
Knowe I ful wel that day is not fer henne.'

Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,
Nought was it lyk tho nightes here-biforn;
For pitously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse y-lorn, 1250
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde: --

'Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this,' quod she,
'That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne, 1255
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encrees of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to biginne. 1260

'I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.
Me thinketh thus, that nouthur ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully. 1265
For there is art y-now for to redresse
That yet is mis, and sleen this hevinesse.

ˆSooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne,
For ought I woot, for no-thing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne. 1270
Considered al, ther nis no-more amis.
But what is thanne a remede un-to this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte swete.

ˆNow that I shal wel bringen it aboute 1275
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.
For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here; and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe, 1280
I shal yow wel an heep of weyes shewe.

ˆFor which I wol not make long sermoun,
For tyme y-lost may not recovered be;
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see. 1285
And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
For trewely, I speke it for the beste;

ˆMakinge alwey a protestacioun,

That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye, 1290
Nis but to shewe yow my mocioun,
To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye;
And taketh it non other wyse, I preye.
For in effect what-so ye me comaunde,
That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde. 1295

Now herkneth this, ye han wel understonde,
My goinge graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be with-stonde
For al this world, as by my Iugement.
And sin ther helpeth noon avysement 1300
To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
And lat us shape a better wey to finde.

The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne
Wol us disese and cruelliche anoye.
But him bihoveth som-tyme han a peyne, 1305
That serveth love, if that he wol have loye.
And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
It oughte lesse causen us to sorwe.

So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe, 1310
That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
Sin wel ye woot that it is now a trewe,

Ye shal ful wel al myn estat y-here.
And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor y-wonne 1315
And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne;

And thenk right thus, "Criseyde is now agoon,
But what! She shal come hastely ayeyn;"
And whanne, allas? By god, lo, right anoon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn. 1320
And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
So as we shulle to-gederes ever dwelle,
That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.

I see that ofte, ther-as we ben now,
That for the beste, our counseil for to hyde, 1325
Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow
In fourtenight; ne see yow go ne ryde.
May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Y-wis, ye mowen elles lite endure! 1330

Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
But-if that onliche it my fader be;
And eek myn othere thinges alle y-fere,
And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,
Whom that I nolde leven for to see 1335

For al this world, as wyd as it hath space;
Or elles, see ich never Loves face!

Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
Lest in this toun that folkes me dispuse 1340
By-cause of him, for his unhappy dede?
What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
For if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare,
Us neded for my wending nought to care.

Ye seen that every day eek, more and more, 1345
Men trete of pees; and it supposed is,
That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis.
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde, 1350
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

For if that it be pees, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen y-fere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve 1355
Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;
And every wight han libertee to bleve
Where-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.

And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were, 1360
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
For which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I can not seen wher-of ye sholden drede. 1365

Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse,
And I right now have founden al the gyse, 1370
With-oute net, wher-with I shal him hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis, 1375
Mot spenden part, the remenant for to save.
For ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is up-on coveityse;
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

The moeble which that I have in this toun 1380

Un-to my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye, 1385
Whyl that this toun stant thus in Iupartye.

And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde, 1390
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

So what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes, 1395
That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he mete!
For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge awayleth nought three hawes;
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende. 1400

And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,

Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
He hath not wel the goddes understonde. 1405
For goddes speken in amphibologyes,
And, for o sooth they tellen twenty lyes.

ʼEek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his cowarde herte
Made him amis the goddes text to glose, 1410
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.
And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed with-inne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.'

And treweliche, as writen wel I finde, 1415
That al this thing was seyde of good entente;
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe; 1420
Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devysen to and fro;
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit; but yet to lete hir go 1425
His herte misforyaf him ever-mo.

But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

For which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and ther-with hem bitwene 1430
Bigan for loye the amoureuse daunce.

And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake y-fere
Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere. 1435

But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
For al this world, may nought out of his minde;
For which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde,
And seyde hire, `Certes, if ye be unkinde, 1440
And but ye come at day set in-to Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne loye.

`For al-so sooth as sonne up-rist on morwe,
And, god! So wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe, 1445
I wol my-selven slee if that ye drecche.
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

For trewely, myn owene lady dere, 1450
Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow stere
Ful shaply been to failen alle y-fere.
For thus men seyn, "That oon thenketh the bere,
But al another thenketh his ledere."
Your sire is wys, and seyde is, out of drede, 1455
"Men may the wyse at-renne, and not at-rede."

It is ful hard to halten unespied
Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yed;
For al be that his moeble is him biraft, 1460
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne feyne a-right, and that is al my drede.

I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde;
But, pees or no, for earnest ne for game, 1465
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekis syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame;
For which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye. 1470

Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose

To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisshen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche. 1475
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

And over al this, your fader shal despise
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn;
And that thassege never shal aryse, 1480
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.
And thus he shal yow with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight 1485
A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but-if routhe 1490
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke

A good opinioun, if that ye wende; 1495
For-why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So think I nam but deed, with-oute more.

For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye; 1500
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somewhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye;
And think that folye is, whan man may chese,
For accident his substaunce ay to lese. 1505

I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no? 1510
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernesse in Iupertye.

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Y-nough to live in honour and plesaunce, 1515
Til in-to tyme that we shal ben dede;
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.

For everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, y-wis, may not ther-with acorde.

And hardily, ne dredeth no poverte, 1520
For I have kin and freendes elles-where
That, though we comen in oure bare sherte,
Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honored whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anoon, for, as in myn entente, 1525
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.'

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde, `Y-wis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swich unthrifty weyes newe; 1530
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
And help me god so at my moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

For thilke day that I for cherisshinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight, 1535
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge,
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Iuno, thorough hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle! 1540

ˆAnd this on every god celestial
I swere it yow; and eek on eche goddess,
On every Nympe and deite infernal,
On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wilderness; 1545
And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste
If I be fals; now trowe me if thow leste!

ˆAnd thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere
Thorugh Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witness of this word that seyde is here, 1550
That thilke day that ich untrewed be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

ˆBut that ye speke, away thus for to go 1555
And leten alle your freendes, god for-bede,
For any womman, that ye sholden so,
And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede
Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce, 1560
And your honour; god shilde us fro mischaunce!

ˆAnd if so be that pees her-after take,

As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, lord! The sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame! 1565
And er that ye Iupartē so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

ˆWhat trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede. 1570
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere. 1575

ˆAnd also thenketh on myn honestee,
That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende, 1580
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

ˆAnd for-thy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, "The suffraunt overcometh," pardee;
Eek "Who-so wol han leef, he lief mot lete;" 1585

Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

‘And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete, 1590
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, with-outen any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Iuno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but-if that deeth me assayle, 1595
I wol yow seen with-outen any fayle.’

‘And now, so this be sooth,’ quod Troilus,
‘I shal wel suffre un-to the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of god, if it be may, 1600
So lat us stele prively away;
For ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste.’

‘O mercy, god, what lyf is this?’ quod she;
‘Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene! 1605
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
For by your wordes it is wel y-sene.
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,

Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe. 1610

And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two a-twinne.
Dryf out the fantasyes yow with-inne; 1615
And trusteth me, and levethe eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for god, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte, 1620
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

But certes, I am not so nyce a wight 1625
That I ne can imaginen a wey
To come ayein that day that I have hight.
For who may holde thing that wol a-way?
My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye 1630
Another day shal torne us alle to Ioye.

For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here, 1635
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

'And over al this I pray yow,' quod she tho,
'Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce, 1640
Sin I am thyn al hool, with-outen mo,
That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
For I am ever a-gast, for-why men rede,
That "love is thing ay ful of bisy drede." 1645

'For in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrewed, as god defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende, 1650
I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
For goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.'

To this answerde Troilus and seyde,

Now god, to whom ther nis no cause y-wrye,
Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde, 1655
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with ye,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.'

'Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis,' quod she, 1660
'And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde, 1665
That ay honour to me-ward shal rebounde.

'For trusteth wel, that your estat royal
Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse, 1670
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

'Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt 1675
Every thing that souned in-to badde,

As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;
And that your reson brydled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure. 1680

And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Iuppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place, 1685
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.'

And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde,
And ofte y-kist, and streite in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde, 1690
And rewwfulliche his lady gan biholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde,
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

For mannes heed imaginen ne can, 1695
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment doun in helle.
For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,