

Lyric Poetry: Nature, Love, and Death

Seminar Two - Wednesday, March 26

Selections from Sappho, Horace, Medieval lyrics

Sappho 1 (“Prayer to Aphrodite”)

1 You with pattern-woven flowers, immortal Aphrodite,
2 child of Zeus, weaver of wiles, I implore you,
3 do not devastate with aches and sorrows,
4 Mistress, my heart!
5 But come here [*tuidē*], if ever at any other time
6 hearing my voice from afar,
7 you heeded me, and leaving the palace of your father,
8 golden, you came,
9 having harnessed the chariot; and you were carried along by beautiful
10 swift sparrows over the dark earth,
11 swirling with their dense plumage from the sky through the
12 midst of the aether,
13 and straightaway they arrived. But you, O holy one,
14 smiling with your immortal looks,
15 kept asking what is it once again this time [*dē'ute*] that has happened to me and for what
16 reason
17 once again this time [*dē'ute*] do I invoke you,
18 and what is it that I want more than anything to happen
19 to my frenzied [*mainolās*] heart [*thūmos*]? “Whom am I once again this time [*dē'ute*] to
20 persuade,
21 setting out to bring her to your love? Who is doing you,
22 Sappho, wrong?”

21 For if she is fleeing now, soon she will give chase.
22 If she is not taking gifts, soon she will be giving them.
23 If she does not love, soon she will love
24 even against her will.”
25 Come to me even now, and free me from harsh
26 anxieties, and however many things
27 my heart [*thūmos*] yearns to get done, *you* do for me. *You*
28 become my ally in war.

Sappho Song 5.1–11

1 O Queen Nereids, unharmed [*ablabēs*]
2 may my brother, please grant it, arrive to me here [*tuide*],
3 and whatever thing he wants in his heart [*thūmos*] to happen,
4 let that thing be fulfilled [*telesthēn*].
[5] And however many mistakes he made in the past, undo them all.
6 Let him become a joy [*kharā*] to those who are near-and-dear [*philoī*] to him,
7 and let him be a pain [*oniā*] to those who are enemies [*ekhthroī*]. As for us,
8 may we have no enemies, not a single one.
9 But may he wish to make his sister [*kasignētā*]
[10] worthy of more honor [*tīmā*].
11 The catastrophic [*lugrā*] pain [*oniā*] ... in the past, he was feeling sorrow [*akheuōn*]... .

Sappho Song 1-6

The Daughter Of Cyprus Lyrics

Dreaming I spake with the Daughter of Cyprus,
Heard the languor soft of her voice, the blended
Suave accord of tones interfused with laughter

Low and desireful;

Dreaming saw her dread ineffable beauty,
Saw through texture fine of her clinging tunic
Blush the fire of flesh, the rose of her body,
Radiant, blinding;

Saw through filmy meshes the melting lovely
Flow of line, the exquisite curves, whence piercing
Rapture reached with tangible touch to thrill me,
Almost to slay me;

Saw the gleaming foot, and the golden sandal
Held by straps of Lydian work thrice doubled
Over the instep's arch, and up the rounded
Dazzling ankle;

Saw the charms that shimmered from knee to shoulder,
Hint of hues, than milk or the snowdrift whiter;
Secret grace, the shrine of the soul of passion,
Glow that consumed me;

Saw the gathered mass of her xanthic tresses,
Mitra-bound, escape from the clasping fillet,
Float and shine as clouds in the sunset splendor,
Mists in the dawn-fire;

Saw the face immortal, and daring greatly,
Raised my eyes to hers of unfathomed azure,
Drank their world's desire, their limitless longing,
Swooned and was nothing.

Sappho 16

1 Some say a massing of chariots and their drivers, some say of footsoldiers,
2 some say of ships, if you think of everything that exists on the surface of this black earth,
3 is the most beautiful thing of them all. But I say it is that one thing
4 that anyone passionately loves [*erātai*].
[5] It's really quite easy to make this understandable
6 to everyone, this thing. You see, that woman who was by far supreme
7 in beauty among all humans, Helen,
8 she [...] her best of all husbands,
9 him she left behind and sailed to Troy,
[10] caring not about her daughter and her dear parents,
11 not caring at all. She was swept along [...]
[15] [All this] reminds me right now of Anaktoria.
16 She is [not] here.
17 Oh, how I would far rather wish to see her taking a dancing step that arouses passionate love [= *eraton*],
18 and to see the luminous radiance from the look of her face
19 than to see those chariots of the Lydians and the footsoldiers in their armor [20] as they fight in battle [...].

Horrorance

BkI:V Treacherous Girl

What slender boy, Pyrrha, drowned in liquid perfume,
urges you on, there, among showers of roses,
deep down in some pleasant cave?
For whom did you tie up your hair,

with simple elegance? How often he'll cry at
the changes of faith and of gods, ah, he'll wonder,
surprised by roughening water,
surprised by the darkening storms,
who enjoys you now and believes you're golden,
who thinks you'll always be single and lovely,
ignoring the treacherous
breeze. Wretched are those you dazzle
while still untried. As for me the votive tablet
that hangs on the temple wall reveals, suspended,
my dripping clothes, for the god,
who holds power over the sea.

BkI:VIII : To Lydia: Stop Ruining Sybaris!

Lydia, by all the gods,
say why you're set on ruining poor Sybaris, with passion:
why he suddenly can't stand
the sunny Campus, he, once tolerant of the dust and sun:
why he's no longer riding
with his soldier friends, nor holds back the Gallic mouth, any longer,
with his sharp restraining bit.
Why does he fear to touch the yellow Tiber? Why does he keep
away from the wrestler's oil

like the viper's blood: he won't appear with arms bruised by weapons,
he who was often noted
for hurling the discus, throwing the javelin out of bounds?
Why does he hide, as they say
Achilles, sea-born Thetis' son, hid, before sad Troy was ruined,
lest his male clothing
had him dragged away to the slaughter, among the Lycian troops?

BkI:XI Carpe Diem

Leuconoë , don't ask, we never know, what fate the gods grant us,
whether your fate or mine, don't waste your time on Babylonian,
futile, calculations. How much better to suffer what happens,
whether Jupiter gives us more winters or this is the last one,
one debilitating the Tyrrhenian Sea on opposing cliffs.
Be wise, and mix the wine, since time is short: limit that far-reaching hope.
The envious moment is flying now, now, while we're speaking:
Seize the day, place in the hours that come as little faith as you can.

BkI:XIII His Jealousy

When you, Lydia, start to praise
Telephus' rosy neck, Telephus' waxen arms,
alas, my burning passion starts

to mount deep inside me, with troubling anger.

Neither my feelings, nor my hue

stay as they were before, and on my cheek a tear

slides down, secretly, proving how

I'm consumed inwardly with lingering fires.

I burn, whether it's madhouse

quarrels that have, drunkenly, marked your gleaming

shoulders, or whether the crazed boy

has placed a love-bite, in memory, on your lips.

If you'd just listen to me now,

you'd not bother to hope for constancy from him

who wounds that sweet mouth, savagely,

that Venus has imbued with her own pure nectar.

Three times happy are they, and more,

held by unbroken pledge, one which no destruction

of love, by evil quarrels,

will ever dissolve, before life's final day.

BkI:XV Nereus' Prophecy of Troy

While Paris, the traitorous shepherd, her guest,

bore Helen over the waves, in a ship from Troy,

Nereus , the sea-god, checked the swift breeze

with an unwelcome calm, to tell
their harsh fate: 'You're taking a bird of ill-omen,
back home, whom the Greeks, new armed, will look for again,
having sworn to destroy the marriage your planning
and the empire of old Priam.

Ah, what sweated labour for men and for horses
draws near! What disaster you bring for the Trojan
people! Athene's already prepared her helm,
breastplate, chariot, and fury.

Uselessly daring, through Venus' protection,
you'll comb your hair and pluck at the peace-loving lyre,
make the music for songs that please girls: uselessly
you'll hide, in the depths of your room,
from the heavy spears, from the arrows of Cretan
reeds, and the noise of the battle, and swift-footed
Ajax quick to follow: yet, ah too late, you'll bathe
your adulterous hair in the dust!

Have you thought of Ulysses, the bane of your race,
have you even considered Pylian Nestor?
Teucer of Salamis presses you fearlessly,
Sthenelus, skilful in warfare,
and if it's a question of handling the horses
he's no mean charioteer. And Meriones

you'll know him too. See fierce Tydides, his father's
braver, he's raging to find you.

As the deer sees the wolf there, over the valley,
and forgets its pastures, a coward, you'll flee him,
breathing hard, as you run, with your head thrown high,
not as you promised your mistress.

The anger of Achilles' armies may delay
the day of destruction for Troy and its women:
but after so many winters the fires of Greece
will burn the Dardanian houses.'

BkI:XVI He Repents

O lovelier child of a lovely mother,
end as you will, then, my guilty iambics
whether in flames or whether instead
deep down in the Adriatic's waters.

Neither Cybele, nor Apollo, who troubles
the priestess's mind in the Pythian shrine,
nor Bacchus, nor the Corybants who
clash their shrill, ringing cymbals together,
pain us like anger, that's undefeated by
swords out of Noricum, or sea, the wrecker,

or cruel fire, or mighty Jupiter
when he sweeps down in terrible fury.
They say when Prometheus was forced to add
something from every creature to our first clay
he chose to set in each of our hearts
the violence of the irascible lion.
Anger brought Thyestes down, to utter ruin,
and it's the prime reason powerful cities
vanished in their utter destruction,
and armies, in scorn, sent the hostile plough
over the levelled spoil of their shattered walls.
Calm your mind: the passions of the heart have made
their attempt on me, in my sweet youth,
and drove me, maddened, as well, to swift verse:
I wish to change the bitter lines to sweet, now,
since I've charmed away all of my hostile words,
if you might become my friend, again,
and if you, again, might give me your heart.

BkI:XIX Glyceria's Beauty

Cruel Venus, Cupid's mother,
Bacchus, too, commands me, Theban Semele's son,

and you, lustful Licentiousness,
to recall to mind that love I thought long-finished.
I burn for Glycera's beauty,
who gleams much more brightly than Parian marble:
I burn for her lovely boldness
and her face too dangerous to ever behold.
Venus bears down on me, wholly,
deserting her Cyprus, not letting me sing of
the Scythians, or Parthians
eager at wheeling their horses, nor anything else.
Here set up the green turf altar,
boys, and the sacred boughs of vervain, and incense,
place here a bowl of last year's wine:
if a victim's sacrificed, she'll come more gently.

BkI:XXI Hymn to Diana

O tender virgins sing, in praise of Diana,
and, you boys, sing in praise, of long-haired Apollo,
and of Latona, deeply
loved by all-conquering Jove.
You girls, she who enjoys the streams and the green leaves
of the groves that clothe the cool slopes of Algidus,

or dark Erymanthian

trees, or the woods of green Cragus.

You boys, sounding as many praises, of Tempe

and Apollo's native isle Delos, his shoulder

distinguished by his quiver,

and his brother Mercury's lyre.

He'll drive away sad war, and miserable famine,

the plague too, from our people and Caesar our prince,

and, moved by all your prayers,

send them to Persians and Britons.

BkI:XXIII Chloë, Don't Run.

You run away from me as a fawn does, Chloë,

searching the trackless hills for its frightened mother,

not without aimless terror

of the pathless winds, and the woods.

For if the coming of spring begins to rustle

among the trembling leaves, or if a green lizard

pushes the brambles aside,

then it trembles in heart and limb.

And yet I'm not chasing after you to crush you

like a fierce tiger, or a Gaetulian lion:

stop following your mother,

now, you're prepared for a mate.

BkI:XXX Ode To Venus

O Venus, the queen of Cnidos and Paphos,
spurn your beloved Cyprus, and summoned
by copious incense, come to the lovely shrine
of my Glycera.

And let that passionate boy of yours, Cupid,
and the Graces with loosened zones, and the Nymphs,
and Youth, less lovely without you, hasten here,
and Mercury too.

BkIII:IX A Dialogue

'While I was the man, dear to you,
while no young man, you loved more dearly, was clasping
his arms around your snow-white neck,
I lived in greater blessedness than Persia's king.'

'While you were on fire for no one
else, and Lydia was not placed after Chloë,
I, Lydia, of great renown,
lived more gloriously than Roman Ilia.'

'Thracian Chloe commands me now,

she's skilled in sweet verses, she's the queen of the lyre,
for her I'm not afraid to die,
if the Fates spare her, and her spirit survives me.'
I'm burnt with a mutual flame
by Calais, Thurian Ornytus's son,
for whom I would die twice over
if the Fates spare him, and his spirit survives me.'
What if that former love returned,
and forced two who are estranged under her bronze yoke:
if golden Chloë was banished,
and the door opened to rejected Lydia?
Though he's lovelier than the stars,
and you're lighter than cork, and more irascible
than the cruel Adriatic,
I'd love to live with you, with you I'd gladly die!

BkIII:XX The Conflict

Pyrrhus, you can't see how dangerous it is
to touch the Gaetolian lioness' cub?
Soon you'll be running from all that hard fighting,
a spiritless thief,
while she goes searching for lovely Nearchus,

through obstructive crowds of young men: ah, surely
the fight will be great, whether the prize is yours,
or, more likely, hers.

Meanwhile, as you produce your swift arrows, as
she is sharpening her fearsome teeth, the battle's
fine judge is said to have trampled the palm leaf,
beneath his bare foot,
and he's cooling his shoulders, draped in perfumed
hair, in the gentle breeze, just like Nireus,
or like Ganymede, who was snatched away from
Ida rich in streams.

BkIII:XXVI Enough

I was suited to sweethearts till now, and performed
my service, not without glory: but now this wall
that protects the left flank of Venus,
the girl from the sea, shall have my weapons,
and hold up the lyre that has finished with warfare.
Here, O here, place the shining torches, and set up
the crowbars, and set up the axes,
so that they menace opposite doorways.
O goddess, you who possess rich Cyprus, O queen,

who holds Memphis, that's free of Sithonian snows,
touch, just for once, arrogant Chloë,
touch her, just once, with your whip, lifted high.

BkIII:XXX Aere Perennius

I've raised a monument, more durable than bronze,
one higher than the Pyramids' royal towers,
that no devouring rain, or fierce northerly gale,
has power to destroy: nor the immeasurable
succession of years, and the swift passage of time.
I'll not utterly die, but a rich part of me,
will escape Persephone: and fresh with the praise
of posterity, I'll rise, beyond. While the High
Priest, and the silent Virgin, climb the Capitol,
I'll be famous, I, born of humble origin,
(from where wild Aufidus roars, and where Daunus once,
lacking in streams, ruled over a rural people)
as the first to re-create Aeolian song
in Italian verse. Melpomene, take pride,
in what has been earned by your merit, and, Muse,
willingly, crown my hair, with the Delphic laurel.

Pindar XII.

FOR ERGOTELES OF HIMERA, WINNER IN THE LONG FOOT-RACE.

* * * * *

Ergoteles was a native of Knosos in Crete, but civil dissension had compelled him to leave his country. He came to Sicily and was naturalized as a citizen of Himera. Had he stayed in Crete he would not have won this victory; nor the Pythian and Isthmian victories, referred to at the end of the ode, for the Cretans seem to have kept aloof, in an insular spirit, from the Panhellenic games.

The date of the ode is B.C. 472, the year after the Himeraeans had expelled the tyrant Thrasydaios of Akragas. The prayer to Fortune would seem to have reference specially to this event. The ode was probably sung in a temple either of Zeus or of Fortune.

* * * * *

I pray thee, daughter of Zeus the Deliverer, keep watch over wide-ruling Himera, O saviour Fortune.

By thee upon the sea swift ships are piloted, and on dry land fierce wars and meetings of councils.

Up and down the hopes of men are tossed as they cleave the waves of baffling falsity: and a sure token of what shall come to pass hath never any man on the earth received from God: the divinations of things to come are blind.

Many the chances that fall to men when they look not for them, sometimes to thwart delight, yet others after battling with the surge of sorrowful pain have suddenly received for their affliction some happiness profound.

Son of Philanor, verily even the glory of thy fleet feet would have fallen into the sere leaf unrenowned, abiding by the hearth of thy kin, as a cock that fighteth but at home, had not the strife of citizen against citizen driven thee from Knosos thy native land.

But now at Olympia hast thou won a crown, O Ergoteles, and at Pytho twice, and at Isthmos, whereby thou glorifiest the hot springs where the nymphs Sicilian bathe, dwelling in a land that is become to thee as thine own.

Pindar - III.

FOR MELISSOS OF THEBES, WINNER IN THE PANKRATION.

* * * * *

The date of this ode is uncertain, though some on the hypothesis that the battle alluded to is the battle of Plataiai, have dated it 478 or 474. In this battle, whatever it was, the Kleonymid clan to which Melissos belonged had lost four men. The celebrity of the clan in the games seems to have been eclipsed for some time, but Melissos revived it by a chariot-victory at Nemea and this pankration-victory at the Isthmus, won in spite of his small stature which might have seemed to place him at a disadvantage. The ode compares his match against his antagonists with that of Herakles against the African giant Antaios.

Very probably this ode was sung at a night meeting of the clan, while the altars of Herakles were blazing.

* * * * *

If any among men having good fortune and dwelling amid prizes of renown or the power of wealth restraineth in his heart besetting insolence, this man is worthy to have part in his citizens' good words.

But from thee, O Zeus, cometh all high excellence to mortals; and longer liveth their bliss who have thee in honour, but with minds perverse it consorteth never steadfastly, flourishing throughout all time.

In recompense for glorious deeds it behoveth that we sing the valiant, and amid his triumphal company exalt him with fair honours. Of two prizes is the lot fallen to Melissos, to turn his heart unto sweet mirth, for in the glens of Isthmos hath he won crowns, and again in the hollow vale of the deep-chested lion being winner in the chariot-race he made proclamation that his home was Thebes.

Thus shameth he not the prowess of his kinsmen. Ye know the ancient fame of Kleonymos with the chariot: also on the mother's side being akin to the Labdakidai his race hath been conversant with riches, and bestowed them on the labours of the four-horse car.

But time with rolling days bringeth changes manifold: only the children of gods are free of wounds.

By grace of God I have ways countless everywhere open unto me^[1]: for thou hast shown forth to me, O Melissos, in the Isthmian games an ample means to follow in song the excellence of thy race: wherein the Kleonymidai flourish continually, and in favour with God pass onward through the term of mortal life: howbeit changing gales drive all men with ever-changing drift.

These men verily are spoken of as having honour at Thebes from the beginning, for that they cherished the inhabitants round about, and had no part in loud insolence; if there be borne about by the winds among men aught of witness to the great honour of quick or dead, unto such have they attained altogether. By the brave deeds of their house they have touched the pillars of Herakles, that are at the end of things. Beyond that follow thou no excellence.

Horse-breeders moreover have they been, and found favour with mailed Ares; but in one day the fierce snow-storm of war hath made a happy hearth to be desolate of four men.

But now once more after that wintry gloom hath it blossomed, even as in the flowery months the earth blossometh with red roses, according to the counsels of gods.

For the Shaker of Earth who inhabiteth Onchestos and the Bridge[2] between seas that lieth before the valley of Corinth, now giveth to the house this hymn of wonder, and leadeth up out of her bed the ancient glory of the famous deeds thereof: for she was fallen on sleep; but she awaketh and her body shineth preeminent, as among stars the Morning-star.

For in the land of Athens proclaiming a victory of the car, and at Sikyon at the games of Adrastos did she give like wreaths of song for the sons of Kleonymos that then were. For neither did they refrain to contend with the curved chariot in the great meetings of the people, but they had delight to strive with the whole folk of Hellas in spending their wealth on steeds.

Touching the unproven there is silence, and none knoweth them: yea and even from them that strive Fortune hideth herself until they come unto the perfect end; for she giveth of this and of that.

The better man hath been ere now overtaken and overthrown by the craft of worse. Verily ye know the bloody deed of Aias, that he wrought beneath the far-spent night, when he smote himself through with his own sword, whereby he upbraideth yet the children of the Hellenes, as many as went forth to Troy.

But lo! Homer hath done him honour among men, and by raising up his excellence in the fulness thereof hath through the rod[3] of his divine lays delivered it to bards after him to sing.

For the thing that one hath well said goeth forth with a voice unto everlasting: over fruitful earth and beyond the sea hath the light of fair deeds shined, unquenchable for ever.

May we find favour with the Muses, that for Melissos too we kindle such beacon-blaze of song, a worthy prize of the pankration for this scion of Telesias' son.

He being like unto the roaring lions in courage taketh unto him their spirit to be his own in the struggle: but in sleight he is as the fox that spreadeth out her feet^[4] and preventeth the swoop of the eagle: for all means must be essayed by him that would prevail over his foe. For not of the stature of Orion was this man, but his presence is contemptible, yet terrible is he to grapple with in his strength.

And verily once to the house of Antaios came a man to wrestle against him, of short stature but of unbending soul, from Kadmean Thebes even unto corn-bearing Libya, that he might cause him to cease from roofing Poseidon's temple with the skulls of strangers—even the son of Alkmene, he who ascended up to Olympus, after that he had searched out the surface of the whole earth and of the crag-walled hoary sea, and had made safe way for the sailing of ships. And now beside the aegis-bearer he dwelleth, possessing happiness most fair, and hath honour from the immortals as their friend, and hath Hebe to wife, and is lord of a golden house, and husband of Hera's child.

Unto his honour upon the heights Elektra we of this city prepare a feast and new-built altar-ring, where we offer burnt sacrifice in honour of the eight mail-clad men that are dead, whom Megara, Kreon's daughter, bore to be sons of Herakles.

To them at the going down of the day there ariseth a flame of fire and burneth all night continually, amid a savoury smoke hurling itself against the upper air: and on the second day is the award of the yearly games, a trial of strength.

Therein did this our man, his head with myrtle-wreaths made white, show forth a double victory, after another won already among the boys, for that he had regard unto the many counsels of him who was the pilot of his helm^[5]. And with Orseas' name I join him in my triumphal song, and shed over them a glory of delight.

[Footnote 1: 'Many themes on which I can justly praise the clan.']

[Footnote 2: The Isthmus.]

[Footnote 3: The rod or staff carried anciently by poets and reciters of poems.]

[Footnote 4: I. e. throwing herself on her back with feet upward. If it is meant that she counterfeits death, then of course the parallel with the pankratiast will only hold good to the extent of the supine posture.]

[Footnote 5: His trainer, Orseas.]

Medieval English Lyrics

- Tell Me, Wight in the Broom by Anonymous

Say me, wight in the brom,
Teche me how I shule don
That min housebonde
Me lovien wolde.
'Hold thine tunge stille
And have al thine wille.'

- Ther is no rose of swich Vertu

[T]her [is n]o rose of swych vertu
As is the rose that bar Jhesu.
Ther is no ro[se of] swych vertu
As is the rose that bar Jhesu,
Alleluya.
For in this rose conteynyd was
Heuen and erthe in lytyl space,

Res miranda

Be that rose we may weel see

That he is God in personys thre,

Pari forma.

The aungelys sungyn the sheperdes to 'Gloria in excelsis Deo'

Gaudeamus.

[L]eue we al this wordly merthe, And folwe we this joyful berthe,

Transeamus

- Cuckoo Song [Brit. Lib. MS Harley 978, f. 11v]

Sumer is icumen in,

Loude sing cuckou!

Groweth seed and bloweth meed,

And springth the wode now.

Sing cuckou!

Ewe bleteth after lamb,

Loweth after calve cow,

Bulloc sterteth, bucke verteth,

Merye sing cuckou!

Cuckou, cuckou,

Wel singest thou cuckou:

Ne swik thou never now!

- Ah, the sighs that come from my heart by William Cornysh

A the syghes that come fro my hert,
They greue me passyng sore;
Syth I must fro my loue depart,
Ffarewell, my joye, for euermore.
Oft to me wyth hire goodly face
She was wont to cast an eye,
And now absence to me in place;
Alas, for woe I dye, I dye!
I was wonte hir to beholde,
And takyn in armys twayne,
And now, wyth syghes manyfolde,
Farewell, my joye, & welcome, payne!
A, mythynke that I se hire yete,
As wolde to gode that I myght!
There myght no joyes compare wyth hyt
Unto my hart to make hyt lyght.

- I Sing of a Maiden MS Sloane 2593. c. 1430.

I sing of a maiden
That is makelees:
King of alle kinges
To her sone she chees.
He cam also stille
Ther his moder was
As dewe in Aprille
That falleth on the gras.

He cam also stille
To his modres bowr
As dewe in Aprille
That falleth on the flowr.
He cam also stille
Ther his moder lay
As dewe in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.
Moder and maiden
Was nevere noon but she:
Wel may swich a lady Godes moder be.

- WHEN THE NYHTEGALE SINGES Harley MS. c. 1310.

When the nyhtegale singes,
The wodes waxen grene,
Lef ant gras ant blosme springes
In Averyl, Y wene ;
Ant love is to myn herte gon
With one spere so kene,
Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes
Myn herte deth me tene.
Ich have loved al this yer
That Y may love na more;
Ich have siked moni syk,
Lemmon, for thin ore,
Me nis love neuer the ner,

Ant that me reweth sore;
Suate lemmon, thench on me,
Ich have loved the yore.
Suate lemmon, Y preye thee,
Of love one speche;
Whil Y lyve in world so wyde
Other nulle Y seche.
With thy love, my suete leof,
My blis thou mihtes eche;
A suete cos of thy mouth
Mihte be my leche.
Suate lemmon, Y preye thee
Of a love-bene:
Yef thou me lovest, ase men says,
Lemmon, as I wene,
Ant yef hit thi wille be,
Thou loke that hit be sene;
So muchel Y thenke vpon the
That al y waxe grene.
Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndeseye,
Norhamptoun ant Lounde,
Ne wot I non so fayr a may,
As y go fore ybounde.
Suate lemmon, Y preye the
Thou lovie me a stounde;
Y wole mone my song
On wham that hit ys on ylong.

- Wynter Wakeneth al my Care [MS. Harl. 2253. f. 49r]

Wynter wakeneth al my care,
Nou this leves waxeth bare.
Ofte y sike ant mourne sare
When hit cometh in my thoht
Of this worldes joie,
hou hit goth al to noht.
Nou hit is ant nou hit nys,
Also hit ner nere, ywys;
That moni mon seith, soth hit ys—
Al goth bote godes wille:
Alle we shule deye, thah us like ylle.
Al that gren me graueth grene,
Nou hit faleweth al by dene:
Jesu help that hit be sene
Ant shild us from helle!
For y not whider y shal,
ne hou longe her duelle.

- Of a Rose Synge We [c1450]

Of a rose synge we:
Misterium mirabile.
This rose is railed on a rys;
He hath bought the prince of prys,
And in this tyme soth hit ys,
Viri sine semine.

Of a rose, &c.

This rose is reed of colour bryght,
Throw whom oure joye gan alyght,
Uppon a Cristys masse nyght,
Claro David germine.

Of a rose, &c.

Of this rose was Cryst y-bore, To save mankynde that was forelore; And us alle from synnes sore,
Prophetarum carmine.

Of a rose, &c.

This rose, of flourys she is flour,
She ne wole fade for no shour,
To synful men she sent socour,
Mira plenitudine.

Of a rose, &c.

This rose is so faire of hywe,
In maide Mary that is so trywe,
Y-borne was lorde of virtue,
Salvator sine crimine.

Of a rose, &c.

- Adam Lay Ybounden MS Sloane 2593. c. 1430.

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond,
Four thousand winter thoughte he not too long;
And al was for an apple, and apple that he took,

As clerkes finden writen, writen in hire book.
Ne hadde the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
Ne hadde nevere Oure Lady ybeen hevene Queen.
Blessed be the time that apple taken was:
Therefore we mown singen Deo Gratias.

- SUNSET ON CALVARY

Nou goth sonne vnder wod
sets behind the tree (s)
me reweth, marie, þi faire Rode.
I pity; thy fair face
Nou goþ sonne vnder tre,
sets behind the tree
me reweþ, marie, þi sone and þe.
I pity; thy son and thee

- LENTEN YS COME c1314-1349. MS Harl. 2253, f71v.

Lenten ys come with love to toune,
With blosmen & with briddes rounne,
That al this blisse bryngeth;
Dayes eyes in this dales,
Notes suete of nyhtegales;
Uch foul song singeth.
The threstelcoc him threteth oo;
Away is huere wynter wo,

When woderove springeth.
This foules singeth ferly fele,
Ant wlyteth on huere wynter wele,
That al the wode ryngeth.
The rose rayleth hire rode;
The leves on the lyhte wode
Waxen al with wille.
The mone mandeth hire bleo;
The lilie is lossom to seo,
|The fenyl & the fille. |
Wowes this wilde drakes;
Miles murgeth huere makes,
Ase strem that striketh stille.
Mody meneth, so doth mo;
Ichot ycham on of tho,
For love that likes ille.
The mone mandeth hire lyht,
So doth the semly sonne bryht,
When briddes singeth breme;
Deawes donketh the dounes,
Deores with huere derne rounes
Domes forte deme;
Wormes woweth under cloude,
Wymmen waxeth wounder proude,
So wel hit wol hem seme,
Yef me shal wonte wille of on,
This wunne weole y wole forgon
Ant wyht in wode be fleme.

Translation

Spring has come with love to town,
With blossoms and with birds' rounds,o
Which all this bliss bringeth;
Daisies in these dales,
Notes sweet of nightingales;
Each fowl a song singeth.
The threstlecock he scoldeth aye;
Away is their winter woe,
When woodruff springeth.
These fowls singeth fairly much,
And look back on their winter weal,o
So that all the wood ringeth.
The rose puts on her red;
The leaves on the trembling trees
Grow forth with eagerness.
The moon sends forth her brightness;
The lily is lovely to see,
The fennel and chervil.
Woo these wild drakes;
Beasts entertain their mates,
As streams which ever flow.
Sad ones moan, so do many more;
I know I am one of those,

Who are ill-pleased with love.
The moon sends forth her light,
So doth the pleasing sun bright,
When birds sing lustily;
Dews drench the hills,
Lovers with their secret songs
Their own laws to make;
Wyrms woo underground,
Women grow wondrously proud,
Which seems so becoming to them;
If I shall lack the goodwill of one,
This wondrous wealth I will forgo
And this wight in the woods be banished.