

Classic Poetry Series

Bernard de Ventadorn

- poems -

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Bel m'es can eu vei la brolha

Bel m'es can eu vei la bròlha
reverdir per mei lo brolh
e.lh ram son cubert de folha
e.l rossinhols sutz de folh
chanta d'amor, don me dolh;
e platz me qued eu m'en dolha,
ab sol qued amar me volha
cela qu'eu desir e volh.

Eu la volh can plus s'orgolha
vas me, mas oncas orgolh
n'ac va lei. Per so m'acolha
ma domna, pois tan l'acolh
c'a tota autras me tolh
per lei, cui Deus no me tolha.
Ans li do cor qu'en grat colha
so que totz jorns s'amor colh.

S'amor colh, qui m'empreizona,
per lei que mala preizo
me fai, c'ades m'ochaizona
d'aisso don ai ochaizo.
Tort n'a, mas eu lo.lh perdo,
e mos cors li reperdona,
car tan la sai bel'e bona
que tuih li mal m'en son bo.

Bo son tuih li mal que.m dona;
mas per Deu li quer un do:
que ma bocha, que jeona,
d'un douz baizar dejeo.
Mas trop quer gran guizerdo
celei que tan guizardona;
e can eu l'en arazona,
ilh me chamja ma razo.

Ma razo chamja e vira;
mas eu ges de lei no.m vir
mo fi cor, que la dezira
aitan que tuih mei dezir
son de lei per cui sospir.
E car ela no sospira,
sai qu'en lei ma mortz se mira,
can sa gran beutat remir.

Ma mort remir, que jauzir
no.n posc ni no.n sui jauzire;
mas eu sui tan bos sofrire
c'atendre cuit per sofrir.

(It pleases me to see the trees turning green in the middle of the forest, when the branches are covered with leaves and the nightingale under the leaves sings of love,

that from which I suffer. And it pleases me to suffer from love, if only she whom I desire wants to love me.

I want her, though she is haughty towards me, but I have never been haughty towards her. May thus my lady welcome me, since I welcome her so well that I abandon all the others for her, provided that God does not abandon me. May it inspire in her rather the desire to acknowledge the fact that I acknowledge each day her love in me.

I acknowledge her love that imprisons me, for her who casts me into a bad prison. Now she reproaches me things for which I bear her reproach. Wrong she is, but I pardon her, and my heart pardons her, for I know the season to be fair and good, and that all wrongs to me are good.

Good are all the wrongs she does me, but I ask God one gift: that my mouth, which is fasting, receive from her a sweet kiss as break-fast. I demand too great a reward of she who rewards so generously; and when I reason to her, she changes my reasons.

My reason changes and shifts, but I hardly change at all my faithful heart, which desires her so much that all my desires are for her for whom I sigh. And since she does not sigh [for me], I know that in her my death is contemplated, when I contemplate her great beauty.

I contemplate my death, since I cannot pleasure in her and am not pleased. But I am such a good patient that I can await in patience.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Cantarai d'aquest trobadors

Cantarai d'aquestz trobadors
que canton de maintas colors
e.l pieier cuida dir mout gen;
mas a cantar lor er aillors
q'entrametre.n vei cen pastors
c'us non sap qe.s mont'o.s dissen.

(I shall sing of the troubadours
who sing in every kind of way;
and many think the worst of them.
But I see a hundred shepherds,
and don't know if they are going
up or going down.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

En cossirer e en esmai

En cossirer et en esmai
sui d'un amor que.m lass'e.m te,
que tan no vau ni sai ni lai
qu'ilh ades no.m tenh' en so fre,
c' aras m'a dat cor e talen
qu' eu enqueses, si podia,
tal que, si.l reis l'enqueria,
auria faih gran ardimen.

Ai las, chaitius! e que.m farai?
ni cal cosselh penrai de me?
Qu'ela no sap lo mal qu'eu trai
ni eu no.lh aus clamar merce.
Fol nesci! ben as pauc de sen,
qu'ela nonca t' amaria
per nom que per drudaria,
c'ans no.t laisses levar al ven!

E doncs, pois atressi.m morrai,
dirai li l'afan que m'en ve?
Vers es c'ades lo li dirai.
no farai, a la mia fe.
si sabia c'a un tenen
en fos tot' Espanha mia;
mais vol morir de feunia
car anc me venc en pessamen.

Pois messatger no.lh trametrai
ni a me dire no.s cove,
negu cosselh de me no sai;
mais d'una re me conort be:
ela sap letras et enten,
et agrada.m qu'eu escria
los motz, e s'a leis plazia,
legis los al meu sauvamen.

(In anguish and torment am I because of a love that grips and holds me so that I can go neither here nor there without her holding me in her harness. And now I have courage and desire to court, if I can, one who, if the King himself were to pursue her, he would show great audacity.

Alas, unhappy one that I am! What shall I do? What counsel shall I take? For she does not know the sorrow that I bear, nor do I dare beg her for mercy. Fool, you have little understanding, since she will never love you, neither in name nor through intimacy. Let yourself be blown away by the wind. And so, since I must die, shall I confess to her my sorrow? Truly, I should do it right away. I won't do it, by my faith, even if I knew that all Spain would be mine. I would rather die of shame than to have entertained such a thought.

Since I shall not send her a messenger, and it is not fitting for me to speak myself, I don't know how to advise myself. But one thing consoles me: she knows the alphabet, and how to read, and I enjoy writing words, and if she pleases, may she read them so

that I may be saved.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Era.m conseillatz

Era.m cosselhatz, senhor,
vos c'avetz saber e sen:
una domna.m det s'amor,
c'ai amada lonjamen;
mas eras sai de vertat
qu'ilh a autr'amic privat,
ni anc de nul companho
companha tan greus no.m fo.

D'una re sui en error
e.n estau en pensamen:
que m'alonge ma dolor,
s'eu aquest plai li cossen,
e s'aissi.l dic mon pessat,
vei mon damnatge doblat.
Cal que.n fassa o cal que no,
re no posc far de mo pro.

E s'eu l'am a dezonor,
esquerns er a tota gen;
e tenran m'en li pluzor
per cornut e per sofren.
E s'aissi pert s'amistat,
be.m tenh per dezeretat
d'amor, e ja Deus no.m do
mais faire vers ni chanso.

Pois voutz sui en la folor,
be serai fols, s'eu no pren
d'aquestz dos mals lo menor;
que mais val, mo essien,
qu'eu ay' en leis la meitat
que.l tot perda per foldat,
car anc a nul drut felo
d'amor non vi far so pro.

Pois vol autre amador
ma domn', eu non lo.lh defen;
e lais m'en mais per paor
que per autre chاوزimen;
e s'anc om dec aver grat
de nul servizi forsat,
be dei aver guizerdo
eu, que tan gran tort perdo.

De l'aiga que dels olhs plor,
escriu salut mais de cen,
que tramet a la gensor
et a la plus avinen.
Mantas vetz m'es pois membrat
de so que.m fetz al comjat:
que.lh vi cobrir sa faisso,

c'anc no.m poc dir oc ni no.

Garsio, ara.m chantat
ma chonso, et la.m portat
a mo Messenger, qu'i fo,
q'elh quer cosselh qu'el me do.

(Now give me counsel, Lords, you who are wise and intelligent. A lady, whom I long loved, gave me her love. But now I know for sure that she has another lover in secret, and never the company of another companion was so hard to bear. One thing makes me out of sorts and pensive: that I prolong my suffering if I agree to this case. And if I say what I think, I see my injuries doubled. Whatever I do, or don't do, I can't accomplish for my own good.

And if I love her in dishonor, I shall be scorned by all; and the majority will consider me a passive cuckold. But if I lose her friendship, I hold myself disinherited by love, and may God never permit me again to compose verses and songs.

Since I am involved in madness, I should be mad if I did not chose the lesser of these two evils. for it is better, in my opinion, to have half of her than to loose everything through folly; for I have never seen an unfaithful lover win out for himself in love.

Since you want another lover, my lady, I shall not forbid it. And I agree more from fear than from anything else. And if ever someone should be grateful for forced labor, I should be rewarded, who have pardoned so great a wrong.

With the water that flows from my eyes, I send greetings, more than a hundred, that I transmit to the most fair and noble one. Often do I remember what she would do on parting -- how she would cover her face, so that she would be saying neither yes nor no.

Garsio, now go and sing my song, and bring it to my Messenger, who was there, and to whom I demand what counsel he [she] would give.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Lancan vei per mei la landa

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Bernard de Ventadorn

Lo gens temps de pascor

Lo gens temps de pascor
ab la frescha verdor
nos adui folh'e flor
de diversa color,
per que tuih amador
son gai e chantador
mas eu, que planh e plor
c'us jois no m'a sabor

a totz me clam, senhor
de midons e d'Amor,
c'aicist dui traïdor,
car me fiav' en lor
me fan viur'a dolor
per ben e per onor
c'ai faih a la gensor,
que no.m val ni.m acor.

Pois fom amdui efan
l'am ades e la blan;
e.s vai m'amors doblan
a chascu jorn del an.
E si no.m fai enan
amor e bel semblan,
cant er velha,.m deman
que l'aya bo talan.

Las! e viure que.m val,
s'eu no vei a jornal
mo fi joi natural
en leih, sutz fenestral,
cors blanc tot atretal
com la neus a nadal,
si c'amdui comunal
mesuram s'em egal?

Be fór'oimais sazos,
bela domna e pros,
que. m fos datz a rescos
en baizan guizardos,
si ja per als no fos,
mas car sui enveyos,
c'us bes val d'autres dos,
can per fors'es faihz dos.

Bel Vezer, si no fos
mos enans totz en vos
laissat agra chansos
per mal dels enoyos.

(The fair season of Easter, with new green, brings us leaves and flowers of various colors, so that all lovers are gay, and sing, except for me, weeping and lamenting, for I

taste of no joy. I make my case to you all, gentlefolk, against my lady and Love; for these two traitors, in whom I had trusted, make me live in sorrow, for all the good and honor I have done for the fair one, who neither values nor succors me. Since the time when we were both children I love and court her. And my love doubles every day of the year. And if we don't make love now and aren't friendly, she can just try asking later on, when we are old, if I feel like it.

Alas! What is life worth to me, if I cannot see every day my true, natural joy in bed, under the window, her body all white like the Christmas snow, so that in common we can take measure to see if we are equal?

It's the season henceforth, fair and precious lady, that in secret you give me a kiss as recompense, for no other reason than that I desire it. For such a kiss is worth two of the other kind, those that are given by constraint.

Fair-to-See, if my welfare were not entirely dependent on you, I would have left off singing because of the meanness of the bluestockings.

Bernard de Ventadorn

Non es meravelha s'eu chan

Non es meravelha s'eu chan
melhs de nul autre chantador,
que plus me tra.l cors vas amor
el melhs sui faihz a so coman.
Cor e cors e saber e sen
e fors' e poder i ai mes.
Si.m tira vas amor lo fres
que vas outra part no.m aten.

Cant eu la vei, be m'es parven
als olhs, al vis, a la color
car aissi tremble de paor
com fa la folha contra.l ven.
Non ai de sen per un efan
aissi sui d'amor entrepres;
e d'ome qu'es aissi conques
pot domn'aver almorna gran.

Ai Deus! car se fosson trian
d'entrels faus li fin amador,
e.lh lauzenger e.lh trichador
portesson corns el fron denan!
Tot l'aur del mon e tot l'argen
i volgr'aver dat, s'eu l'agues,
sol que ma domna conogues
aissi com eu l'am finamen.

Bona domna, re no.us deman
mas que.m prendatz per servidor,
qu'e.us servirai com bo senhor,
cossi que del gazardo m'an.
Ve.us m'al vostre comandamen,
francs cors umils, gais e cortes
Ors ni leos non etz vos ges
que.m aucizatz, s'a vos me ren.

A Mo Cortes, lai on ilh es,
tramet lo vers, e ja no.lh pes
car n'ai estat tan lonjamen.

English

(It's no wonder that I sing better than any other singer,
for I am the one whose heart is most strongly drawn towards love,
and the most obedient to Love's law.
Heart and body, intellect and instinct,
strength and power, all these have I engaged.
And the bridle steers me so strongly to love that I
pay no attention to anything else.

When see her, it's visible in my eyes,

my face, my color,
because I tremble with fear like a leaf in the wind.
I have no more sense than a babe,
so dominated am I by love;
and for a man so vanquished,
a lady should have great sollicitude.

Oh, God! If it were only possible
to separate out the true lovers and the false;
and if the flatterers and cheats only wore horns
in the middle of their foreheads.
All the gold in the world, all the silver,
if I had them, I would give them away,
so that my lady could see how truly I love her.

Good Lady, I ask you nothing else but
that you take me as your servant,
so that I could serve you as a good master,
whatever my reward may be.
You see me here at your orders,
you who are honest and humble,
cheerful and courtly.
You are neither a lion nor a bear,
who would kill me if I gave myself to you.

To my Courtly One, where she is, I send this verse, and may it not weigh that I am so far distant.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Per mels cobrir lo mal pes (Anne)

Per melhs cobrir lo mal pes e.l cossire
chan e deport et ai joi e solatz;
e fatz esfortz car sai cantar ni rire,
car eu me mor e nul semblan no.n fatz;
e per Amor sui si apoderatz,
tot m'a vencut a forsa e batalha.

Anc Deus no fetz trebalhas ni martire,
ses mal d'amor, qu'eu no sofris en patz;
mas d'aquel sui, si be.m peza, sofrire,
c'Amors mi fai amar lai on li platz;
e dic vos be que s'eu no sui amatz,
ges no reman en lai mia nualha.

Midons sui om et amics e servire,
e no.lh en quer mais autras amistatz
mas c'a celat los seus bels olhs me vire,
que gran be.m fan ades can sui iratz;
e ren lor en laus e merces e gratz,
qu'el mon non ai amic que tan me valha.

Dins en mo cor me corrotz e.m azire,
car eu sec tan las mias voluntatz.
Mas negus om no deu aital re dire,
c'om no sap ges com s'es aventuratz.
Que farai doncs dels bels semblans privatz?
Falhirai lor? Mais volh que.l mons me falha!

Corona, man salut e amistaz,
e prec midons que m'ayut e me valha.

(To better hide the dark thoughts and the pain, I sing and play around, I have pleasure and solace; I make an effort, because I know how to sing and laugh. Still, I am dying, but show no sign of it, and by Love am so overcome, for Love has conquered me by force and battle.

Never has God created martyrdom and travail that I could not undergo peacefully, except for lovesickness. Still, although it weighs on me, I suffer it, for Love makes me love where he pleases. And I say to you that if I am not loved, it is not the fault of my passivity.

I am the servant and friend and vassal of my lady, and I do not ask from her any other favor but this: secretly, to turn her fair eyes to me, for when I am distraught they do me much good. In my heart I blame and accuse myself for following so my desires. Noone should say such things, because we never know what our destiny will be. What shall I do, then, with her beautiful, secret glances? Shall I fail them? Better that the world itself fail me.

Corona, I send greetings and love, and I pray my lady that she aid and assist me.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Pois preyatx me, senhor

Pois preyatx me, senhor,
qu'eu chan, eu cantarai;
e can cuit chantar, plor
a l'ora c'o essai.
Greu veiretz chantador
be chan, si mal li vai.
Vai me doncs mal d'amor?
Ans mels que no fetz mai!
E doncs, per que m'esmai?

Gran ben e gran onor
conosc que Deus me fai,
qu'eu am la belazor
et ilh me, qu'eu o sai.
Mas eu sui sai, alhor,
e no sai com l'estai!
So m'auci de dolor,
car ochaizo non ai
de soven venir lai.

Amors, e que.m farai?
Si garrai ja ab te?
Ara cuit qu'e.m morrai
del dezirer que.m ve,
si.lh bela lai on jai
no m'aizis pres de se,
qu'eu la manei e bai
et estrenha vas me
so cors blanc, gras e le.

Bona domna, merce
del vostre fin aman!
Mas jonchas, ab col cle,
vos m'autrei e.m coman.
Qu'e.us pliu per bona fe
c'anc re no amei tan.
E si locs s'esdeve,
vos me fatz bel semblan,
que molt n'ai gran talan.

(Since you request me to sing, my Lords, I shall sing. And when I think of singing, I weep just at the moment when I begin. You will hardly ever here a singer who sings well, if he is unhappy. Am I thus unhappy in love? No, rather better than ever. Then why I am I in disarray?

I know that God has done me a great honor, since I love the most beautiful of women and she me, as far as I know. But I am elsewhere, and I do not know how she is, which kills me with sorrow, for I do not often have the opportunity to go there.

Now, Love, what shall I do? Shall I ever be cured of you? Right now I think I will die of the desire that comes upon me, if the fair one invites me to be near her, where she sleeps, so that I can caress and kiss and hold next to mine her body, white, round, and smooth.

Sweet lady, have pity on your faithful lover! Hands joined, head bowed, I commend myself to your mercy. For I swear to you in faith that I have never loved anyone as much as you. And if the right moment occurs, show me your best behavior, for I really desire it so.)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Quan l'herba fresqu'el.h folha

Can l'erba fresch'e.lh folha par
e la flors boton'el verjan
e.l rossinhols autet e clar
leva sa vots e mou so chan,
joi ai de lui, e joi ai de la flor
e joi de me e de midons major;
daus totas partz sui de joi claus e sens,
mas sel es jois que totz autres jois vens.

Tan am midons e la tenh car,
e tan la dopt' e la reblan
c'anc de me no.lh auzi parlar,
ni re no.lh quer ni re no.lh man.
Pero elh sap mo mal e ma dolor,
e can li plai, mi fai be e onor,
e can li plai, eu m'en sofert ab mens,
per so c'a leis no.n avenha blastens.

S'eu saubés la gen enchantar,
mei enemic foran efan,
que ja us no saubra triar
ni dir re que.ns tornes a dan.
Adoncs sai eu que vira la gensor
e sos bels olhs e sa frescha color,
e baizera.lh la bocha en totz sens,
si que d'un mes i paregra lo sens.

Be la volgra sola trobar,
que dormis, o.n fezés semblan,
per qu'e.lh emblès un doutz baizar,
pus no valh tan qu'eu lo.lh deman.
Per Deu, domna, pauc esplecham d'amor;
vai s'en lo tems, e perdem lo melhor!
Parlar degram ab cubertz entresens,
e, pus no.ns val arditz, valgués nos gens!

Ai las! com mor de cossirar!
que manhtas vetz en cossir tan:
lairó m'en poirian portar
que re no sabia que.s fan.
Per Deu, Amors! be.m tròbas vensedor:
ab pauc d'amics e ses autre senhor.
Car una vetz tan midons no destrens
abans qu'eu fos del dezirer estens?

Messatger, vai, e no m'en prezes mens,
s'eu del anar vas midons sui temens.

(When the new vegetation and the leaves appear, when the flowers bloom on the branch, and when the nightingale clear and loud raises its voice and begins to sing, I rejoice in the nightingale, and in the flowers, and in myself, and most of all in my lady. I am surrounded by joy on all sides, but she is the joy from which all other joys come.

So much do I love my lady, and hold her dear, and so much do I fear and honor her, that I dare not talk to her of myself. I ask her nothing and I send her nothing. But still she knows of my pain and sorrow, and when it pleases her she bestows on me grace and honor, and when it pleases her I submit to even less so that no blame may come to her.

If I knew how to cast spells on people, my enemies would become babes, so that none of them could discover anything that could be turned against us. I know now that I will see my lady, and her fair eyes and fresh color, and I will kiss her on the mouth every which way, so that for a month the marks will be visible.

I would like to find her alone, sleeping, or pretending to sleep, so that I could steal a sweet kiss from her, since I am not worth so much that I could ask it of her. By God, lady, little do we profit from our love; time passes, and we are losing the best moments. We should speak in a coded language, and since audacity is worth little, may ingenuity be the thing.

Alas! I die from desire. For often, I am so full of yearning that thieves could carry me off, and I wouldn't even realize what was happening. By God, Love! you find me Defeated (vensedor=Ventadorn), with few friends and without another master. Why don't you, once, ensnare my lady, before I am consumed with passion?)

Bernard de Ventadorn

Tant ai mo cor

Tant ai mo cor ple de joya,
tot me desnatura.
Flor blancha, vermeilh'e groya
me par la frejura,
c'ab lo ven et ab la ploya
me creis l'aventura,
per que mos chans mont' e poya
e mos pretz melhura.
Tan ai al cor d'amor,
de joi e de doussor,
per qu'el gels me sembla flor
e la neus verdura.

Anar posc ses vestidura,
nutz en ma chamiza,
car fin'amors m'asegura
de la freja biza.
Mas es fols qui.s desmezura,
e no.s te de guiza,
Per qu'eu ai pres de me cura,
deis c'agui enquiza
la plus bela d'amor,
don aten tan d'onor,
car en loc de sa ricor
non volh aver Piza.

Eu n'ai la bon'esperansa.
Mas petit m'aonda,
c'atressi.m ten en balansa
com la naus en l'onda.
Del mal pes que.m desenansa,
non sai on m'esconda.
Tota noih me vir'e.m lansa
desobre l'esponda.
Plus trac pena d'amor
de Tristan l'amador
que.n sofri manta dolor
per Izeut la blonda.

Mas fals lauzengier engres
m'an lunhat de so pais
que tals s'en fai esdevis
qu'eu cuidera qu'ens celes
si.ns saubes ams d'un coratge.

(My heart is so full of joy that everything is changed for me. The cold season seems like a flower, white, vermillion, and yellow. For with the wind and the rain my good fortune grows, so that my singing rises up, and my worth augments. I have so much love in my heart, so much joy and sweetness, that the ice seems like flowers, and the snow like greenery.

I go around without clothes, naked under my nightshirt, for true love protects me from the cold wind. But he is mad who goes beyond measure and does not behave according to custom. And so I have been on my guard since I have sought the love of the most beautiful lady, from whom I expect much honor. For I would not give up all her riches for Pisa itself.

I have good hope. But that's of little help, because she holds me in balance like a ship on the waves. From the bad thoughts that depress me I do not know how to escape. Every night I toss and turn on my bed. I have more pain from love than Tristan the lover, who suffered many woes for Iseult, the Blond.

(But the false intriguers have distanced me from her country; and that one has become a spy whom / thought would have helped us, if he knew our souls had one will.)

Bernard de Ventadorn