Troilus & Criseyde

by

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Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde

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Book I

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
In louynge how his auentures follen
ffro wo to wele, and after out of ioie,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thow help me for tendite
Thise woful vers that wepen as I write.

To the clepe I, thow goddess of torment,
Thow cruwel furie, sorwynge euere in peyne,
Help me that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth loueres, as I kan, to pleyne;
ffor wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery feere,
And to a sorwful tale a sory chere.

ffor I, that god of loues seruantz serue,
Ne dar to loue, for myn vnliklynesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I ther-fore sterue,
So fer am I from his help in derknesse;
But natheles, if this may don gladnesse
To any louere and his cause auaille,
Haue he my thonk, and myn be this trauaille.

But ye loueres that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pyte in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed heuynesse
That ye han felt, and on the aduersite
Of othere folk, and thynketh how that ye
Han felt that loue dorste yow displese,
Or ye han wonne hym with to grete an ese.

And preieth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That loue hem brynge in heuene to solas;
And ek for me preieth to god so dere
That I haue myght to shewe in som manere
Swich peyne and wo as loues folk endure,
In Troilus vnsely auenture.

And biddeth ek for hem that ben despeired
In loue that neuere nyl recouered be,
And ek for hem that falsly ben apeired
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth god, for his benignite,
So graunte hem soone owt of this world to pace,
That ben despeired out of loues grace.

And biddeth ek for hem that ben at ese.
That god hem graunte ay good perseueraunce,
And send hem myght hire ladies so to plesa
That it to loue be worship and plesaunce;
ffor so hope I my sowle best auaunce,
To prey for hem that loues seruauntz be,
And write hire wo, and lyue in charite,
And for to haue of hem compassioun,
As though I were hire owne brother dere.
Now herkneth with a good entencioun,
ffor now wil I gon streght to my matere,
In which ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus in louynge of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook hym er she deyde.

Yt is wel wist how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troiewardes, and the cite longe
Assegeden, neigh ten yer er they stente,
And in diuerse wise and oon entente,
The rauysshyng to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris don, they wroughten al hir peyne.

Now fel it so that in the town ther was
Dwellynge a lord of gret auctorite.
A gret deuyn that clepid was Calkas,
That in science so expert was that he
Knew wel that Troie sholde destroyed be,
By answere of his god that highte thus:
Daun Phebus or Appollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calkas knew by calkulynge,
And ek by answer of this Appollo.
That Grekes sholden swich a peple brynge
Thorugh which that Troie moste ben for-do,
He caste anon out of the town to go;
ffor wel wiste he by sort that Troye sholde

Book I

Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde
Destroyed ben — ye, wolde who-so nolde.

ffor which forto departen softly
Took purpos ful this for-knowynge wise,
And to the Grekes oost ful pryuely
He stal anon; and they in curteys wise
Hym diden bothe worship and seruyce,
In trust that he hath konnynge hem to rede
In euery peril which that is to drede.

The noise vp ros whan it was first aspied
Thorugh al the town and generaly was spoken
That Calkas traitour fled was and allied
With hem of Grece, and casten to be wroken
On hym that falsly hadde his feith so broken,
And seyden he and al his kyn atones
Ben worthi for to brennen, felle and bones

Now hadde Calkas left in this meschaunce,
Al vnwist of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
ffor of hire lif she was ful sore in drede,
As she that nyste what was best to rede;
ffor bothe a widewe was she and allone
Of any frend to whom she dorste hir mone.

Criseyde was this lady name al right —
As to my doom in al Troies cite
Nas non so fair, for passynge euery wight
So aungelik was hir natif beaute
That lik a thing in-mortal semed she,
As doth an heuenyssh perfit creature
That down were sent in scornynge of nature.

This lady which that alday herd at ere
Hire fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel neigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habet large of samyt broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector adown
With pitous vos, and tendrely wepynge,
His mercy bad, hir seluen excusynge.

Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saugh that she was sorwfully bigon,
And that she was so faire a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladede hire anon,
And seyde, "lat youre fadres treson gon
fforth with meschaunce, and ye youre self in ioie
Dwelleth with vs, whil yow good list, in Troie.

"And al thonour that men may don yow haue,
As ferforth as youre fader dwelled here,
Ye shul haue, and youre body shal men saue,
As fer as I may ought enquire or here."
And she hym thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille.
And took hire leue, and hom, and held hir stille.

And in hire hous she abood with swich meyne
As til hire honour nede was to holde;
And whil she was dwellynge in that cite
Kepte hir estat, and both of yonge and olde
fful wel biloued, and wel men of hir tolde —
But wheither that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it naught, ther-fore I late it goon.

The thynges fellen as they don of werre
Bitwixen hem of Troie and Grekes ofte;
ffor som day boughten they of Troie it derre,
And eft the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troie; and thus fortune on lofte
And vnder eft gan hem to whielen bothe
Aftir hir cours, ay whil that thei were wrothe.

But how this town com to destruccion
Ne falleth naught to purpos me to telle;
ffor it were here a long digression
ffro my matere and yow to long to dwelle;
But the Troian gestes as they felle,
In Omer or in Dares or in Dite,
Who-so that kan may rede hem as they write.

But though that Grekes hem of Troie shetten
And hir cite biseged al aboute,
Hire olde vsage nolde they nat letten,
As for to honour hir goddes ful deuoute;
But aldirmost in honour, out of doute,
Thei hadde a relik heet Palladion
That was hire trist abouen euerichon.
And so bifel whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Veer the pryme,
And swote smellen floures white and rede,
In sondry wises shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troie hire obseruaunces olde,
Palladiones feste forto holde.

And to the temple in al hir beste wise
In general ther wente many a wight
To herknen of Palladion the seruyce;
And namely, so many a lusty knyght,
So many a lady fressh and mayden bright,
fful wel arayed, both moeste, mene, and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habit blak, but natheles,
Right as oure firste lettre is now an A,
In beaute first so stood she makeles;
Hire goodly lokyng gladed al the prees.
Nas neuere yet seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,
Nor vnder cloude blak so bright a sterre,
As was Criseyde, as folk seyde euerichone,
That hir behelden in hir blake wede;
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille allone,
Byhynden other folk in litel brede,
And nei y the dore, ay vndre shames drede,
Simple of atire and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured lokyng and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to gide
His yonge knyghtes, lad hem vp and down
In thilke large temple on euery side,
Byholding ay the ladies of the town,
Now here, now there, for no deuocioun
Hadde he to non to reuen hym his reste,
But gan to preise and lakken whom hym leste.

And in his walk ful faste he gan to wayten
If knyght or squyer of his compaignie
Gan forto syke or lete his eighen baiiten
On any womman that he koude espye;
He wolde smyle and holden it folye,
And seye hym thus, "god woot, she slepeth softe
ffor loue of the, whan thow turnest ful ofte.

"I haue herd told, perdieux, of youre lyuynge,
Ye loueres, and youre lewed obseruaunces,
And which a labour folk han in wynynge
Of loue, and in the kepyng which doutaunces;
And whan youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.
O veray fooles, nyce and blynde be ye;
Ther nys nat oon kan war by other be."

And with that word he gan caste vp the browe,
Ascaunces, "loo, is this naught wisely spoken?"
At which the god of loue gan loken rowe
Right for despit, and shop forto ben wroken:
He kidde anon his bowe nas naught broken,
ffor sodeynly he hitte hym atte fulle,
And yet as proude a pekok kan he pulle.

O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!
How often falleth al the effect contraire
Of surquidrie and foul presumpcioun!
ffor kaught is proud, and kau yt is debonaire:
This Troilus is clomben on the staire
And litel weneth that he moot descenden —
But alday faileth thing that fooles wenden.

As proude Bayard gynneth forto skippe
Out of the weye, so pryketh him his corn,
Til he a lasshe haue of the longe whippe,
Than thynketh he, ""though I praunce al byforn
ffirst in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe."

So ferde it by this fierse and proude knyght:
Though he a worthy kynges sone were,
And wende no thing hadde had swich myght
A yeyns his wille that shuld his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wax a-fere,
That he that now was moost in pride a-boue
Wax sodeynly moost subgit vnto loue.

fforthy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wise, proude, and worthi folkes alle,
To scornen loue, which that so soone kan
The fredom of youre hertes to him thralle —
ffor euere it was and euere it shal byfalle
That loue is he that alle thing may bynde
ffor may no man fordon the lawe of kynde.

That this be soth, hath preued and doth yit;
ffor this trowe I ye knowen alle or some:
Men reden nat that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with loue ynome;
And strengest folk bien ther-with ouerecome,
The worthiест and grettest of degree —
This was, and is, and yet men shall it see.

And trewelich it sit wel to be so,
ffor alderwisest han ther-with ben plesed,
And they that han ben aldermost in wo
With loue han ben comforted moost and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthi folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth moost to dreden vice and shame.

Now sith it may nat goodly ben with-stonde,
And is a thing so vertuouse in kynde,
Refuseth nat to loue forto ben bonde,
Syn as hym seluen liste he may yow bynde:
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and wynde
Than that that brest; and therfore I yow rede
To folowen hym that so wel kan yow lede.

But forto tellen forth in special
As of this kynges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collaterial,
Of hym thenke I my tale forth to holde,
Both of his ioie and of his cares colde;
And al his werk as touching this matere,
ffor it gan, I wol therto refere.

With-inne the temple he wente hym forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of euery wight aboute,
On this lady, and now on that, lokynge,
Where so she were of town or of with-oute;
And vp-on cas bifel that thorugh a route
His eye percede, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smote, and ther it stente.
And sodeynly he wax ther-with astoned,
And gan hir bet biholde in thrifty wise.
"O mercy god," thoughte he, "wher hastow woned,
That art so feyre and goodly to deuise?"
Therwith his herte gan to sprede and rise,
And softe sighed, lest men myghte hym here,
And cau yt a yeyn his firste pleyinge chere.

She nas nat with the leste of hire statore,
But alle hir lymes so wel answerynge
Weren to wommanhode, that creature
Was neuere lasse mannyssh in semynge;
And ek the pure wise of hire meuynge
Shewed wel that men myght in hire gesse
Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

To Troilus right wonder wel with alle
Gan forto like hire meuynge and hire chere,
Which somdel deignous was, for she let falle
Hire look a lite a-side in swich manere
Ascaunces, "what, may I nat stonden here?"
And after that hir lokynge gan she lighte.
That neuere thoughte hym seen so good a syghte.

And of hire look in him ther gan to quyken
So gret desire and swich affeccioun,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun;
And though he erst hadde poured vp and down,
He was tho glad his hornes in-to shrinke;
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke.

Lo, he that leet hym seluen so konnynge,
And scorned hem that loues peynes dryen,
Was ful vnwar that loue hadde his dwellynge
With-inne the subtle stremes of hire eyen;
That sodeynly hym thoughte he felte deyen,
Right with hire look, the spirit in his herte —
Blissed be loue, that kan thus folk conuerte!

She, this in blak, likynge to Troilus
Ouer al thing, he stood forto biholde;
Ne his desire, ne wherfore he stood thus,
He neithre chere made, ne worde tolde;
But from a-fer, his manere forto holde,
On other thing his look som tyme he caste,
And ofte on hire, while that the seruyse laste.

And after this, nat fullich al awhaped,
Out of the temple al esilich he wente,
Repentynge hym that he hadde euere i-aped
Of loues folk, lest fully the descente
Of scorn fille on hym self; but what he mente,
Lest it were wist on any manere syde,
His woo he gan dissimilen and hide.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streght anon vnto his paleys torneth,
Hight with hire look thorugh-shoten and thorugh-darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he soiourneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth,
And ay of loues seruantz euery while,
Hym self to wrey, at hem he gan to smyle.

And seyde, "lord, so ye lyue al in lest,
Ye loueres, for the konnygeste of yow,
That serueth most ententiflich and best,
Hym tit as often harm ther-of as prow:
Youre hire is quyt a yeyn, ye, god woot how,
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good seruyse;
In feith, youre ordre is ruled in good wise.

"In noun-certeyn ben alle youre obseruaunces,
But it a sely fewe pointes be;
Ne no thing asketh so gret attendaunces
As doth youre lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is nat the worste, as mote I the;
But tolde I yow the worste point, I leue,
Al seyde I soth, ye wolde at me greue.

"But take this: that ye loueres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon, of good entencioun,
fful ofte thi lady wol it mysconstruwe,
And deme it harm in hire oppynyoun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun
Be wroth, than shaltow haue a groyne anon —
Lord, wel is hym that may of yow ben oon!"

But for al this, whan that he say his tyme,
He held his pees, non other boote hym gayned; 355
ffor loue bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel vnneth vn-til his folk he fayned
That other besy nedes hym destrayned;
ffor wo was hym, that what to doon he nyste,
But bad his folk to gon wher that hem liste.

And whan that he in chambre was allone,
He doun vp-on his beddes feet hym sette, 360
And first he gan to sike and eft to grone,
And thought ay on hire so with-ou ten lette,
That as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hire sauy, and temple, and al the wise
Right of hire look, and gan it newe a-vise.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde, 365
In which he saugh al holly hire figure;
And that he wel koude in his herte fynde,
It was to hym a right good auenture
To loue swich oon, and if he dede his cure
To seruen hir, yet myghte he falle in grace,
Or ellis for oon of hire seruantes pace.

Imagenynge that trauaille nor grame
Ne myghte for so goodly oon be lorn 370
As she, ne hym for his desire no shame,
Al were it wist, but in pris and vp born
Of alle louers wel more than biforn —
Thus argumented he in his gynnynge,
fful vnauysed of his woo comynge.

Thus took he purpos loues craft to suwe,
And thoughte he wolde werken pryuely, 380
ffirst to hiden his desire in muwe
ffrom euery wight yborn, al outrely,
But he myghte ought recouered be therby,
Remembryng hym that loue to wide yblowe
Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

And ouere al this yet muchel more he thoughte
What forto speke and what to holden inne, 385
And what to arten hire to loue he soughte,
And on a song anon right to bygynne,
And gan loude on his sorwe forto wynne;
ffor with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde forto loue and nought repente.

And of his song naught only the sentence,
As writ myn auctour called Lollius,
But pleinly, saue ooure tongs difference,
I dar wel seyn in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song, loo, euery word right thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
Loo, next this vers he may it fynden here.

"If no loue is, O god, what fele I so?
And if loue is, what thing and which is he?
If loue be good, from whennes cometh my woo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thynketh me,
Whenne euery torment and aduersite
That cometh of hym may to me sauory thinke,
ffor ay thurst I the more that ich it drynke.

"And if that at myn owen lust I brenne,
ffrom whennes cometh may waillynge and my pleynte?
If harme a-gree me, wherto pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne whi vn-wery that I feynte.
O quike deth, O swete harm so queynte,
How may of the in me swich quantite,
But if that I consente that it be?

"And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, i-wis; thus possed to and fro,
Al sterelees with-inne a boot am I
Amydde the see, bitwixen wyndes two,
That inne contrarie stonden euere mo.
Allas, what is this wondre maladie?
ffor hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye."

And to the god of loue thus seyde he
With pitous vois, "O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
But wheither goddesse or womman, i-wis,
She be, I not, which that ye do me serue;
But as hire man I wol ay lyue and sterue.

"Ye stonden in hir eighen myghtily,
As in a place vnto youre vertue digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my seruice or I
May liken yow, so beth to me benigne;
ffor myn estat roial I here resigne
In-to hire hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere."

In hym ne deyned spare blood roial
The fyre of loue — the wherfro god me blesse —
Ne him forbar in no degree for al
His vertue or his excellent provessae,
But held hym as his thral lowe in destresse,
And brende hym so in soundry wise ay newe,
That sexti tyne a day he loste his hewe.

So mucho, day by day, his owene thought
ffor lust to hire gan quiken and encresse,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
fforthi ful ofte, his hote fire to cesse,
To sen hire goodly lok he gan to presse;
ffor ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.

ffor ay the ner the fire the hotter is —
This, trowe I, knoweth al this compaignye;
But were he fer or ner, I dar sey this:
By nyght or day, for wisdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes eye,
Was ay on hire, that fairer was to sene
Than euere were Eleyne or Polixene

Ek of the day ther passed nou yt an houre
That to hym self a thousand tyme he seyde,
"Good goodly, to whom serue I and laboure
As I best kan, now wolde god, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe, er that I deyde;
My dere herte, allas, myn hele and hewe
And lif is lost, but ye wol on me rewe."

Alle other dredes weren from him fledde,
Both of thassege and his sauacioun;
Nyn him desire noon other fownes bredde
But argumentes to his conclusioun,
That she of him wolde han compashioun,
And he to ben hire man while he may dure —
Lo, here his lif, and from the deth his cure.
The sharpe shoures felle, of armes preue,
That Ector or his other brethren diden,
Ne made hym only therfore ones meue;
And yet was he, where so men wente or riden,
ffounde on the beste, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide ek swich travaile
In armes that to thenke it was merueille.

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the town,
Ne made hym thus in armes forto madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun:
To liken hire the bet for his renoun.
ffro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That the Grekes as the deth him dredde.

And fro this forth tho refte hym loue his slepe,
And made his mete his foo, and ek his sorwe
Gan multiplie, that, who-so tok kepe,
It shewed in his hewe both eue and morwe;
Therfor a title he gan him forto borwe
Of other siknesse, lest men of hym wende
That the hote fire of loue hym brende,

And seyde he hadde a feuere and ferd amys.
But how it was, serteyn, kan I nat seye,
If that his lady vnderstood nat this,
Or feynede hire she nyste, on of the tweye;
But wel I rede that by no manere weye
Ne semed it as that she of hym roughte,
Or of his peyne, or what so euere he thoughte.

But thanne felte this Troilus swich wo,
That he was wel neigh wood — for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight hadde loued so
That neuere of hym she wolde han taken hede,
ffor which hym thoughte he felte his herte blede,
Ne of his wo ne dorste he nat bygynne
To tellen hir, for al this world to wynne.

But whan he hadde a space from his care,
Thus to hym self ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
He seyde, "O fool, now artow in the snare,
That whilom iapedest at loues peyne;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thin owen cheyne;
Thow were ay wont eche louere reprehende
Of thing fro which thow kanst the nat defende.

"What wol now euery louere seyn of the
If this be wist, but euere in thin absence
Laughen in scorne and seyn, "lo, ther goth he
That is the man of so gret sapience,
That held vs loueres leest in reuerence.
Now, thanked be god, he may gon in the daunce
Of hem that loue list fiebli for to auaunce.

"But O thow woful Troilus, god wolde,
Sith thow most louen thorugh thi destine,
That thow be-set were on swich oon that sholde
Know al thi wo, al lakked hir pitee.
But also cold in loue towards the
Thi lady is as frost in wynter moone,
And thow fordon as snow in fire is soone.

"God wold I were aryued in the porte
Of deth to which my sorwe wol me lede.
A, lord, to me it were a gret confort —
Than were I quyt of languisshyng in drede;
ffor be myn hidde sorwe i-blowe on brede,
I shal by-iaped ben a thousand tyme
More than that fol of whos folie men ryme.

But now help, god, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, i-kaught, ye, neuere wight so faste —
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deth, for I, while that my lyf may laste,
More than my self wol loue yow to my laste;
And with som frendly lok gladeth me, swete,
Though neuere more thing ye me byheete."

Thise wordes, and ful many an other to,
He spak, and called euere in his compleynt
Hire name, forto tellen hire his wo,
Til nei y that he in salte teres dreynte:
Al was for nought, she herde nat his pleynte.
And whan that he by-thought on that folie,
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplie.

By-wayling in his chambr e thus allone,
A frend of his that called was Pandare
Com oones in vnwar and herd hym groone,
And say his frend in swich destresse and care:
"Allas," quod he, "who causeth al this fare?
O mercy, god, what vnhap may this meene?
Han now thus soone Grekes maad yow leene?

"Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som deuocioun,
And wailest for thi synne and thin offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God saue hem that biseged han oure town,
That so kan leye oure iolite on presse,
And bringe oure lusty folk to holynesse!"

This wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swich thing he myght hym angry maken,
And with an angre don his wo to falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wist, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Thanne he, ne more desired worthinesse.

"What cas," quod Troilus, "or what auenture
Hath gided the to sen me langwisshinge,
That am refus of euery creature?
But for the loue of god, at my preyinge,
Go hennes awey, for certes my deyinge
Wol the disese and I mot nedes deye;
Therfore go wey, ther is na more to seye.

"But if thow wene I be thus sik for drede,
It is naught so, and therfore scorne nou yt;
Ther is another thing I take of hede
Wel more than aught the Grekes han yet wrought,
Which cause is of my deth for sorowe and thought;
But though that I now telle it the ne leste,
Be thow nau yt wroth, I hide it for the beste."

This Pandare that neigh malt for wo and routhe
fful ofte seyde, "allas, what may this be?
Now frend," quod he, "if euere loue or trouthe
Hath ben, or is, bitwixen the and me,
Ne do thow neuere swich a crueltie
To hiden fro thi frend so gret a care.
Wostow nau yt wel that it am I, Pandare?

"I wol parten with the al thi peyne,  
If it be so I do the no comfort,  
As it is frendes right, soth forto seyne,  
To entreparten wo as glad despore.  
I haue and shal, for trewe or fals report,  
In wronge and right i-loued the al my lyue:  
Hid nat thi wo fro me but telle it blyue."  

Than gan this sorwful Troylus to syke,  
And seide hym thus, "god leue it be my beste  
To telle it the, for sith it may the like,  
Yet wol I telle it, though myn herte breste;  
And wel woot I thow mayst do me no reste;  
But lest thow deme I truste nat to the,  
Now herke, frend, for thus it stant with me.

"Loue, ayeins the which who-so defendeth  
Hym seluen most, hym alderlest auaylleth,  
With disespeyre so sorwfulli me offendeth,  
That streight vn-to the deth myn herte sailleth;  
Therto desire so brennyngly me assailleth,  
That to ben slayn it were a gretter ioie  
To me than kyng of Grece ben and Troye.

"Suffiseth this, my fulle frend Pandare,  
That I haue seyd, for now wostow my wo;  
And for the loue of god, my colde care  
So hide it wel, I tolde it neuere to mo;  
ffor harmes myghten folwen mo than two,  
But be thow in gladnesse,  
And lat me sterue, vnknowe, of my destresse."  

"How hastow thus vnkyndely and longe  
Hid this fro me, thow fol?" quod Pandarus;  
"Peraunter thow myghte after swich oon longe  
That myn auys anoon may helpen vs."  
"This were a wonder thing," quod Troilus;  
"Thow koudest neuere in loue thi seluen wisse;  
How deuel maistow brynge me to blisse?",  

"Ye, Troilus, now herke," quod Pandare;  
"Though I be nyce, it happeth often so  
That oon that excesse doth ful yuele fare
By good counseil kan kepe his frend ther-fro.  
I haue my self ek seyn a blynd man goo  
Ther as he fel that couthe loken wide;  
A fool may ek a wis man ofte gide.

"A wheston is no keruyng instrument,  
But yet it maketh sharppe keruyng tolis;  
And there thow woost that I haue au yt myswent,  
Eschuwe thow that, for swich thing to =e scole is;  
Thus often wise men ben war by foolys.  
If thow do so, thi wit is wel bewared;  
By his contrarie is euery thyng declared.

"ffor how myghte euere sweetnesse han ben knowe  
To him that neuere tasted bitternesse?  
Ne no man may ben inly glad, I trowe,  
That neuere was in sorwe or som destresse;  
Eke whit by blak, by shame ek worthinesse,  
Ech set by other, more for other semeth,  
As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth.

"Sith thus of two contraries is o lore,  
I, that haue in loue so ofte assayed  
Greuances, oughte konne, and wel the more,  
Counseillen the of that thow art amayed;  
And ek the ne aughte nat ben yuel appayed,  
Though I desyre with the forto bere  
Thyn heuy charge; it shal the lasse dere.

"I woot wel that it fareth thus by me  
As to thi brother, Paris, an herdesse,  
Which that i-cleped was Oenone,  
Wrote in a compleynte of hir heuynesse;  
Yee say the lettre that she wrote, I gesse?"  
"Nay, neuere yet, ywys," quod Troilus.  
"Now," quod Pandare, "herkne, it was thus:

"’Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,’  
Quod she, ’and couthe in euery wightes care  
Remedye and rede by herbes he knew fyne,  
Yet to hym self his konnyng was ful bare;  
ffor loue hadde hym so bounden in a snare,  
Al for the doughter of the kyng Amete,  
That al his craft ne koude his sorwes bete.’
"Right so fare I, vnhappyly for me; 
I loue one best, and that me smerteth sore; 
And yet, peraunter, kan I reden the, 
And nat my self — repreue me na more. 
I haue no cause, I woot wel, forto sore 
As doth an hauk that listeth forto pleye; 
But to thin help yet somwhat kan I seye.

"And of o thing right siker maistow be, 
That certein, forto dyen in the peyne, 
That I shal neuere mo discoueren the; 
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne 
The fro thi loue, theigh that it were Eleyne 
That is thi brother wif, if ich it wiste; 
Be what she be, and loue hire as the liste.

"Therfore, as frend fullich in me assure, 
And telle me plat now what is thencheson 
And final cause of wo that ye endure; 
ffor douteth no thyng, myn entencioun 
Nis nat to yow of reprehencioun 
To speke as now, for no wight may byreue 
A man to loue, tyl that hym list to leue.

"And witteth wel that bothe two ben vices: 
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leue. 
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vice is: 
ffor for to trusten som wight is a preue 
Of trouth, and forthi wolde I fayn remeue 
Thi wronge conseyte and do the som wyght triste 
Thi wo to telle; and tel me if the liste.

"The wise seith, "wo hym that is allone, 
ffor, and he falle, he hath non helpe to ryse’; 
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thi mone; 
ffor this nys naught, certein, the nexte wyse 
To wynnen loue, as techen vs the wyse, 
To walwe and wepe as Nyobe the queene, 
Whos teres yet in marble ben yseene.

"Lat be thy wepyng and thi drerynesse, 
And lat vs lissen wo with oother speche; 
Delyte nat in wo thi wo to seche, 
As don thise foles that hire sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan thei han mysauenture,
And listen naught to seche hem other cure.

"Men seyn, 'to wrecche is consolacioun
To haue another felawe in hys peyne.'
That owghte wel ben oure opynyoun,
ffor bothe thow and I of loue we pleyne:
So ful of sorwe am I, soth forto seyne,
That certeinly namore harde grace
May sitte on me, for why ther is no space.

"If god wol, thow art nat agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thi lady the bygyle;
Thow woost thy self whom that I loue, parde,
As I best kan, gon sithen longe while;
And sith thow woost I do it for no wyle,
And seyst I am he that thou trustest mooste,
Telle me somwhat, syn al my wo thou wooste."

Yet Troilus for al this no worde seyde,
But longe he ley as stylle as he ded were;
And after this with sikynge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus vois he lente his ere,
And vp his eighen caste he, that in feere
Was Pandarus lest that in frenesie
He sholde falle, or elles soone dye;

And cryde "awake," ful wonderlich and sharpe,
"What! slombrestow as in a litargie?
Or artow lik an asse to the harpe,
That hereth sown whan men the strynges plye,
But in his mynde of that no melodie
May sinken hym to gladen, for that he
So dul ys of his bestialite?"

And with that, Pandare of his wordes stente;
And Troilus yet hym no thyng answerde,
ffor why to tellen nas nat his entente
To neuere no man, for whom that he so ferde.
ffor it is seyd, "men maketh ofte a yerde
With which the maker is hym self ybeten
In sondry manere," as thise wyse treten;

And namelich in his counseil tellynge
That toucheth loue that oughte ben secrete;
ffor of him self it wol ynough out sprynge, 745
But if that it the bet gouerned be;
Ek som tyme it is a craft to seme fle
ffro thyngh whych in effect men hunte faste —
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

But natheles whan he hadde herd hym crye 750
"Awake," he gan to syken wonder soore,
And seyde, "frende, though that I style lye,
I am nat deef; now pees, and crye namore,
ffor I haue herd thi wordes and thi lore;
But suffre me my meschief to bywaille,
ffor thy prouerbes may me naught auaille.

Nor other cure kanstow non for me; 755
Ek I nyl nat ben cured, I wol deye.
What knowe I of the queene Nyobe?
Lat be thyne oldeensaumles, I the preye."
"No," quod tho Pandarus, "therfore I seye,
Swych is delit of foles to by-wepe
Hire wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

"Now knowe I that ther reson in the failleth; 760
But telle me if I wiste what she were
ffor whom that the al this misaunter ailleth:
Dorst thou that I tolde in hire ere
Thi wo, sith thow darst naught thi self for feere,
And hire bysoughte on the to han som routhe?"
"Why nay," quod he, "by god and by my trouthe."

"What, nat as bisyly," quod Pandarus, 765
"As though myn owene lyf lay on thi nede?"
"No, certes, brother," quod this Troilus.
"And whi?" — "for that thow scholdest neuere spede."
"Wostow that wel?" — " ye, that is out of drede," 770
Quod Troilus, "for al that euere ye konne,
She nyl to noon swich wrecche as I ben wonne."

Quod Pandarus, "allas, what may thi be,
That thou dispeired art thus causeles?
What, lyueth nat thi lady, bendiste? 780
How wostow so that thou art graceles?
Swich yuel is nat alwey booteles.
Why, put nat impossible thus thi cure,
Syn thyng to come is oft in auenture.
"I graunte wel that thow endurest wo,
As sharp as doth he Ticius in helle,
Whos stomak foughles tiren euere moo
That hightyn volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may nat endure that thow dwelle
In so vnskillful an oppynyoun
That of thi wo is no curacioun.

"But oones nyltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folissh wilfulnesse,
ffor wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thywn owen help don bysynesse
As muche as speke a reson moore or lesse?
But list as he that lest of no thyng recche —
What womman koude louen swich a wrecche?

"What may she demen oother of thy deeth,
If thow thus deye and she not why it is,
But that for feere is yolden vp thy breth
ffor Grekes han biseged vs, i-wys?
Lord, which a thonk than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the town attones,
"The wrecche is ded, the deuel haue his bones.'

"Thow mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele —
But loue a womman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte it that thow shalt nat fele:
Unknow, vnkist, and lost, that is vnsought.
What! many a man hath loue ful deere ybought
Twenty wynter that his lady wiste,
That neuere yet his lady mouth he kiste.

"What sholde he ther-fore fallen in dispayre,
Or be recreant for his owne tene,
Or slen hym self, al be his lady faire?
Nay, nay, but euere in oon be fresshe and grene
To serue and loue his deere hertes queene,
And thynk it is a guerdon hire to serue
A thousand fold moore than he kan deserue."

And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte a-non what folie he was inne,
And how that soth hym seyde Pandarus,
That forto slen hym self myght he nat wynne,
But bothe don vnmanhod and a synne,
And of his deth his lady naught to wite;
ffor of his wo, god woot, she knew ful lite.

And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde, "allas, what is me best to do?"
To whom Pandare answered, "if the like,
The beste is that thow telle me al thi wo;
And haue my trouthe, but thaw it fynde so
I be thy boote er that it be ful longe,
To pieces do me drawe and sithen honge."

"Ye, so thow seyst," quod Troilus tho, "allas,
But, god woot, it is naught the rather so.
fful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
ffor wel fynde I that fortune is my fo;
Ne al the men that riden konne or go
May of hire cruel whiel the harm withstonde;
ffor as hire list she pleyeth with free and bonde."

Quod Pandarus, "than blamestow fortune
ffor thow art wroth, ye, now at erst I see;
Woost thow nat wel that fortune is comune
To eueri manere wight in som degree?
And yet thow hast this comfort, lo, perde,
That as hire ioies moten ouergone,
So mote hire sorwes passen euerychone.

"ffor if hire whiel stynte any thyng to torne,
Than cessed she fortune anon to be.
Now sith hire whiel by no way may soiourne,
What woostow if hire mutabilite
Right as thy seluen list wol don by the,
Or that she be naught fer fro thyth helpynge?
Paraunter thow hast cause forto synge.

"And therfore wostow what I the biseche?
Lat be thy wo and tornyng to the grounde;
ffor who-so list haue helpyng of his leche,
To hym byhoueth first vnwre his wownde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bownde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe,
By my wil she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

"Look vp, I seye, and telle me what she is
Anon, that I may gon aboute thy nede.
Knowe ich hire aught? for my loue, telle me this;
Thanne wolde I hopen rather for to spede."
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
ffor he was hit and wax al reed for shame.
"A ha!" quod Pandare, "here bygynneth game."

And with that word he gan hym for to shake,
And seyde, "thef, thow shalt hyre name telle."
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake,
As though men sholde han led hym in to helle,
And seyde, "allas, of al my wo the welle,
Thanne is my swete fo called Criseyde."
And wel neigh with the word for feere he deide.

And whann that Pandare herde hire name neuene,
Lord, he was glad, and seyde, "frende so deere,
Now fare aright, for Ioues name in heuene,
Loue hath byset the wel; be of good cheere,
ffor of good name and wisdom and manere
She hath ynough, and ek of gentilesse —
If she be fayre, thow woost thy self, I gesse.

"Ny neuere saugh a more bountevous
Of hire estat, na gladder, ne of speche
A frendlyer, na more gracious
ffor to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to don; and al this bet to eche,
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,
A kynges herte semeth by hyrs a wrecche.

["And forthi loke of good comfort thow be;
ffor certeinly the ferste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeyne,
A man to haue pees with hym self, y-wis;
So oghtist thow, for nought but good it is
To loue wel, and in a worthy place;
The oughte not to clepe it hap but grace.

"And also thynk, and ther-with glade the,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So foloweth it that there is som pitee
Amonges alle thise other in general;
And forthi se that thow in special
Requere naught that is a yeyns hyre name,
ffor vertue streccheth naught hym self to shame.

"But wel is me that euere that I was borne,
That thow biset art in so good a place;
ffor by my trouthe, in loue I dorste haue sworne
The sholde neuere han tid thus fayre a grace;
And wostow why? for thow were wont to chace
At loue in scorn, and for despit hym calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle.'

"How often hastow maad thi nyce iapes,
And seyd that loues seruantz euerichone
Of nycete ben verray goddes apes;
And some wolde mucche hire mete allone,
Liggyng abedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thow seydest, hadde a blaunche feuere,
And preydest god he sholde neuere keuere.

"And som of hem took on hem for the colde
More than ynough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And som han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they waken whan thei slepen softe;
And thus they wolde han brought hem self a-lofe,
And natheles were vnder at the laste —
Thus seydestow, and iapedest ful faste.

"Yet seydestow that for the moore parte,
Thise loueres wolden speke in general,
And thoughten that it was a siker arte,
ffor faylyng for tassaien ouere al.
Now may I iape of the, if that I shal;
But natheles, though that I sholde deye,
That thow art non of tho, I dorste saye.

"Now bet thi brest and sey to god of loue
Thy grace, lord, for now I me repente
If I mysspak, for now my self I loue’ —
Thus sey with al thyng herte in good entente."
Quod Troilus, “a, lord, I me consente,
And preye to the my iapes thow for yiue,
And I shal neuere more whyle I liue.’

"Thow seist wel,” quod Pandare, "and now I hope
That thow the goddes wrathe hast al apesed;
And sithen thow hast wopen many a drope,
And seyd swych thyng wher-with thi god is plesed,  
Now wolde neuere god but thow were esed;  
And thynk wel, she of whom rist al thi wo  
Here-after may thy comfort be also.  

"ffor thilke grouwnde that bereth the wedes wikke  
Bereth ek thise holsom herbes as ful ofte:  
Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,  
The rose waxeth swoote and smothe and softe;  
And next the valeye is the hill o-lofte;  
And next the derke nyght the glade morwe;  
And also ioie is next theelynfyn of sorwe.  

"Now loke that a-tempre be thi bridel,  
And for the beste ay suffre to the tyde,  
Or elles al oure laboure is on ydel;  
He hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde.  
Be diligent and trewe, and ay wel hide;  
Be lusty, fre, perseuere in thy seruyse —  
And al is wel, if thow werke in this wyse.  

"But he that parted is in eueri place  
Is nowher hol, as writen clerkes wyse.  
What wonder is though swich oon haue no grace?  
Ek wostow how it fareth of som seruise,  
As plaunte a tree or herbe in sondry wyse  
And on the morwe pulle it vp as blyue,  
No wonder is though it may neuere thryue.  

"And sith that god of loue hath the bistowed  
In place digne vnto thi worthinesse,  
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;  
And of thi self, for any heuynesse,  
Hope alwey wel; for but if drerinesse,  
Or ouere-haste, oure bothe labour shende,  
I hope of this to maken a good ende.  

"And wostow why I am the lasse afered  
Of this matere with my Nece trete?  
ffor this haue I herd seyd of wyse lered,  'Was neuere man or womman yet bigete  
That was vnapt to suffren loues hete,  
Celestial, or elles loue of kynde.’  
fforthysom grace I hope in hire to fynde.
"And for to speke of hire in specyal,
Hire beaute to bithynken and hire youthe,
It sit hire naught to ben celestial
As yet, though that hire liste bothe and kowthe;
But trewely, it sate hire wel right nowthe
A worthi knyght to louen and cherice —
And but she do, I holde it for a vice.

"Wher-fore I am and wol ben ay redy
To payne me to do yow this seruyse;
ffor bothe yow to plese thus hope I
Her-afterward; for ye ben bothe wyse,
And konne it counseil kepe in swych a wyse
That no man shal the wiser of it be —
And so we may ben gladed alle thre.

"And, by my trouthe, I haue right now of the
A good conceyte in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thow se:
I thanke, sith that loue of his goodnesse
Hath the convierted out of wikkednesse,
That thow shalt ben the beste post, I leue,
Of al his lay, and moost his foos to greue.

"Ensample why, se now thise wise clerkes,
That erren aldermost a yeyn a lawe,
And ben convierted from hire wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of god that list hem to hym drawe,
Thanne arn they folk that han moost god in awe,
And strengest feythed ben, I vndirstonde,
And konne an errowe alderbest withstonde."

Whan Troilus hadde herd Pandare assented
To ben his help in louyng of Cryseyde,
Weex of his wo, as who seith, vntormented,
But hotter weex his loue and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, although his herte pleyde:
"Now blisful Venus help, er that I sterue,
Of the, Pandare, I mowe som thank deserue.

"But deere frende, how shal my wo be lesse
Til this be doon? and, good, ek telle me this:
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse,
Lest she be wroth — this drede I moost, ywys —
Or nyl nat here or trowen how it is?
Al this drede I, and ek for the manere
Of the, hire Em, she nyl no swich thyng here."

Quod Pandarus, "thow hast a ful gret care
Lest that the Cherl may falle out of the moone.
Whi, lord, I hate of the thi nyce fare.
Whi, entremete of that thou hast to doone!
ffor goddes loue, I bidde the a boone:
So lat Malone, and it shal be thi beste."
"Whi, frende," quod he, "now do right as the leste.

"But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so gret folie,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
ffor dredeles me were leuere dye
Than she of me aught elles vnderstode
But that that myghte sownen in-to goode."

Tho lough this Pandare, and anon answere,
"And I thi borough? fy, no wight doth but so;
I roughte naught though that she stood and herde
How that thou seist; but fare wel, I wol go.
A-dieu, be glad, god spede vs bothe two!
Yef me this labour and this bisynesse,
And of my spede be thy al that swetnesse."

Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde, "now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, parde, god shal helpe vs atte laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shal smerte;
And yet mathenketh that this auant masterte.

"Now, Pandare, I kan namore seye,
But thow wis, thow woost, thow maist, thow art al.
Mi lif, my deth, hol in thyn honde I leye;
Help now!" Quod he, "yis, by my trowthe, I shal."
"God yelde the, frend, and this in special,"
Quod Troilus, "that thow me recomande
To hire that to the deth me may comande."

This Pandarus, tho desirous to serue
His fulle frende, than seyde in this manere:
"ffarwell, and thenk I wol thi thank deserue,
Haue here my trowthe, and that thow shalt wel here,"
And went his wey thenkyng on this matere,
And how he best myghte hire biseche of grace,
And fynde a tyme therto and a place.

ffor eueri wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
And sende his hertes line out fro with-inne
Aldirfirst his purpos forto wynne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wisely or he wroughte.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
But vp anon vpon his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde the leoun;
Wo was that Grek that with hym mette a-day!
And in the town his manere tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat hym so in grace,
That ecch hym loued that loked on his face.

ffor he bicom the frendlieste wight,
The gentilest, and ek the mooste fre,
The thriftiest, and oon the beste knyght,
That in his tyme was or myghte be:
Dede were his iapes and his cruelte,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ecch of tho gan for a vertue chaunge.

Now lat vs stynte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth like a man that hurt is soore,
And is som deel of akyngge of his wownde
Y-lissed wel, but heeled no deel moore,
And, as an esy pacyent, the loore
Abit of hym that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his auenture.

Explicit liber primus.
Owt of thise blake wawes forto saylle,
O wynde, O wynde, the weder gynneth clere,
ffor in this see the boot hath swych trauaylle
Of my konnyng that vnneth I it steere:
This see clepe I the tempestous materere
Of disespeir that Troilus was inne —
But now of hope the kalendes bygynne.

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thow be my speed fro this forth, and my Muse,
To ryme wel this book til I haue do;
Me nedeth here noon othere art to vse.
ffor-whi to euery louere I me excuse
That of no sentement I this endite,
But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.

Wherfore I nyl haue neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
Disblameth me if any word be lame,
ffor as myn auctour seyde, so sey I;
Ek though I speeke of loue vnfelyngly,
No wondre is, for it no thyng of newe is:
A blynd man kan nat iuggen wel in hewis.

Ye knowe ek that in fourme of speche is chaunge
With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden pris now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thenketh hem, and yet thei spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in loue as men now do,
Ek forto wynnen loue in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry ben vsages.

And forthi if it happe in any wyse,
That here be any louere in this place
That herkneth, as the storie wol deuise,
How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, "so nold I nat loue purchace,"
Or wondreth on his speche or his doynge,
I noot, but it is me no wonderynge.
ffor every wight which that to Rome wente
Halt nat o path or alwey o manere;
Ek in som lond were al the game shente
If that they ferde in loue as men don here,
As thus, in opyn doyng or in chere,
In visitying in forme or seyde hire sawes;
ffor-thi men seyn, ecch contree hath hise lawes.

Ek scarsly ben ther in this place thre
That haue in loue seid like and don in al,
ffor to thi purpos this may liken the,
And the right nought, yet al is seid, or schal;
Ek som men graue in tree, som in ston wal,
As it bitit; but syn I haue bigonne,
Myn auctour shal I folwen if I konne.

Explicit prohemium secundi libri

Incipit liber secundus

In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
That fresshe flores blew and white and rede
Ben quike agayn, that wynter dede made,
And ful of bawme is fletyng euery mede;
Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede
Right in the white Bole, it so bitidde,
As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thrydde,

That Pandarus, for al his wise speche,
ffelt ek his parte of loues shotes keene,
That koude he neuere so wel of louyng preche,
It made his hewe a-day ful ofte greene;
So shop it that hym fil that day a teene
In loue, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
And made er it was day ful many a wente.

The swalowe Proigne with a sorowful lay
Whan morwen com gan make hire waymentyng
Whi she forshapen was, and euere lay
Pandare a-bedde half in a slomberyng,
Til she so neigh hym made hire cheteryng,
How Tereus gan forth hire suster take,
That with the noyse of hire he gan awake,
And gan to calle, and dresse hym vp to ryse,
Remembryng hym his erand was to doone
ffrom Troilus, and ek his grete emprise,
And caste and knewe in good plit was the moone
To doon viage, and took his way ful soone
Unto his Neces palays ther biside;
Now Ianus, god of entree, thow hym gyde!

Whan he was come vnto his Neces place,
"Wher is my lady?" to hire folk quod he;
And they hym tolde and he forth in gan pace
And fond two othere ladys sete, and she,
With-inne a paued parlour, and they thre
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the siege of Thebes while hem lestes.

Quod Pandarus, "ma dame, god yow see,
With al youre book and al the compaignie."
"Ey, vnclle myn, welcome i-wis," quod she;
And vp she roos and by the hond in hye
She took hym faste and seyde, "this nyght thrie —
To goode mot it turne — of yow I mette."
And with that word she doun on benche hym sette.

"Ye, Nece, yee shal faren wel the bet,
If god wol, al this yeere," quod Pandarus;
"But I am sorry that I haue yow let
To herken of youre book ye preysen thus.
ffor goddes loue, what seith it? telle it vs;
Is it of loue? O, som good ye me leere!,,
"Uncle," quod she, " youre maistresse is nat here."

With that thei gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,
"This romaunce is of Thebes that we rede;
And we han herd how that kyng Layus deyde,
Thorugh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
And here we stynten at thise lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book kan telle,
Amphiorax, fil thorugh the grounde to helle."

Quod Pandarus, "al this knowe I my selue,
And al thassege of Thebes and the care,
ffor her-of ben ther maked bookes twelue;
But lat be this and telle me how ye fare;
Do wey youre barbe and shew youre face bare;
Do wey youre book, rys vp, and lat vs daunce,
And lat vs don to May som obseruaunce."

"I, god forbede!" quod she, "be ye madde?
Is that a widewes lif, so god yow saue?
By god, ye maken me ryght soore adradde,
Ye ben so wylde, it semeth as ye raue.
It satte me wel bet ay in a caue
To bidde and rede on holy seyntes lyues;
Lat maydens gon to daunce and yonge wyues."

"As euere thriue I," quod this Pandarus,
"Yet koude I telle a thyng to doon yow pleye."
"Now Uncle deere," quod she, "telle it vs
ffor goddes loue: is than thassege aweye?
I am of Grekes so fered that I deye."
"Nay, nay," quod he, "as euere mote I thryue,
"It is a thing wel bet than swyche fyue."

"Ye, holy god," quod she, "what thyng is that?
What, bet than swyche fyue? I! nay, ywys.
ffor al this world ne kan I reden what
It sholde ben; som iape I trowe is this;
And but youre seluen telle vs what it is,
My wit is for tarede it al to leene;
As help me god, I not nat what ye meene."

"And I youre borugh, ne neuere shal, for me,
This thyng be told to yow, as mote I thryue."
"And whi so, vnce myn, whi so?" quod she.
"By god," quod he, "that wol I telle as blyue;
ffor proudder womman is ther noon on lyue,
And ye it wist, in al the town of Troye;
I iape nought, as euere haue I ioye."

Tho gan she wondren moore than biforne
A thousand fold, and down hire eyghen caste;
ffor neuere sith the tyme that she was borne
To knowe thyng desired she so faste;
And with a syk, she seyde hym atte laste,
"Now, Uncle myn, I nyl yow nought displese,
Nor axen more that may do yow disese.'

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And frendly tales and with merie chiere,
Of this and that they pleide and gonnen wade
In many an vnkouth, gladde, and depe matere,
As frendes doon whan thei ben mette y-fere,
Tyl she gan axen hym how Ector ferde,
That was the townes wal and Grekes yerde.

"fful wel, I thonk it god," quod Pandarus,
"Saue in his arme he hath a litel wownde,
And ek his fresshe brother, Troilus,
The wise, worthi Ector the secounde,
In whom that alle vertue list habounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentilesse,
Wisdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse."

"In good feith, Em," quod she, "that liketh me
Thei faren wel, god saue hem bothe two;
ffor trewelich I holde it gret deynte,
A kynes sone in armes wle to do,
And ben of good condiciouns therto;
ffor grete power and moral vertue here
Is selde yseyn in o persone y-feere."

"In good faith, that is soth," quod Pandarus,
"But, by my trouthe, the kyng hath sones tweye —
That is to mene Ector and Troilus —
That certeynly, though that I sholde deye,
Thei ben as voide of vices, dar I seye,
As any men that lyuen vndre the sonne;
Hire myght is wyde i-knowe, and what they konne.

"Of Ector nedeth it namore forto telle:
In al this world ther nys a bettre knyght
Than he that is of worthynesse welle,
And he wel moore vertue hath than myght;
This knoweth many a wise and worthi wight.
The same pris of Troilus I seye;
God help me so, I knowe nat swiche tweye."

"By god," quod she, "of Ector that is sooth;
"Of Troilus the same thyng trowe I;
ffor dredeles, men tellen that he doth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth hym here at hom so gentily
To eueri wight, that alle pris hath he
Of hem that me were leuest preyssed be."
"Ye sey right sooth, y-wys," quod Pandarus; 190
"ffor yesterday who-so hadde with hym ben,
He myghte han wondred vp-on Troilus;
ffor neuere yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh as Grekes fro hym gonne fleen;
And thorugh the feld in eueri wightes eere
Ther nas no cry but 'Troilus is there!'

"Now here, now ther, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood and Troilus.
Now hym he hurte and hym al down he caste;
Ay wher he wente it was arayed thus:
He was hire deth, and sheld and lif for vs,
That, as that day, ther dorste non withstonde,
Whil that he held his blody swerd in honde.

"Therto he is the frendlieste man
Of gret estat that euere I saugh my lyue,
And wher hym lest, best felawshipe kan
To swich as hym thynketh able forto thryue."
And with that word tho Pandarus as blyue
He took his leue and seyde, "I wol gon henne." 200
"Nay, blame haue I, myn Uncle," quod she thenne.
"What aileth yow to be thus wery soone,
And namelich of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down; by god, I haue to doone
With yow to speke of wisdom er ye go."
And eueri wight that was aboute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer a-wey to stonde,
Whil they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

Whan that hire tale al brought was to an ende,
Of hire estat and of hire gouernaunce,
Quod Pandarus, "now is it tyme I wende;
But yet I say, ariseth, lat vs daunce,
And cast youre widewes habit to mischaunce.
What list yow thus youre self to disfigure,
Sith yow [MS thow] is tid thus faire an auenture?"

"A, wel bithought, for loue of god," quod she, 225
"Shal I nat witen what ye meene of this?"
"No, this thing axeth leyser," tho quod he,
"And eke me wolde muche greue, i-wis,
If I it tolde and ye it toke amys.
Yet were it bet my tonge forto stille
Than seye a soth that were a yeys youre wille.

"ffor, Nece, by the goddesse Mynerue,
And Jupiter, that maketh the thondre rynge,
And by the blisful Venus that I serue,
Ye ben the womman in this world lyuyen —
With-outen paramours to my wyttynge —
That I best loue and lothest am to greue,
And that ye weten wel youre self, I leue."

"I-wis, myn vnclere," quod she, "grant mercy;
Youre frendshipe haue I founden euere yit;
I am to no man holden, trewely,
So muche as yow, and haue so litel quy;
And with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
As in my gylt I shall yow neuere offende,
And if I haue er this, I wol amende."

"But for the loue of god, I yow biseche,
As ye ben he that I moost loue and triste,
Lat be to me youre fremde manere speche,
And sey to me, youre Nece, what yow liste."
And with that word hire uncle anoon hire kiste
And seyde, "gladly, leue Nece dere —
Tak it for good that I shal sey yow here."

With that she gan hire eighen down to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lite,
And seyde, "Nece, alwey, lo, to the laste,
How so it be that som men hem delite
With subtyl art hire tales forto endite,
Yet for al that, in hire entencioun,
Hire tale is al for som conclusioun.

"And sithen thende is euery tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihouely,
What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
To yow that ben my frend so feythfully?"
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Byholden hire and loken on hire face
And seyde, "on swich a mirour goode grace!"

Than thought he thus, "if I my tale endite
Aught harde, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no sauour haue ther-in but lite,
And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bigyle;
ffor tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Ther as thei kan nought pleynly vnderstonde;
fforthi hire wit to seruen wol I fonde."

And loked on hire in a bysi wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hire so,
And seyde, "lord, so faste ye mauise!
Sey ye me neuere er now? what sey ye? no?"
"Yis, yys," quod he, "and bet wol er I go;
But be my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat, for now men shal it se.

"fforto euery wight som goodly auenture
Som tyme is shape, if he it kan receyuen,
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it commeth, but wilfully it weyuen,
Lo, neyther cas ne fortune hym deceyuen,
But ryght his verray slouthe and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is forto blame, I gesse.

"Good auenture, O beele Nece, haue ye
fful lightly founden, and ye konne it take;
And for the loue of god and ek of me,
Cache it anon, lest auenture slake.
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me youre hond, for in this world is noon,
If that yow list, a wight so wel bygon.

"And sith I speke of good entencioun,
As I to yow haue told wel here byforn,
And loue as wel youre honour and renoun
As creature in al this world yborn,
By alle the othes that I haue yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
Ne shal I neuere sen yow eft with eye.

"Beth naught agast, ne quaketh naught; wherto?
Ne chaungeth naught for feere so youre hewe;
ffor hardly, the werst of this is do,
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yet trist alwey ye shal me fynde trewe;
And were it thyng that me thoughte vnsittynge,
To yow wolde I no swiche tales brynge."

"Now, my good Em, for goddes loue I preye,"
Quod she, "come of and telle me what it is;
ffor both I am agast what ye wol seye,
And ek me longeth it to wite, ywis;
ffor whethir it be wel or be amys,
Say on, lat me nat in this feere dwelle.’,
"So wol I doon; now herkeneth, I shall telle."

"Now, Nece myn, the kynges deere sone, 310
The gooode, wise, worthi, fresshe and free,
Which alwey for to don wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loueth the,
That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al — what sholde I moore sey?
Do what yow lest to make hym lyue or dey.

"But if ye late hym deyen, I wol sterue — 320
Haue here my trouthe, Nece, I nyl nat lyen —
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerue."
With that the teris breste out of his eyen,
And seyde, "if that ye don vs bothe dyen,
Thus gilteles, than haue ye fisshed fayre;
What mende ye, though that we booth appaire?

"Allas, he which that is my lord so deere, 330
That trewe man, that noble, gentil knyght,
That naught desireth but youre frendly cheere,
I se hym deyen ther he goth vp-ryght,
And hasteth hym with al his fulle myght
fforto ben slayn, if his fortune assente;
Allas, that god yow swich a beaute sente!

"If it be so that ye so cruel be, 340
That of his deth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthi as ye se,
Namoore than of a iaper or a wrecche —
If ye be swich youre beaute may nat streche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede:
Auysement is good byfore the nede.

"Wo worth the faire gemme vertuelees!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no boote!
Wo worth that beaute that is routheles!
Wo worth that wight that tret ech vndir foote!
And ye that ben of beaute crop and roote,
If therwith-al in yow ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye lyuen, by my trouthe.

"And also think wel that this is no gaude;
ffor me were leuere thow and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde ben his baude,
As heigh as men myghte on vs alle y-see;
I am thyn Em, the shame were to me
As wel as the if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

"Now vnderstond, for I yow nought requere
To bynde yow to hym thorugh no byheste,
But only that ye make hym bettre chiere
Than ye han doon er this and moore feste,
So that his lif be saued atte leeste;
This al and som, and pleynly, oure entente;
God help me so, I neuere other mente.

"Lo this requeste is naught but skylle, ywys,
Ne doute of resoun, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dreden this:
Men wolde wondren sen hym com or goon;
There-a yeins answere I thus anoon,
That euery wight, but he be fool of kynde,
Wol deme it loue of frendship in his mynde.

"What, who wol demen, though he se a man
To temple go, that he thymages eteth?
Thenk ek how wel and wisely that he kan
Gouerne hym self that he nothyng for yeteth,
That where he cometh he pris and thank hym geteth;
And ek therto he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the town byhelde?

"Swych loue of frendes regneth al this town,
And wry yow in that mantel euere moo;
And, god so wys be my sauacioun,
As I haue seyd, youre beste is to do soo;
But alwey, goode Nece, to stynte his woo,
So lat youre daunger sucred ben a lite,
That of his deth ye be naught forto wite."
Criseyde, which that herde hym in this wise, 390
Thought, "I shal felen what he meneth, y-wis."
"Now, Em," quod she, "what wolde ye deuise?
What is youre rede I sholde don of this?"
"That is wel seyd," quod he, "certein, best is
That ye hym loue a yeyn for his louynge,
As loue for loue is skilful guerdonynge.

"Thenk ek how elde wasteth euery houre
In eche of yow a partie of beautee;
And therfore, er that age the deouure,
Go loue, for old, ther wol no wight of the;
Lat this prouverbe a loore vn-to yow be:
"To late ywar, quod beaute, whan it paste';,
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

"The kynges fool is wont to crien loude,
Whan that hym thinketh a womman berth hire hye,
"So longe mote ye lyue, and alle proude,
Tyl crowes feet be growe vnder youre eye,
And sende yow than a myrour in-to prye,
In which that ye may se youre face a morwe.,
Nece, I bidde wisshe yow namore sorwe."

With this he stynte and caste a-down the hede,
And she began to breste a-wepe a-noon,
And seyde, "allas, for wo why nere I deede?
ffor of this world the feyth is al agoon.
Allas, what sholden straunge to me doon,
Whan he that for my beste frende I wende
Ret me to loue, and sholde it me defende?

"Allas, I wolde han trusted, douteles,
That if that I thorugh my disauenture
Hadde loued outhyr hym or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreue.
This false worlde, allas, who may it leue?

"What! is this al the ioye and al the feste?
Is this youre reed? is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of youre byheeste?
Is al this paynted proces seyd, allas,
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas,
Thow in this dredful cas for me purueye, 
ffor so astoned am I that I deye."

Wyth that she gan ful sorwfully to syke. 
"A! may it be no bet?" quod Pandarus, 
"By god, I shal namore come here this wyke, 
And god toforn, that am mystrusted thus. 
I se ful wel that ye sette lite of vs, 
Or of oure deth; allas, I woful wrecche! 
Might he yet lyue, of me is nought to recche.

"O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte, 
O furies thre of helle, on yow I crye! 
So lat me neuere out of this hous departe, 
If that I mente harm or vilenye. 
But sith I se my lord mot nedes dye, 
And I with hym, here I me shryue and seye 
That wikkedly ye don vs bothe deye.

"But sith it liketh yow that I be dede, 
By Neptunus, that god is of the see, 
ffro this forth shal I neuere eten brede, 
Til I myn owen herte blood may see; 
ffor certeyn I wol deye as soone as he." 
And vp he sterte and on his wey he raughte, 
Tyl she agayn hym by the lappe kaughte.

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for feere, 
So as she was the ferfulleste wight 
That myghte be, and herde ek with hire ere, 
And saugh the sorwful ernest of the knyght, 
And in his preier ek saugh noon vnryght, 
And for the harm that myghte ek fallen moore, 
She gan to rewe and dredde hire wonder soore.

And thoughte thus: "vnhappes fallen thikke 
Alday for loue, and in swych manere cas, 
As men ben cruel in hem self and wikke; 
And if this man sle here hym self, allas, 
In my presence, it wol be no solas. 
What men wolde of it deme I kan nat seye; 
It nedeth me ful sleighly forto pleie.";

And with a sorwful sik she sayde thrie, 
"A, lord, what me is tid a sory chaunce!
ffor myn estat lith now in iupartie,
And ek myn Emes lif is in balaunce;
But natheles, with goddes gournaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And ek his lif" — and stynte forto wepe.

"Of harmes two the lesse is forto chese;
Yet haue I leuere maken hym good chere
In honour than myn Emes lyf to lese. —
Ye seyn ye no-thyng elles me requere?"
"No, wis," quod he, "myn owen Nece dere."
"Now wel," quod she, "and I wol doon my peyne;
I shal myn herte a yeins my lust constreyne.

"But that I nyl nat holden hym in honde,
Ne loue a man ne kan I naught ne may
A yeins my wyl, but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plese hym fro day to day;
Therto nolde I nat ones han seyd nay,
But that I drede, as in my fantasye;
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladie.

"And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certeynly, for no saluacioun
Of yow, though that ye steruen bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I neuere of hym han other routhe."
I graunte wel, quod Pandare, "by my trowthe."

"But may I truste wel therto," quod he,
"That of this thyg that ye han hight me here,
Ye wolde it holden trewely vn-to me?"
"Ye, doutelees," quod she, "myn vncl deere."
"Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,"
Quod he, "to pleyn or ofter yow to preche?"
"Why no, perde; what nedeth moore speche?"

Tho fillen they in other tales glade,
Tyl at the laste, "O good Em," quod she tho,
"ffor his loue which that vs bothe made,
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo?
Woot noon of it but ye?" He seyde, "no."
"Kan he wel speke of loue," quod she, "I preye?"
"Tel me, for I bet me shal purueye."
Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
And seyde, "by my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, naught gon ful longe while,
In-with the paleis gardyn by a welle,
Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right forto spoken of an ordinaunce,
How we the Grekes myghten disauaunce.

"Soon after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with oure darters to and fro,
Tyl at the laste he seyde he wolde slepe,
And on the gres adoun he leyde hym tho;
And I afer gan romen to and fro,
Til that I herde, as that I welk alone,
How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

"Tho gan I stalke hym softly byhynde,
And sikirly, the soothe forto seyne,
As I kan clepe a yein now to my mynde,
Right thus to loue he gan hym forto pleyne:
He seyde, "lord haue routhe vp-on my peyne,
Al haue I ben rebell in myn entente,
Now mea culpa, lord, I me repente.

"O god that at thi disposicioun
LeDEST the fyn, by iuste purueiaunce
Of euery wight, my lowe confessioun
Accepte in gree, and sende me swich penaunce
As liketh the, but from disesperaunce,
That may my goost departe awey fro the,
Thow be my sheld, for thi benignite.

"ffor certes, lord, so soore hath she me wounded,
That stood in blak, with lokyng of hire eyen,
That to myn hertes botme it is y-sounded,
Thorugh which I woot that I moot nedes deyen:
This is the werste, I dar me nat bywreyen,
And wel the hotter ben the gledes rede,
That men hem wrien with ashen pale and dede."

"Wyth that he smot his hed adown a-non,
And gan to motre I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille awey to goon,
And leet ther-of as no thing wist had I,
And com a yein anon and stood hym by,
And seyde, "awake, ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that loue doth yow longe,
"That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey euere or this so dul a man?"
"Ye, frende," quod he, "do ye youre hedes ake
ffor loue, and lat me lyuen as I kan."
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresshe a countenaunce
As though he sholde haue led the newe daunce.

"This passed forth til now, this other day,
It fel that I com romyng al allone
In-to his chaumbre and fond how that he lay
Vp-on his bed, but man so soore grone
Ne herde I neuere, and what that was his mone
Ne wist I nought, for as I was comyng,
Al sodeynly he lefte his complaynyng.

"Of which I took somwhat suspecioun,
And ner I com and fond he wepte soore;
And god so wys be my sauacioun,
As neuere of thyng hadde I no routhe moore,
ffor neither with engyn, ne with no loore,
Unnethes myghte I fro the deth hym kepe,
That yet fele I myn herte for hym wepe.

"And god woot, neuere sith that I was born
Was I so besy no man forto preche,
Ne neuere was to wight so depe i-sworn,
Or he me told who myghte ben his leche.
But now to yow rehercen al his speche,
Or all his woful wordes forto sowne,
Ne bid me naught, but ye wol se me swowne.

"But forto saue his lif, and elles nought,
And to noon harm of yow, thus am I dryuen;
And for the loue of god that vs hath wrought,
Swich cheer hym dooth that he and I may lyuen.
Now haue I plat to yow myn herte shryuen,
And sith ye woot that myn entent is cleene,
Take heede therof, for I non yuel meene.

"And right good thrifte, I prey to god, haue ye
That han swich oon y-kaught withouten net;
And be ye wis as ye be faire to see,
Wel in the rynge than is the rubie set.
Ther were neuere two so wel y-met,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:
Ther myghty god yit graunte vs see that houre."

"Nay, therof spak I nought, ha, ha!" quod she;
"As helpe me god, ye shenden euery deel."
"O, mercy, dere Nece," anon quod he,
"What so I spak, I mente naught but wel,
By Mars, the god that helmed is of steel;
Now beth naught wroth, my blood, my Nece dere."
"Now wel," quod she, "for yeuen be it here."

With this he took his leue and home he wente;
And lord, so he was glad and wel bygon!
Criseyde aros, no lenger she ne stente,
But streght in-to hire closet wente anon,
And set hire doun as style as any ston,
Aad euery word gan vp and down to wynde,
That he had seyd, as it com hire to mynde,
And wax somdel astoned in hire thoughte,
Right for the newe cas, but whan that she
Was ful auysed, tho fond she right noughte
Of peril why she ought afered be.
ffor man may loue, of possibilite,
A womman so his herte may to-breste,
And she naught loue a yein but if hire leste.

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,
Ascry aros at scarmuch al with-oute,
And men criden in the strete, "se, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!"
With that gan al hire meigne forto shoute,
"A, go we se, caste vp the yates wyde,
ffor thorwgh this strete he moot to paleys ride;
"ffor other wey is fro the yate noon
Of Dardanus, there opyn is the cheyne."
With that com he and al his folk anoon
An esy pas rydyng in routes twyne,
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
ffor which, men seyn, may nought destourbed be
That shal bityden of necessitee.

This Troilus sat on his baye steede,
Al armed, saue his hed, ful richely,
And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On which he rood a pas ful softly;
But swich a knyghtly sighte, trewely,
As was on hym was nought, withouten faille,
To loke on Mars that god is of bataille.

So lik a man of armes and a knyght
He was to seen, fulfilled of heigh prowesse,
ffor bothe he hadde a body and a myght
To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse,
And ek to seen hym in his gere hym dresse,
So fressh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heuen vp-on hym forto see.

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tyssew heng his bak byhynde;
His sheeld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
In which men myghte many an arwe fynde
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rynde;
And ay the peple cryde, "here comethoure ioye,
And, next his brother, holder vp of Troye."

ffor which he wex a litel reed for shame,
When he the peple vp-on hym herde cryen,
That to byholde it was a noble game,
How snyderly he caste down his eyen.
Criseyda gan al his chere aspien,
And leet it so softe in hire synke,
That to hire self she seyde, "who yaf me drynke?"

ffor of hire owen thought she wex al reed,
Remembryng hire right thus, "lo, this is he
Which that myn vncler swerith he moot be deed,
But I on hym haue mercy and pitee."
And with that thought for pure ashamed she
Gan in hire hed to pulle and that asaste,
While he and al the peple forby past;

And gan to caste and rollen vp and down
With-inne hire thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estat and also his renown,
His wit, his shap and ek his gentilesse,
But moost hire fauour was for his distresse
Was al for hire, and thought it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon if that he mente trouthe.

Now myghte som envious iangle thus:
"This was a sodeyn loue; how myght it be
That she so lightly loued Troilus
Right for the firste syghte, ye, parde?"
Now whoso seith so, mote he neuere y-the;
ffor every thyng a gynnyng hath it nede
Er al be wrought, with-owten any drede.

ffor I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf hym hire loue, but that she gan enclyne
To like hym first, and I haue told yow whi;
And after that his manhod and his pyne
Made loue with-inne hire herte forto myne,
ffor which by proces and by good seruyse
He gat hire loue, and in no sodeyn wyse.

And also blisful Venus, wel arrayed,
Sat in hire seuenthe hous of heuene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his woo;
And soth to seyne, she nas nat al a foo
To Troilus in his natuuitee;
God woot that wel the sonner spedde he.

Now lat vs stynte of Troilus a throwe,
That rideth forth, and lat vs torne faste
Unto Criseyde that heng hire hed ful lowe,
Ther as she sat allone and gan to caste
Where on she wolde apoynte hire atte laste,
If it so were hire Em ne wolde cesse
ffor Troilus vp-on hire forto presse.

And lord, so she gan in hire thought argue
In this matere of which I haue yow tolde,
And what to doone best were and what eschewe,
That plited she ful ofte in many folde;
Now was hire herte warme, now was it colde;
And what she thoughte, somwhat shal I write,
As to myn auctour listeth for tendite.
She thoughte wel that Troilus persone
She knew by syghte and ek his gentilesse,
And thus sh she seyde, "al were it nat to doone
To graunte hym loue, yit, for his worthynesse,
It were honour with pleye and with gladnesse
In honestee with swich a lord to deele,
ffor myn estat and also for his heele.

"Ek wel woot I my kynges sone is he,
And sith he hath to se me swich delite,
If I wolde outreliche his sighte flee,
Peraunder he myghte haue me in dispite,
Thorugh whicch I myghte stonde in worse plite,
Now were I wis me hate to purchace,
With-outen nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

"In euery thyng, I woot, ther lith mesure,
ffor though a man forbede dronkenesse,
He naught forbet that euery creature
Be drynkeles for alwey, as I gesse.
Ek sith I woot for me is his destresse,
I ne aughte naught for that thing hym despise,
Sith it is so he meneth in good wyse.

"And ek I knowe, of longe tyme agon,
His thewes goode, and that he is nat nyce;
Nauantour, seith men, certein is he noon —
To wis is he to doon so get a vice;
Ne als I nyl hym neuere so cherice,
That he may make auaunt by iuste cause;
He shal me neuere bynde in swich a clause.

"Now sette a caas: the hardest is, y-wys,
Men myghten demen that he loueth me;
What dishonour were it vn-to me this?
May ich hym lette of that? why nay, parde.
I knowe also, and alday heere and se,
Men louen wommen al biside hire leue,
And whan hem leste namore, lat hem byleue.

"I thank ek how he able is forto haue
Of al this noble towne the thriftestie
To ben his loue, so she hire honour saue;
ffor out and out he is the worthieste,
Saue only Ector, which that is the beste;
And yet his lif al lith now in my cure.
But swich is loue and ek myn aventure.

"Ne me to loue, a wonder is it nought;
ffor wel woot I my self, so god me spede —
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought —
I am oon the faireste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, whoso taketh hede,
And so men seyn, in al the town of Troie:
What wonder is though he of me haue ioye?

"I am myn owene womman, wel at ese,
I thank it god, as after myn estate,
Right yong, and stonde vnteyd in lusty leese,
With-outen ialousie or swich debate;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me 'chek mate.'
ffor either they ben ful of ialousie,
Or maisterfull, or louen nouelrie.

"What shal I doon? to what fyn lyue I thus?
Shal I nat loue, in cas if that me leste?
What, pardieux! I am naught religious.
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knyght, that is the worthieste,
And kepe awey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame."

But right as when the sonne shyneth bright,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloude is put with wynd to flight,
Which ouersprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hire soule pace,
That ouerspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for feere almost she gan to falle.

That thought was this: "allas, syn I am free,
Sholde I now loue, and put in iupertie
My sikernesse and thrallen libertee?
Allas, how dorst I thenken that folie?
May I naught wel in other folk aspie
Hire dredfull ioye, hire constreinte and hire peyne?
Ther loueth noon that she nath wey to pleyne.

"ffor loue is yet the mooste stormy lyf,
Right of hym self, that euere was bigonne;
ffor euere som mystrust or nice strif
Ther is in loue, som cloude is ouere that sonne.
Therto we wrecched wommen no-thing konne,
Whan vs is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Oure wrecche is this, oure owen wo to drynke.

"Also thise wikked tonges ben so preste
To speke vs harm, ek men ben so vntrewe,
That right anon as cessed is hire leste
So cesseth loue, and forth to loue a newe;
But harm y-doon is doon, who-so it rewe:
ffor though thise men for loue hem first to-renede,
fful sharp bygynnyng breketh ofte at ende.

"How ofte tyme hath it y-knowen be,
The tresoun that to wommen hath ben do;
To what fyn is swich loue I kan nat see,
Or wher bycometh it whan it is ago.
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Where it bycometh; lo, no wight on it sporneth:
That erst was no thing, in-to nought it torneth.

"How bisy, if I loue, ek most I be
To plesen hem that iangle of loue and dremen,
And coye hem, that they seye noon harm of me;
ffor though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hire frendes quemen;
And who may stoppen euery wikked tonge,
Or sown of belles whil that thei ben ronge?"

And after that, hire thought gan forto clere,
And seide, "he which that nothing vndertaketh,
No thyng nacheueth, be hym looth or deere."
And with an other thought hire herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus bitwixen tweye,
She rist hire vp, and wente hire forto pleye.

Adown the steyre anon right tho she wente
In-to the gardyn with hire neces thre,
And vp and down ther made many a wente —
fflexippe, she, Tharbe and Antigone —
To pleyen, that it ioye was to see;
And other of hire wommen a gret route
Hire folwede in the gardyn al aboute.
This yerde was large and rayled alle thaleyes,
And shadowed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene;
Til at the laste, Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singen cleere,
That it an heuen was hire vois to here.

She seyde, "O loue, to whom I haue and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best kan, to yow, lord, yeue ich al,
ffor euere mo, myn hertes lust to rente.
ffor neuere yet thi grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lif to lede
In alle ioie and seurte out of drede.

"Ye, blisful god, han me so wel byset
In loue, i-wys, that al that bereth lif
Ymagynen ne kouthe how to ben bet;
ffor, lord, withouten jalousie or strif,
I loue oon which that moost is ententif
To seruen wel, vnweri or vnfeyned,
That euere was, and leest with harm desteyned.

"As he that is the welle of worthynesse,
Of trouthe grownd, mirour of goodlihede,
Of wit Apollo, stoon of sikernesse,
Of vertue roote, of lust fynder and hede,
Thorugh which is alle sorwe fro me dede —
I-wis, I loue hym best, so doth he me;
Now good thrifte haue he, wher-so that he be!

"Whom shulde I thanken but yow, god of loue,
Of al this blisse in which to bathe I gynne?
And thanked be ye, lord, for that I loue.
This is the righte lif that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vice and synne;
This dooth me so to vertue for tentende,
That day by day I in my wille amende.

"And whoso seith that forto loue is vice,
Or thraldom, though he feele in it destresse,
He outher is enuyous or right nyce,
Or is vnmyghty for his shrewednesse
To louen; for swich manere folk, I gesse,
Defamen loue as nothing of it knowe:
They spoken, but thei benten neuere his bowe.

"What is the sonne wers, of kynde right,
Though that a man for fieblesse of his eyen
May nought endure on it to see for bright?
Or loue the wers, though wrecches on it crien?
No wele is worth that may no sorwe dryen;
And forthi, who that hath an hed of verre,
ffro caste of stones war hym in the werre.

"But I with al myn herte and al my myghte,
As I haue seyd, wol loue vn-to my laste
My deere herte and al myn owen knyghte,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal euere laste:
Al drede I first to loue hym to bigynne,
Now woot I wel ther is no peril inne."

And of hir song right with that word she stente,
And ther-with-al, "now Nece," quod Cryseyde,
"Who made this song now with so good entente?"
Antygone anwerde anoon and seyde,
"Madame, y-wys, the goodlieste mayde
Of gret estat in al the town of Troye,
And let hire lif in moste honour and ioye."

"ffor-soth, so it semeth by hire songe,"
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to sike,
And seyde, "lord, is ther swych blisse amonge
Thise loueres, as they konne faire endite?"
"Ye, wis," quod fresshe Antigone the white,
"ffor al the folk that han or ben on lyue
Ne konne wel the blisse of loue discryue.

"But wene ye that euery wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of loue? why nay, i-wys;
They wenen all be loue if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot nothyng of this.
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught faire in heuene — why? for they kan telle —
And axen fendes is it foule in helle."

Criseyde vnto that purpos naught answerde,
But seyde, "ywys, it wol be nyght as faste."
But every word which that she of hire herde,
She gan to prenten in hire herte faste,
And ay gan loue hire lasse for tagaste
Than it dide erst and synken in hire herte,
That she wex somwhat able to conuerte.

The dayes honour and the heuenes eye,
The nyghtes foo — al this clepe I the sonne —
Gan westren faste and downward forto wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours yronne,
And white thynges wexen dymme and donne
ffor lakke of lyght and sterres for tapere,
That she and alle hire folk in went yfeere.

So whan it liked hire to go to reste,
And voided weren thei that voiden oughte,
She seyde that to slepen wel hire leste;
Hire wommen soon vnto hire bed hire broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wise;
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wise.

A nghtyngele vpon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
fful loude song ayein the moone shene
Peraunter in his briddes wise a lay
Of loue that made hire herte fressh and gay,
That herkned she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede slepe hire hente.

And as she slep, anon right tho hire mette
How that an egle fethered whit as bone
Under hire brest his longe claws sette,
And out hire herte he rente, and that anone,
And dide his herte in-to hire brest to gone —
Of which she nought agroos ne nothyng smerte —
And forth he fleigh with herte left for herte.

Now lat hire slepe, and we oure tales holde
Of Troilus that is to paleis ridden
ffro the scarmuch of the which I tolde,
And in his chaumbre sit and hath abiden
Til two or thre of his messages yeden
ffor Pandarus and soughten hym ful faste,
Til they him founde and broughte hym at the laste.

This Pandarus com lepyng in attones,
And seyde thus, "who hath ben wel i-bete
To-day with swerdes and with slynge stones
But Troilus, that hath caught hym an hete?
And gan to iape and seyde, "lord, so ye swete!
But ris and lat vs soupe and go to reste."
And he answerd hym, "do we as the leste."

With al the haste goodly that they myghte,
They spedde hem fro the soper vnto bedde,
And euery wight out at the dore hym dyghte,
And where hym liste vp-on his wey him spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
ffor wo til that he herde som tydyng,
He seyde, "frend, shal I now wepe or syng?"

Quod Pandarus, "ly stille and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be,
And chese if thow wolt synge or daunce or lepe.
At shorte wordes, thow shalt trowen me.
Sire, my Nece wol do wel by the,
And loue the best, by god and by my trouthe,
By lakke of pursuyt make it in thi slouthe.

"ffor thus ferforth I haue thi werk bigonne,
ffro day to day til this day by the morwe,
Hire loue of frendshipe haue I to the wonne,
And therto hath she leyd hire feyth to borwe;
Algate a foot is hameled of thi sorwe."
What sholde I lenger sermoun of it holde?
As ye han herd byfore, al he hym tolde.

But right as floures, thorugh the colde of nyght
Iclosed, stoupen on hire stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hire kynde cours by rowe,
Right so gan tho his eighen vp to throwe
This Troilus and seyde, "O Venus deere,
Thi myght, thi grace, y-heried be it here."

And to Pandare he held vp bothe his hondes,
And seyde, "lord, al thyn be that I haue,
ffor I am hool, al brosten ben my bondes;
A thousand Troyes who-so that me yaue,
Ech after other, god so wys me saue,
Ne myghte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for ioie it wol to-sterte.

"But lord, how shal I doon, how shal I lyuen?
Whan shal I next my deere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme awey be dryuen
Til that thow be ayein at hire fro me?
Thow maist answer, "abid, abid," but he
That hangeth by the nekke, soth to seyne,
In gret disese abideth for the peyne."

"Al esily, now, for the loue of Marte,"
Quod Pandarus, "for euery thing hath tyme
So longe abid til that the nyght departe;
ffor also siker as thow list here by me,
And god to-forn, I wol be ther at pryme;
And for-thi, werk som-what as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.

ffor pardee, god woot, I haue euere yit
Den redy the to serue, and to this nyght
Haue I naught feyned, but emforth my wit
Don al thi lust, and shal with al my myght.
Do now as I shal seyn and fare aright;
And if thow nylt, wite al thi self thi care:
On me is nought a-long thyn yuel fare.

"I woot wel that thow wiser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thow,
God help me so, as I wolde outrely
Right of myn owen hond write hire right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hire tellen how
I ferd amys, and hire biseche of routhe;
Now help thi self and leue it nought for slouthe-

"And I my self wol therwith to hire gon;
And whan thow woost that I am with hire there,
Worth thow vp-on a courser right anon,
Ye, hardily, right in thi beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place as nought ne were,
And thow shalt fynde vs, if I may, sittyng
At som wyndow in-to the strete lokyng.
"And if the list, than maystow vs salue,
And vp-on me make thow thi countenaunce,
But by thi lif be war and faste eschue
To tarien ought — god shilde vs fro meschaunce!
Rid forth thi wey and hold thi gouernaunce,
And we shal speek of the somwhat, I trowe,
Whan thow art gon, to don thyn eris glowe.

"Towchyng thi lettre, thou art wys ynough;
I woot thow nylt it dygneliche endite,
As make it with thise argumentes tough,
Ne scryuenyssh or craftily thow it write;
Biblotte it with thi teris ek a lite,
And if thow write a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it nought to ofte.

"ffor though the beste harpour vp-on lyue
Wolde on the beste sowned ioly harpe
That euere was with alle his fyngres fyue
Touche ay o stryng or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted neuere so sharpe,
It sholde maken euery wight to dulle
To here his glee and of his strokes fulle.

"Ne iompre ek no discordant thyng y-feere,
As thus, to vsen termes of Phisik
In loues termes; hold of thi matere
The forme alwey and do that it be lik;
ffor if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses feet and hedde it as an ape,
It cordeth naught, so nere it but a iape."

This counseil liked wel to Troilus,
But as a dreadful louere he seye this,
"Allas, my deere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed forto write, ywis,
Lest of myn innocence I seye amys,
Or that she nolde it for despit receyue;
Than were I ded, ther myght it nothying weyue."

To that Pandare answerde, "if the lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith gon;
ffor by that lord that formed est and weste,
I hope of it to brynge answere anon
Right of hire hond, and if that thow nylt noon,
Lat be, and sory mote he ben his lyue
Ayeins thi lust that helpeth the to thryue."

Quod Troilus, "depardieux, ich assente,
Sith that the list, I wil arise and write;
And blisful god prey ich with good entente,
The viage and the lettre I shal endite,
So spede it, and thow, Minerua the white,
Yif thow me wit my lettre to deuyse."
And sette hym down and wrot right in this wyse.

ffirst he gan hire his righte lady calle,
His hertes lif, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and ek thiese other termes alle,
That in swich cas thise loueres alle seche;
And in ful humble wise, as in his speche,
He gan hym recomaunde vnto hire grace;
To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

And after this ful lowly he hire preyde
To be nought wroth, thogh he, of his folie,
So hardy was to hire to write, and seyde
That loue it made or elles most he die;
And pitousli gan mercy forto crye;
And after that he seyde — and leigh ful loude —
Hym self was litel worth, and lasse he koude;

And that she sholde han his konnyng excused,
That litel was, and ek he dredde hire soo,
And his vnworthynes ay he acused;
And after that han gan he telle his woo—
But that was endeles, with-outen hoo —
And seyde he wolde in trouth alwey hym holde;
And radde it ouer and gan the lettre folde.

And with hise salte teris gan he bathe
The rubie in his signet and it sette
Up-on the wex deliuerliche and rathe;
Therwith a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde, "lettre, a blisful destine
The shapyn is, my lady shal the see."

This Pandare tok the lettre, and that by-tyme
A-morwe, and to his Neces paleis sterte;
And faste he swor that it was passed prime,
And gan to iape and seyde, "ywys, myn herte,
So fresshe it is, al-though it sore smerte,
I may naught slepe neuere a Mayes morwe;
I haue a ioly wo, a lusty sorwe."

Criseyde, whan that she hire vnclene herde,
With dreedful herte and desirous to here
The cause of his comynge, thus anserde,
"Now by youre fey, myn vnclene," quod she, "dere,
What manere wyndes gydeth yow now here?
Tel vs youre ioly wo and youre penaunce —
How ferforth be ye put in loues daunce?"

"By god," quod he, "I hoppe alwey by-hynde."
And she to laughe, it thought hire herte brest.
Quod Pandarus, "loke alwey that ye fynde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow lest:
Ther is right now come in-to town a gest,
A Greek espie, and telleth newe thinges,
ffor which I come to telle yow tydynges.

"In-to the gardyn go we and ye shal here
Al pryuely of this a longe sermoun."
With that they wenten arm in arm yfeere,
In-to the gardyn from the chaumbre down,
And whan that he so fer was that the sown
Of that he spake no man heren myghte,
He seyde hire thus, and out the lettre plighte:

"Lo, he that is al holy youres free
Hym recomaundeth lowely to youre grace,
And sente yow this lettre here by me.
Auyseth yow on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answere yow purchace;
Or helpe me god, so pleynly forto seyne,
He may nat longe lyuen for his peyne."

fful dreedfully tho gan she stonden stylle,
And took it naught, but al hire humble chere
Gan forto chaunge, and seyde, "scrit ne bille,
ffor loue of god, that toucheth swich mater.
Ne brynge me noon; and also, vnclene deere,
To myn estat haue more rewarde, I preye,
Than to his lust — what sholde I more seye?
"And loketh now if this be resonable, 1135
And letteth nought for fauour ne for slouthe
To seyn a sooth; now were it couenable
To myn estat, by god and by youre trouthe,
To taken it or to han of hym routhe
In harmyng of my self or in repreue?
Ber it ayein for hym that ye on leue."

This Pandarus gan on hire forto stare,
And seyde, "now is this the grettest wondre
That euere I seigh — lat be this nyce fare!
To dethe mot I smyten be with thondre,
If for the citee which that stondeth yondre,
Wolde I a lettre vnto yow brynge or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

"But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serue,
Of hym ye recche leest wher he by-come,
And whethir that he lyue or elles sterue.
But for al that that euer I may deserue,
Refuse it naught," quod he and hente hire faste,
And in hire bosom the lettre down he thraste,

And seyde hire, "now cast it awey anon,
That folk may seen and gauren on vs tweye."
Quod she, "I kan abyde til they be gon,
And gan to smyle and seyde hym, "Em, I preye,
Swich answere as yow list youre self purueye,
ffor trewely I nyl no lettre write."
"No? than wol I," quod he, "so ye endite."

Therwith she lough and seyde, "go we dyne."
And he gan at hym self to iape faste,
And seyde, "Nece, I haue so grete a pyne
ffor loue that euerich other day I faste,"
And gan his beste iapes forth to caste,
And made hire so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye.

And whan that she was comen in-to halle,
"Now Em," quod she, "we wol go dyne anon."
And gan some of hire wommen to hire calle,
And streght in-to hire chambre gan she gon,
But of hire besynesses this was on,
Amonges othere thynges out of drede,
fful pruely this lettre forto rede.

Auysed word by word in euery lyne,
And fond no lakke, she thoughte he koude good;
And vp it putte and wente hire in-to dyne;
But Pandarus, that in a studye stood,
Er he was war, she took hym by the hood,
And seyde, "ye were caught er that ye wist."
"I vouche-sauf," quod he, "do what you list."

Tho wesshen they and sette hem down and ete;
And after noon ful sleighly Pandarus
Gan drawe hym to the wyndowe next the strete,
And seyde, "Nece, who hath araid thus
The yonder hous that stant aforyeyn vs?"
"Which hous?" quod she, and gan forto byholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was hym tolde.

And fillen forth in speche of thynges smale,
And seten in the windowe bothe tweye,
Whan Pandarus saugh tyme vn-to his tale,
And saugh wel that hire folk were alle aweye,
"Now, Nece myn, tel on," quod he, "I seye,
How liketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Kan he ther-on? for by my trouthe, I noot."

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to homme and seyde, "so I trowe."
"Acquite hym wel, for goddes loue," quod he;
"My self to medes wol the lettre sowe."
And held his hondes vp and sat on knowe;
"Now, goode Nece, be it neuere so lite,
Yif me the labour it to sowe and plite."

"Ye, for I kan so writen," quod she tho,
"And ek I noot what I sholde to hym seye."
"Nay, Nece," quod Pandare, "sey nat so;
Yet at the leeste thonketh hym, I preye,
Of his good wille and doth hym nat to deye.
Now for the loue of me, my Nece deere,
Refuseth nat at this tyme my prayere."

"Depardieux," quod she, "god leue al be wel!"
God help me so, this is the firste lettre
That euere I wroot, ye, al or any del."
And in-to a closet for tauise hire bettre
She wente allone, and gan hire herte vnfettre
Out of desdaynes prisoun but a lite,
And sette hire down and gan a lettre write.

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Theffect as fer as I kan vnderstonde:
She thanked hym of al that he wel mente
Towardes hire, but holden hym in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hire seluen bonde
In loue, but as his suster hym to plese
She wolde ay fayn, to doon his herte an ese.

She shette it and to Pandare in gan goon,
Ther as he sat and loked in-to the strete,
And down she sette hire by hym on a stoon
Of iaspre, vp-on a quysshyn gold y-bete,
And seyde, "as wisly help me god the grete,
I neuere dide a thing with more peyne
Than writen this, to which ye me constreyne" —

And took it hym. He thonked hire and seyde,
"God woot, of thyng ful often looth bygonne
Comth ende good, and, Nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to hym of hard now ben y-wonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne;
ffor whi men seith, "Impressiounes lighte
fful lightly ben ay redy to the flighte."

"But ye han played the tirant neigh to longe,
And hard was it youre herte forto graue;
Now stynte, that ye no lenger on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger saue,
But hasteth yow to doon hym ioye haue;
ffor trusteth wel, to long y-doon hardnesse
Causeth despit ful often for destresse."

And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com rydyng with his tenthe somme y-fere,
Al softly, and thiderward gan bende
Ther as they sete, as was his way to wende
To paleis-ward, and Pandare hym aspide
And seyde, "Nece, i-see who comth here ride.

"O fle naught in — he seeth vs, I suppose —
Lest he may thynken that ye hym eschuwe."
"Nay, nay," quod she, and wex as rede as rose.
With that he gan hire humbly to saluwe,
With dredful chere and oft his hewes muwe,
And vp his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare and forth he paste.

God woot if he sat on his hors aright,
Or goodly was biseyn that ilke day!
God woot wher he was lik a manly knyght!
What sholde I drecche or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle thise thynges say,
To telle in short, hire liked al in fere,
His persoun, his aray, his look, his chere,

His goodly manere, and his gentilesse,
So wel that neuere, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swych routh of his destresse;
And how so she hath hard ben here byforn,
To god hope I she hath now kaught a thorn,
She shal nat pulle it out this nexte wyke —
God sende mo swich thornes on to pike.

Pandare, which that stood hire faste by,
ffelte iren hoot and he bygan to smyte,
And seyde, "Nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lite:
A womman that were of his deth to wite,
With-outen his gilt, but for hire lakked routhe,
Were it wel doon?" Quod she, "nay, by my trouthe."

"God help me so," quod he, "ye sey me soth.
Ye felen wel youre self that I nought lye.
Lo, yond he rit!" "ye," quod she, "so he doth."
"Wel," quod Pandare, "as I haue told yow thrie,
Lat be youre nyce shame and youre folie,
And spek with hym in esyng of his herte;
Lat nycete nat do yow bothe smerte."

But ther-on was to heuen and to doone,
Considered al thing, it may nat be;
And whi? for shame, and it were ek to soone
To graunten hym so grete a libertee.
ffor pleynly hire entente, as seyde she,
Was forto loue hym vnwist if she myghte,
And guerdoun hym with no thing but with sighte.

But Pandarus thought, "it shal nought be so,
Yif that I may, this nyce opynyoun
Shal nought be holden fully yeres two."
What shoelde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste asente on that conclusioun
As for the tyme, and whan that it was eue,
And al was wel, he roos and toke his leue.

And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for ioye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond allone a-bedde,
That lay as do thise louers in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk disesperaunce.
But Pandarus, right at his in comynge,
He song, as who seyth, "somwhat I brynge."

And seyde, "who is in his bed so soone
I-buried thus?" "It am I, frend," quod he.
"Who, Troilus? nay, help me so the moone,"
Quod Pandarus, "thow shalt arise and see
A charme that was sent right now to the,
The which kan helen the of thyn accesse,
If thow do forth-with al thi bisynesse.",

"Ye, thorugh the myght of god," quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan hym the lettre take,
And seyde, "parde, god hath holpen vs;
Haue here a light and loke on al this blake."
But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whil that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yaue hym hope or drede.

But finaly he took al for the beste
That she hym wroot, for somwhat he byhelde
On which hym thoughte he myghte his herte reste,
Al couered she the wordes vnder shelde.
Thus to the more worthi part he helde,
That what for hope and Pandarus byheste,
His grete wo foryede he at the leste.
But as we may alday oure seluen see,
Thorugh more wode or col the more fire,
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encresseth ek desire;
Or as an ook comth of a litil spire,
So thorugh this lettre which that she hym sente
Encrescen gan desire of which he brente.

Wherfore I seye alwey that day and nyght
This Troilus gan to desiren moore
Thanne he did erst, thorugh hope, and did his myght
To preessen on as by Pandarus loore,
And writen to hire of his sorwes soore;
ffro day to day he leet it nought refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde;

And dide also his other obseruaunces,
That til a louere longeth in this cas;
And after that his dees torned on chaunces,
So was he outher glad or seyde "allas."
And held after his gistes ay hid pas;
And after swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay to hym to pleyne,
And hym bisoughte of reed and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his woode peyne,
Wex wel neigh ded for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte cast
Som of his wo to slen, and that as faste;

And seyde, "lord and frend and brother dere,
God woot that thi disese doth me wo.
But wiltow stynten al this woful cheere,
And by my trouthe, er it be dayes two,
And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thow shalt come in-to a certeyn place,
There as thow mayst thi self hire preye of grace.

"And certeynyly — I noot if thow it woost,
But tho that ben expert in loue it seye —
It is oon of the thynge forthereth most
A man to han a layser forto preye,
And siker place his wo forto bywreye;
ffor in good herte it mot som routhe impresse
To here and see the gittlees in distresse.

"Peraunter thynkestow: though it be so,
That kynde wolde don hire to bygynne
To haue a manere routhe vpon my woo,
Seyth daunger, "nay, thow shalt me neuere wynne."
So reulith hire hir herdes gost with-inne,
That though she bende, yeet she stant on roote;
What in effect is this vnto my boote?

"Thenk here ayeins: whan that the stordy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte for the nones,
Recyued hath the happy fallyng strook,
The greete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
As don thise rokkes or thise milnestones;
ffor swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte,
Whan it descendeth, than don thynges lighte.

"And reed that boweth down for euery blaste,
fful lightly, cesse wynd, it wol aryse;
But so nyl nought an ook whan it is caste;
It nedeth me nought the longe to forbise.
Men shal reioissen of a grete empryse
Acheued wel, and stant with-outen doute,
Al han men ben the lenger ther-aboute.

"But Troilus, yet telle me if the lest
A thing now which that I shal axen the:
Which is thi brother that thow louest best,
As in thi verray hertes priuetee?"
"I-wis, my brother Deiphebus," quod he.
"Now," quod Pandare, "er houres twyes twelue,
He shal the ese, vnwist of it hym selue.

"Now lat malone and werken as I may,"
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho,
Which hadde his lord and grete frend ben ay;
Saue Troilus, no man he loued so.
To telle in short, withouten wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus, "I pray yow that ye be
ffrend to a cause which that toucheth me."

"Yis, perde," quod Deiphebus, "wel thow woost,
In al that euere I may, and god to-fore,
Al nere it but for man I loue moost,
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is, for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas, ne neuere mo to ben I thynke,
Ayeins a thing that myghte the forthynke."

Pandare gan hym thank and to hym seyde,
"Lo, sire, I haue a lady in this town,
That is my Nece and called is Criseyde,
Which som men wolden don oppressioun;
And wrongfully han hire possesioun;
Wherfore I of youre lordship yow biseche
To ben oure frend, withouten more speche."

Deiphebus hym anserde, "O, is nat this,
That thow spekest of to me thus straungely,
Criseyda, my frend?" He seyde, "yis."
"Than nedeth," quod Deiphebus, "hardyly,
Namore to speke, for trusteth wel that I
Wol be hire champioun with spore and yerde;
I roughte nought though alle hire foos it herde.

"But telle me, thow that woost al this matere,
How I myght best auaylen." — "Now lat se,"
Quod Pandarus, "if ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now do this honour to me,
To preyen hire to-morwe, lo, that she
Come vn-to yow, hire pleyntes to deuise,
Hire aduersaries wolde of it agrise.

"And yif I more dorste prey yow as now,
And chargen yow to han so gret trauaille,
To han som of youre bretheren here with yow,
That myghten to hire cause bet auaille,
Than wot I wel she myghte neuere faile
efto ben holpen, what at youre instaunce,
What with hire other frendes gouernaunce."

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kynde
To alle honour and bounte to consente,
Answerd, "it shal be don, and I kan fynde
Yet grettere help to this in myn entente.
What wiltow seyn if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste,
ffor she may leden Paris as hire leste.
"Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother, 1450
It nedeth naught to preye hym frend to be;
ffor I haue herd hym, o tyme and ek oother,
Speke of Cryseyde swich honour that he
May seyn no bet, swich hap to hym hath she:
It nedeth naught his helps forto craue;
He shal be swich right as we wol hym haue.

"Speke thow thi self also to Troilus 1455
On my byhalue, and prey hym with vs dyne."
"Syre, al this shal be don," quod Pandarus,
And took his leue and neuere gan to fyne.
But to his Neces hous as streyght as lyne
He come, and fond hire fro the mete arise,
And sette hym down and spak right in this wise.

He seide, "O verray god, so haue I ronne! 1460
Lo, Nece myn, se ye nought how I swete?
I not wheither ye the more thank me konne.
Be ye naught war how false Poliphete
Is now aboute eftsones forto plete
And brynge on yow aduocacies newe?"
"I? no," quod she, and chaunged al hire hewe.

"What is he more aboute me to drecche 1465
And don me wrong? what shal I doon, allas?
Yet of hym self nothing ne wolde I recche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That ben his frendes in swich manere cas.
But for the loue of god, myn vncle deere,
No fors of that, lat hym han al yfeere.

"With-outen that I haue ynough for vs." 1470
"Nay," quod Pandare, "it shal no thing be so,
ffor I haue ben right now at Deiphebus,
At Ector, and myn oother lordes moo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his foo,
That, by my thrift, he shal it neuere wynne,
ffor aught he kan, whan that so he bygynne."

And as thei casten what was best to doone, 1475
Deiphebus of his owen curteisie
Com hire to preye, in his propre persone,
To holde hym on the morwe compaignie,
At dyner, which she nolde nought denye,
But goodly gan to his preier obeye.
He thonked hire and went vp-on his weye.

Whan this was don, this Pandare vp anon,
To telle in short, and forth gan forto wende
To Troilus, as stille as any ston,
And al this thyng he tolde hym worde and ende,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende,
And seyde hym, "now is tyme, if that thow konne,
To bere the wel to-morwe, and al is wonne.

"Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleigne;
Lat nought for nyce shame or drede or slouthe.
Som tyme a man mot telle his owne payne;
Bileue it, and she shal han on the routhe;
Thow shalt be saued by thi feyth in trouthe.
But wel woot I that thow art now in deede,
And what it is I leye I kan arede.

"Thow thynkest now, "how sholde I don al this?
ffor by my cheres mosten folk aspie
That for hire loue is that I fare amys;
Yet hadde I leuere vnwist for sorwe dye."
Now thynk nat so, for thow dost gret folie,
ffor I right now haue founden o manere
Of sleighte forto coueren al thi cheere.

"Thow shalt gon ouer nyght, and that bylyue,
Unto Deiphebus hous as the to pleye,
Thi maladie awey the bet to dryue,
ffor whi thow semest sik, soth forto seye.
Soone after that, down in thi bed the leye,
And sey thow mayst no lenger vp endure,
And lie right there and bide thyne auenture.

"Sey that thi fevre is wont the forto take
The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe;
And lat se now how wel thow kanst it make,
ffor perde, sik is he that is in sorwe.
Go now, far-wel; and Venus here to borwe,
I hope, and thow this purpos holde ferme,
Thi grace she shal fully ther conferme."

Quod Troilus, "i-wis, thow nedeles
Conseilest me that siklich I me feyne,
ffor I am sik in ernest, douteles,
So that wel neigh I sterue for the peyne." 1530
Quod Pandarus, "thow shalt the bettre pleyne,
And hast the lasse nede to countrefete,
ffor hym men demen hoot that men seen swete.
"Lo, hold the at thi triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer vnto thi bowe dryue." 1535
Therwith he took his leue al softly,
And Troilus to paleis wente blyue;
So glad ne was he neuere in al his lyue,
And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at nyght he wente. 1540

What nedeth yow to tellen al the cheere
That Deiphebus vnto his brother made,
Or his accesse or his siklich manere —
How men gan hym with clothes forto lade,
Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde hym glade? 1545
But al for nought: he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this deuyse.

But certayn is, er Troilus hym leyde,
Deiphebus had hym preied ouer nyght
To ben a frend and helpyng to Criseyde. 1550
God woot that he it graunted a-non right,
To ben hire fulle frend with al his myght;
But swich a nede was to preye hym thenne,
As forto bidde a wood man forto renne.

The morwen com and neighen gan the tyme
Of meeltide that the faire queene Eleuye
Shoop hire to ben, an houre after the prime,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, homly, soth to seyne,
She com to dyner in hire pleyne entente — 1560
But god and Pandare wist al what this mente.

Com ek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hire suster Tarbe also,
But fle we now prolixitee best is,
ffor loue of god, and lat vs faste go
Right to theffect, withouten tales mo,
Whi al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat vs of hire saluynges pace.

Gret honour did hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that myghte like,
But euere mo, "allas," was his refrey,
"My goode brother, Troilus, the syke,
Lith yet" — and therwithal he gan to sike;
And after that he peyned hym to glade
Hem as he myghte and cheere good he made.

Compleyned ek Eleyne of his siknesse
So feythfully that pite was to here;
And euery wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anon and seyde, "in this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow leere";
But ther sat oon, al list hire nought to teche,
That thoughte, "best koude I yet ben his leche."

After compleynte, hym gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet whan som wight hath bygonne
To preise a man, and vp with pris hym reise
A thousand fold yet heigher than the sonne:
"He is, he kan, that fewe lordes konne."
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He naught forgat hire preisynge to conferme.

Herde al this thyng Criseyde wel i-nough,
And euery word gan forto notifie,
ffor which with sobre cheere hire herte lough;
ffor who is that ne wolde hire glorifie,
To mowen swich a knyght doon lyue or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
ffor for o fyn is al that euere I telle.

The tyme com fro dyner forto ryse,
And as hem aughte arisen euerrichone,
And gonne a while of this and that deuise;
But Pandarus brak al this speche anone,
And seide to Deiphebus, "wol ye gone,
If it youre wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?"

Eleyne, which that by the hond hire helde,
Took first the tale and seyde, "go we blyue";
And goodly on Criseyde she bihelde,
And seyde, "Ioues lat hym neuere thryue,
That doth yow harm, and brynge hym soone of lyue,
And yeue me sorwe but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe."

"Tel thou thi Neces cas," quod Deiphbus
To Pandarus, "for thow kanst best it telle."
"My lorde and my lades, it stant thus:
What sholde I lenger," quod he, "do yow dwelle?"
He rong hem out a proces lik a belle
Up-on hire foo, that highte Poliphete,
So heynous that men myghte on it spete.

Answerde of this eche werse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien:
"Anhonged be swich oon, were he my brother,
And so he shal, for it ne may nought varien."
What shold I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleynliche alle at ones they hire highten
To ben hire help in al that euere they myghten.

Spak than Eleyne and seyde, "Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord my brother this matere,
I meene Ector? or woot it Troilus?"
He seyde, "ye, but wole ye now me here?
Me thynketh this, sith that Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hire self hym al this er she wente.

"ffor he wol haue the more hir grief at herte,
By-cause, lo, that she a lady is,
And, by youre leue, I wol but in right sterte
And do yow wyte, and that anon, i-wys,
If that he slepe, or wol ought here of this."
And in he lepte, and seyde hym in his ere,
"God haue thi soule, i-brought haue I thi beere!"

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, withouten rekenyng,
Out wente anon to Eleyne and Deiphbus,
And seyde hem, "so ther be no tarying,
Ne moore prees, he wol wel that ye bryng
Criseyda, my lady, that is here,
And as he may endure, he wol here.
"But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lite,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warme;
Now loketh ye — for I wol haue no wite,
To brynge in prees that myghte don hym harme,
Or hym disesen, for my bettre arme —
Wher it be bet she bide til eft-sonys?
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

"I sey for me, best is, as I kan knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I kan in a throwe
Reherce hire cas vnlik that she kan seye;
And after this she may hym ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hire leue;
This may nought muchel of his ese hym reue-

"And ek for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese which that hym thar nought for yow;
Ek oother thing that toucheth nought to here
He wol yow telle—I woot it wel, right now —
That secret is, and for the townes prow."
And they that nothyng knewe of his entente,
Withouten more, to Troilus in they wente.

Eleyne in al hire goodly, softe wyse
Gan hym salue, wommanly to pleye,
And seyde, "I-wys, ye moste algate arise;"Now, faire brother, beth al hool, I preye."
And gan hire arm right ouer his shulder leye,
And hym with al hire wit to reconforte;
As she best koude, she gan hym to disporte.

So after this quod she, "we yow biseke,
My deere brother, Deiphebus and I,
ffor loue of god, and so doth Pandare eke,
To ben good lord and frend right hertely
Unto Criseyde, which that certeynly
Receyueth wrong, as woot weel here Pandare,
That kan hire cas wel bet than I declare."

This Pandarus gan newe his tong affile,
And al hire cas reherce and that anon.
Whan it was seyd, soone after in a while,
Quod Troilus. "as sone as I may gon,
I wol right fayn with al my myght ben oon,
Haue god my trouthe, hire cause to sustene."
"Good thrift haue ye," quod Eleyne the queene."

Quod Pandarus, "and it youre wille be,
That she may take hire leue er that she go?"
"O, elles god forbede it," tho quod he,
If that she vouche sauf forto do so."
And with that word quod Troilus, "ye two,
Deiphebus and my suster lief and deere,
To yow haue I to speke of o matere,
"To ben auysed byoure reed the bettre."
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes hede,
The copie of a tretys and a lettre
That Ector hadde hym sent to axen rede
If swych a man was worthi to ben dede —
Woot I nought who — but in a grisly wise
He preyede hem anon on it auysse.

Deiphebus gan this lettre for tonfolde
In ernest greet; so did Eleyne the queene;
And romyng outward faste it gone byholde,
Downward a steire, in-to an herber greene,
This ilke thing they redden hem bitwene;
And largely, the mountance of an houre,
Thei gone on it to reden and to poure.

Now lat hem rede, and torne we anon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye
That al was wel, and out he gan to gon
In-to the grete chaumbre, and that in hye,
And seyde, "god saue al this compaynye!
Come, Nece myn, my lady queene Eleyne
Abideth yow and ek my lordes tweyne.
"Rys, take with yow youre Nece, Antigone,
Or whom yow list — or no fors, hardly
The lesse prees the bet — com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonken humblely
Hem alle thre, and whan ye may goodly
Youre tyme se, taketh of hem youre leue,
Lest we to longe hise restes hym byreeue.".

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Crisyde, "go we, vncle deere."
And arm in arm inward with hym she wente,
Auysed wel hire wordes and hire cheere;
And Pandarus in earnestful manere
Seyde, "We folk, for goddes loue, I preye,
Stynteth right here, and softely yow pleye.

"Auyseth yow what folk ben here with-inne,
And in what plit oon is, god hym amende!"
And inward thus, "ful softely bygynn,
Nece, I coniure and heighly yow defende,
On his half which that soule vs alle sende,
And in the vertue of corones tweyne,
Sle naught this man that hath for yow this peyne.

"ffy on the deuel! thynk which oon he is,
And in what plit he lith; com of anon!
Thynk al swich taried tyde but lost it nys —
That wol ye bothe seyn whan ye ben oon.
Secoundely, ther yet deuyneth noon
Upon yow two; come of now, if ye konne —
While folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne.

"In titeryng and pursuyte and delayes
The folk deuyne at waggyng of a stree;
And though ye wolde han after mirye dayes,
Than dar ye naught; and whi? for she and she
Spak swych a word, thus loked he and he;
Las tyme i-loste, I dar nought with yow dele;
Com of, therfore, and bryngeth hym to hele."

But now to yow, ye loueres that ben here,
Was Troilus nought in a kankedort,
That lay and myghte whispryng of hem here,
And thoughte, "O lord, right now renneth my sort
ffully to deye or han anon comfort,"
And was the firste tyme he shulde hire preye
Of loue? O myghty god, what shal he seye?

Explicit secundus liber.
Book III

Incipit prohemium tercii libri

O blisful light, of which the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde heuen faire;
O sonnes lief, O Ioues doughter deere,
Plesance of loue, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire;
O veray cause of heele and of gladnesse,
I-heryed be thy myghte and thi goodnesse.

In heuene and helle, in erthe and salte see,
Is felt thi myght, if that I wel descerne;
As man, brid, beste, fisshe, herbe, and grene tree
The fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
God loueth, and to loue wol nought werne,
And in this world no lyues creature
With-outen loue is worth, or may endure.

Ye Ioues first to thilke effectes glade,
Thorugh which that thynges lyuen alle and be,
Comeueden, and amorous hem made
On mortal thyng, and as yow list ay ye
Yeue hym in loue ese or aduersitee,
And in a thousand formes down hym sente
ffor loue in erthe, and whom yow liste he hente.

Ye fierse Mars apaisen of his ire,
And as yow list ye maken hertes digne;
Algates hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,
They dreden shame, and vices they resygne;
Ye do hem cortays be, fresshe and benigne;
And heighe or lowe, after a wight entendeth,
The ioies that he hath, youre myght it sendeth.

Ye holden regne and hous in vnitee;
Ye sothfast cause of frendshipe ben also;
Ye knowe al thilke couered qualitee
Of thynges, which that folk on wondren so,
Whan they kan nought construe how it may jo
She loueth hym, or whi he loueth here,
As whi this fissh, and naught that, comth to were.
Ye folk a lawe han set in vniverse,
And this knowe I by hem that louers be,
That who-so stryueth with yow hath the werse.
Now lady bryght, for thi benignite,
At reverence of hem that seruen the,
Whos clerc I am, so techeth me deuyse
Som ioye of that is felt in thi seruyse.

Ye in my naked herte sentement
In-hielde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse.
Caliope, thi vois be now present,
ffor now is nede: sestow nought my destresse,
How I mot telle a-non right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?
To which gladnesse who nede hath god hym brynge!

Explicit prohemium tercii libri

Incipit liber tercius

Lay al this mene while Troilus,
Recordyng his lesson in this manere:
"Mafay," thoughte he, "thus wol I sey and thus;
Thus wol I pleyne vn-to my lady dere;
That word is good, and this shal be my cheere;
This nyl I nought foryeten in no wise."
God leue hym werken as he kan deuyse.

And lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
Heryng hire come, and shorte forto sike;
And Pandarus that ledde hire by the lappe,
Com ner and gan in at the curtyn pike,
And seyde, "god do boot on alle syke!
Se who is here yow comen to visite;
Lo, here is she that is youre deth to wite."

Ther-with it semed as he wepte almoste.
"Ha, a," quod Troilus so reufully,
"Wher me be wo, O myghty god, thow wooste;
Who is al ther? I se nought trewely."
"Sire," quod Criseyde, "it is Pandare and I."
"Ye, swete herte? allas, I may nought rise,
To knele and do yow honour in som wyse";
And dressed hym vpward, and she right tho
Gan bothe hire hondes softe vpon hym leye,
"O, for the loue of god, do ye nought so
To me," quod she, "! what is this to seye?
Sire, comen am I to yow for causes tweye:
ffirst, yow to thonke, and of youre lordshipe eke
Continuance I wolde yow biseke."

This Troilus that herde his lady preye
Of lordshipe hym, wax neither quyk ne dede,
Ne myghte o word for shame to it seye,
Al-though men sholde smyten of his hede;
But lord, so he wex sodeynliche rede,
And sire, his lessoun that he wende konne
To preyen hire is thorugh his wit i-ronne.

Criseyde al this aspied wel ynough,
ffor she was wis and loued hym neuere the lasse,
Al ner he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold to syng a fool a masse;
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde,
I wol yow telle as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verray drede,
Which vois ek quook, and therto his manere
Goodly abaist, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, vnto Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look down cast and humble i-yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that hym asterte
Was twyes, "mercy, mercy, swete herte."

And stynte a while, and whan he myghte out brynge,
The nexte word was, "god woot, for I haue,
As ferforthly as I haue had konnynge,
Ben youres al, god so my soule saue,
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be graue;
And though I dar ne kan vnto yow pleyne,
I-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.

"Thus muche as now, O wommanlich wif,
I may out brynge, and if this yow displesse,
That shal I wreke vp-on myn owen lif
Right soone, I trowe, and do youre herte an ese,
If with my deth youre wreteth the may apese.
But syn that ye han herd me somwhat seye
Now recche I neuere now soone that I deye.

Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
It myghte han made an herte of stoon to rewe,
And Pandare wep as he to water wolde,
And poked euere his Nece new and newe,
And seyde, "wo bygon ben hertes trewe;
ffor loue of god, make of this thinge an ende,
Or sle vs both at ones, er ye wende."

"I, what?’ quod she, "by god and by my trouthe,
I not nat what ye wilne that I seye."
"I, what?’ quod he, "that ye han on hym routhe,
ffor goddes loue, and doth him nought to deye."
"Now thanne thus," quod she, "I wolde hym preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente;
yet wist I neuere wel what that he mente."

"What that I mene, O swete herte deere?"
Quod Troilus, "O goodly fresshe free,
That with the stremes of youre eyen cleere
Ye wolde som-tyme frendly on me see,
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
With-outen braunche of vice on any wise,
In trouthe alwey to don yow my seruise,

"As to my lady right and chief resorte,
With al my wit and al my diligence;
And I to han, right as yow list, confort;
Under yowre yerde egal to myn offence,
As deth, if that I breke youre defence;
And that ye deigne me so muche honoure
Me to comanden aught in any houre;

"And I to ben youre verray, humble, trewe,
Secret, and in myn paynes pacient,
And euere mo desiren fresshly newe
To serue and ben ay ylike diligent,
And with good herte al holly youre talent
Receyuen wel, how sore that me smerte —
Lo, this mene I, myn owen swete herte."

Quod Pandarus, "lo, here an hard requeste,
And resonable, a lady forto werne!
Now Nece myn, by natal Ioues feste,
Were I a god ye sholden sterue as yerne,
That heren wel this man wol no thing yerne
But youre honour, and sen hym al-most sterue,
And ben so loth to suffren hym yow serue."

With that she gan hire eyen on hym caste
fful esily and ful debonairly,
Auysyng hire, and hied nought to faste
With neuere a word but seyde hym softly,
"Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewly,
And in swich forme as he gan now deuyse,
Receyuen hym fully to my seruyse,
"Bysechyng hym for goddes loue, that he
Wolde in honour of trouthe and gentilesse,
As I wel mene, ek menen wel to me,
And myn honour with wit and bisynesse
Ay kepe, and if I may don hym gladnesse,
ffrom hennes-forth, i-wys, I nyl nought feyne.
Now beth al hool, no lenger ye ne pleyne.
"But natheles, this warne I yow," quod she,
"A kynges sone al-though ye be, ywys,
Ye shal namore han souereignete
Of me in loue than right in that cas is;
Ny nyl forbere, if that ye don amys,
To wratthe yow, and whil that ye me serue,
Chericen yow right after ye disserue.
"And shortly, deere herte and al my knyght,
Beth glad and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely with al my myght
Youre bittre tornen al in-to swetenesse;
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
ffor euery wo ye shal recouere a blisse."
And hym in armes took and gan hym kisse.

ffil Pandarus on knees and vp his eyen
To heuen threw and held hise hondes highe,
"Immortal god," quod he, "that mayst nought deyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifie;
And Venus, thow mayst maken melodie;
With-outen hond me semeth that in towne
ffor this merueille ich here ech belle sowne.
"But ho, namore as now of this matere;
ffor whi this folk wol comen vp anon,
That han the lettre red — lo, I hem here;
But I coniure the, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thow Troilus, whan thow mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye ben at my warnyng,
ffor I ful well shal shape youre comyng;

"And eseth there youre hertes right ynough;
And lat se which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of loue aright," — therwith he lough —
"ffor ther haue ye a leiser forto telle."
Quod Troilus, "how longe shalle I dwelle,
Er this be don?" Quod he, "whan thow mayst ryse,
This thyng shal be right as I yow deuyse."

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen vpward, right at the steires ende;
And lord, so thanne gan gronen Troilus,
His brother and his suster forto blende.
Quod Pandarus, "it tyme is that we wende;
Tak, Nece myn, youre leue at alle thre,
And lat hem speke and cometh forth with me."

She took hire leue at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel koude, and they hire reuerence
Unto the fulle diden hardly,
And wonder wel spoken in hire absence
Of hire in preyning of hire excellence —
Hire gouernaunce, hire wit, and hire manere
Comendeden, it ioie was to here.

Now lat hire wende vnto hire owen place,
And torne we to Troilus ayein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre pace,
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardyn seyn;
And of Eleyne and hym he wolde feyn
Deliered ben, and seyde that hym leste
To slepe and after tales haue reste.

Eleyne hym kiste and took hire leue blyue,
Deiphebus ek, and hom wente euery wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryue,
To Troilus tho com as lyne right;
And on a paillet al that glade nyght
By Troilus he lay with mery chere
To tale, and wel was hem they were yfeere.

Whan euery wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores weren faste yshette,
To telle in short with-outen wordes mo,
This Pandarus with-outen any lette
Up roos and on his beddes syde hym sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow deuyse.

"Myn alderleuest lord and brother deere,
God woot, and thow, that it sat me so soore,
Whan I the saugh so langwisshyng to-yere
ffor loue, of which thi wo wax alwey moore,
That I, with al my myght and al my loore
Haue euere sithen don my bisynesse
To brynge the to ioye out of distresse;

"And haue it brought to swich plit as thow wooste,
So that thorugh me thow stondest now in weye
To faren wel — I sey it for no boste,
And wostow whi? for shame it is to seye:
ffor =e haue I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I neuere do shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

"That is to seye, for the am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a meene
As maken wommen vn-to men to comen —
Al sey I nought, thow wost wel what I meene:
ffor the haue I my Nece, of vices cleene,
So fully maad thi gentilesse triste,
That al shal ben right as thi seluen liste.

"But god, that al woot, take I to witnesse,
That neuere I this for coueitise wroughte,
But oonly for tabregge that distresse,
ffor which wel neigh thow deidest, as me thoughte.
But goode brother, do now as the oughte,
ffor goddes loue, and kepe hire out of blame,
Syn thow art wys, and saue alwey hire name.
"ffor wel thow woost, the name as yet of here
Among the peele, as who seyth, halwed is;
ffor that man is vnborne, I dar wel swere,
That euere wiste that she dide amys. 270
But wo is me that I, that cause al this,
May thynken that she is my Nece deere,
And I hire em and traitour ek y-feere.

"And were it wist that I, thorugh myn engyn,
Hadde in my Nece yput this fantasie,
To doon thi lust and holly to ben thyn,
Whi, al the world vpon it wolde crie,
And seyn that I the werste trecherie
Dide in this cas that euere was bigonne,
And she forlost, and thow right nought y-wonne. 280

"Wher-fore, er I wol ferther gon a pas,
The preye ich eft, althogh thow shuldest deye,
That priuete go with vs in this cas —
That is to seyn, that thow vs neuere wreye;
And be nought wroth though I the ofte preye
To holden secre swich an heigh matere,
ffor skilfull is, thow woost wel, my praiere.

"And thynk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
ffor makynge of auantes, as men rede;
And what meschaunce in this world yet ther is,
ffro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
ffor which thise wise clerkes that ben dede
Han euere yet prouerbed to vs yonge
That 'firste vertue is to kepe tonge.’

"And nere it that I wilne as now tabregge
Diffusioun of speche, I koude al-moost
A thousand olde stories the allegge
Of wommen lost thorugh fals and foles bost;
Prouerbes kanst thi self inowe and woost
Ayeins that vice for to ben a labbe,
Al seyde men soth as often as thei gabbe.

"O tonge, allas, so often here byforne
Hath mad ful many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd, 'weilaway, the day that I was borne!’
And many a maydes sorwe forto newe;
And, for the more part, al is vntrewa
That men of yelp, and it were brought to preue —
Of kynde non auautour is to leue.

"Auautour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose a womman graunte me
Hire loue and seith that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or thre —
I-wis, I am auautour at the leeste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste.

"Now loke thanne if they be nought to blame,
Swich manere folk — what shal I klepe hem, what? —
That hem auaute of wommen, and by name,
That neuere yet bihyghte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat.
No wonder is, so god me sende hele,
Though wommen dreden with vs men to dele.

"I sey nought this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wise men, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the werld in now,
As wel for folie ofte as for malice;
ffor wel woot I in wise folk that vice
No womman drat, if she be wel auised;
ffor wyse ben by foles harm chastised.

"But now to Purpos, leue brother deere,
Haue al this thyng that I haue seyd in mynde,
And kepe the clos and be now of good cheere,
ffor at thi day thow shalt me trewe fynde.
I shal thi proces set in swych a kynde,
And god to-forn, that it shal the suffise,
ffor it shal be right as thow wolt deuyse.

"ffor wel I woot, thow menest wel, parde;
Ther-fore I dar this fully vndertake.
Thow woost ek what thi lady graunted the,
And day is set, the chartres vp to make.
Haue now good nyght, I may no lenger wake;
And bid for me syn thow art now in blysse,
That god me sende deth or soone lisse."

Who myghte tellen half the ioie or feste
Which that the soule of Troilus tho felte,
Heryng theeffect of Pandarus byheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for ioie wasten and to-melte,
And al the richesse of hise sikes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem namore.

But right so as thise holtes and thise hayis,
That han in wynter dede ben and dreye,
Reuesten hem in grene whan that May is,
Whan euery lusty liketh best to plye,
Right in that selue wise, soth to seye,
Wax sodeynliche his herte ful of ioie,
That gladder was ther neuere man in Troie.

And gan his look on Pandarus vp caste
fful sobrely and frendly forto se,
And seyde, "frend, in Aperil the laste —
As wel thow woost if it remembre the —
How neigh the deth for wo thow fownde me,
And how thow dedest al thi bisynesse
To knowe of me the cause of my destresse.

"Thow woost how longe ich it forbar to seye
To the that art the man that I best triste;
And peril non was it to the bywreye,
That wist I wel; but telle me, if the liste,
Sith I so loth was that thi self it wiste,
How dorst I mo tellen of this matere,
That quake now and no wight may vs here?

"But natheles, by that god I the swere,
That as hym list may al this world gouerne —
And if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleue, al were my lif eterne,
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it be-wreye, or dorst, or sholde konne,
ffor al the good that god made vnder sonne —

"That rather dey I wolde and determyne,
As thynketh me, now stokked in prisoun,
In wrecchidnesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Caytif to cruel kyng Agamenoun;
And this in all the temples of this town,
Up-on the goddes alle, I wol the swere
To-morwe day, if that it liketh the here.
"And that thow hast so muche i-do for me
That I ne may it neuere more disserue,
This know I wel, al myghte I now for the
A thousand tymes on a morwe sterue;
I kan namore but that I wol the serue
Right as thi sclae, whider so thow wende,
ffor euere more vn-to my lyues ende.

"But here, with al myn herte, I the biseche,
That neuere in me thow deme swich folie
As I shal seyn: me thoughte by thi speche
That this, which thow me dost for compaignie,
I sholde wene it were a baudereye —
I am nought wood, al if I lewed be;
It is nought so, that woot I wel, parde.

"But he that gooth for gold or for ricchesse
On swich message, calle hym what the liste;
And this that thow doost, calle it gentilesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and triste;
Departe it so, for wyde wher is wiste
How that ther is diuersite requered
Bytwixen thynges lik, as I haue lered.

"And that thow knowe I thynke nought, ne wene,
That this seruise a shame be or iape,
I haue my faire suster, Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she neuere so faire or wel y-shape,
Tel me which thow wilt of euerychone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

"But sith thow hast i-don me this seruyse,
My lif to saue, and for non hope of mede,
So, for the loue of god, this grete emprise
Perfourme it out, for now is moste nede;
ffor heigh and lough, with-owten any drede,
I wol alwey thyn hestes alle kepe;
Haue now good nyght, and lat vs bothe slepe."

Thus held hym eche of other wel apayed,
That al the world ne myghte it bet amende;
And on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Eche to his owen nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fire he brende
ffor sharp desire of hope and of plesaunce,
He nought forgat his wise gouernaunce.

But in hym self with manhod gan restreyne
Ech racle dede and ech vnbridled cheere,
That alle tho that lyuen, soth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente as touchyng this matere:
ffrom euery wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he koude.

And al the while which that I yow deuyse,
This was his lif: with all his fulle myght
By day he was in Martes heigh seruyse —
This is to seyn in armes as a knyght;
And for the more part, the longe nyght
He lay and thoughte how that he myghte serue
His lady best, hire thonk forto disserue.

Nil I naught swere, al-though he lay ful softe,
That in his thought he nas somwhat disesed,
Ne that he torned on his pilwes ofte,
And wold of that hym missed han ben sesed.
But in swich cas men ben nought alwey plesed,
ffor aught I woot, namore than was he;
That kan I deme of possibilitee.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this while, as writen is in geeste,
He say his lady som tymne and also
She with hym spak whan that she dorst or leste;
And by hire both auys as was the beste
Apoynteden full warly in this nede,
So as they durste, how they wolde procede.

But it was spoken in so short a wise,
In swich a-wait alwey and in swich feere,
Lest any wight deuynen or deuyse
Wold of hem two or to it laye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupide wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hire speche aright an ende.

But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,
Hise wise goost took ay of al swych heede,
It semed hire he wiste what she thoughte
With-outen word, so that it was no nede
To bidde hym ought to doon or ought for-beede;
ffor which hir thought that loue, al come it late,
Of alle ioie hadde opned hire the yate.

And shortly of this proces forto pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette.
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, er she lette,
She thonked god that euere she with hym mette;
So koude he hym gouerne in swich seruyse,
That al the world ne myght it bet deuyse.

ffor whi she fond hym so discret in al,
So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hire a wal
Of stiel and sheld from euery displesaunce;
That to ben in his goode gouernaunce,
So wis he was, she was namore afered —
I mene as fer as oughte ben requered.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fire,
Was euere y-like prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desire.
He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent,
He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent,
That neuere man, as in his frendes nede,
Ne bar hym bet than he with-outen drede.

But now, parauntour, som man wayten wolde
That euery word, or soonde, or look, or cheere
Of Troilus that I rehercen sholde,
In al this while vnto his lady deere:
I trowe it were a long thyng forto here,
Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte,
Hise wordes alle, or euery look, to poynete.

ffor sothe I haue naught herd it don er this
In story non, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde, I koude nought, y-wys;
ffor ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctour, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which hym liste nought write;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endite?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
That stondyng in concord and in quiete
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I haue told, and in this tyme swete —
Saue only often myghte they nought mete,
Ne leiser haue hire speches to fulfelle —
That it bifel right as I shal yow telle,

That Pandarus, that euere dide his myght
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As forto bryngen to his hows som nyght
His faire Nece and Troilus yfere,
Wher-as at leiser al this heighe matere,
Touchyng here loue, were at the fulle vp-bounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

ffor he with gret deliberacioun
Hadde euery thyng that herto myght auaille
fforncast and put in execucioun,
And neither left for cost ne for traaille;
Come if hem list, hem sholde no thyng faille;
And forto ben in ought aspied there,
That wiste he wel an impossible were.

Dredeles it clere was in the wynde
Of euery pie and euery lette-game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blynde
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
This tymbur is al redy vp to frame;
Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
A certeyn houre in which she comen sholde.

And Troilus, that al this purueiaunce
Knew at the fulle and waited on it ay,
Hadde here vpon ek mad gret ordinaunce,
And found his cause, and therto al the aray,
If that he were missed, nyght or day,
Ther while he was aboute this seruyse,
That he was gon to don his sacrifise,

And moste at swich a temple allone wake,
Answered of Apollo forto be,
And first to sen the holy laurer quake
Er that Apollo spak out of the tree
To telle hym next whan Grekes sholde flee —
And forthy lette hym no man, god forbede,
But prey Apollo helpen in this nede.

Now is ther litel more forto doone,
But Pandare vp and, shortly forto seyne,
Right sone vp-on the chaungynge of the moone,
Whan lightles is the world a nyght or tweyne,
And that the wolken shop hym forto reyne,
He streght o morwe vn-to his Nece wente —
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

Whan he was come, he gan anon to pleye
As he was wont, and of hym self to iape;
And finaly he swor and gan hire seye,
By this and that, she sholde hym nought escape,
Ne lenger don hym after hire to cape;
But certeynly she moste, by hire leue,
Come soupen in his hous with hym at eue.

At which she lough and gan hire faste excuse,
And seyde, "it reyneth, lo, how sholde I gon?"
"Lat be," quod he, "ne stant nought thus to muse;
This moot be don, ye shal be ther anon."
So at the laste herof they fille aton,
Or elles, softe he swor hire in hire ere,
He nolde neuer comen ther she were.

Soone after this she to hym gan to rowne,
And axed hym if Troilus were there.
He swor hire nay, for he was out of towne,
And seyde, "Nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurste neuere han the more fere;
ffor rather than men myghte hym ther aspie,
Me were leuere a thousand fold to dye."

Nought list myn auctour fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of towne y-fare,
As if he seyde ther-of soth or no;
But that, with-owten await, with hym to go
She graunted hym, sith he hire that bisoughte,
And as his Nece obeyed as hire oughte.
But natheles yet gan she hym biseche,
Al-though with hym to gon it was no fere,
ffor to ben war of goosissh poeples speche,
That dremen thynges which that neuere were,
And wel auyse hym whom he broughte there;
And seyde hym, "Em, syn I most on yow triste,
Loke al be wel and do now as yow liste."

He swor hire yes, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in heuene dwelle,
Or elles were hym leuere, soule and bones,
With Pluto kyng as depe ben in helle
As Tantalus — what sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leue;
And she to soper com whan it was eue.

With a certein of hire owen men,
And with hire faire nece Antigone,
And other of hire wommen nyne or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and myght it se
Thorugh-out a litel wyndow in a stewe,
Ther he bishet syn mydnyght was in mewe,

Unwist of euery wight but of Pandare?
But to the point: now whan that she was come,
With alle ioie and alle frendes fare,
Hire Em anon in armes hath hire nome,
And after to the soper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette —
God woot, ther was no deynte forto fette.

And after soper gonnen they to rise,
At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
And wel was hym that koude best deuyse
To liken hire or that hire laughen made:
He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
But at the laste, as euery thyng hath ende,
She took hire leue and nedes wolde wende.

But O fortune, executrice of wyerdes,
O influences of thise heuenes hye,
Soth is that vnder god ye ben oure hierdes,
Though to vs bestes ben the causes wrie.
This mene I now, for she gan homward hye,
But execut was al bisyde hire leue
The goddes wil, for which she moste bleue.

The bente moone with hire hornes pale,
Saturne, and loue in Cancro ioyned were,
That swych a reyn from heuen gan auale,
That euery maner womman that was there
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray feere;
At which Pandare tho lough and seyde thenne,
"Now were it tyme a lady to gon henne!"

"But goode Nece, if I myghte euere plese
Yow any thyng, than prey ich yow," quod he,
"To don myn herte as now so grete an ese
As forto dwelle here al this nyght with me,
ffor whi this is youre owen hous, parde.
ffor by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame."

Criseyde, which that koude as muche good
As half a world, took hede of his preiere;
And syn it ron and al was on a flod,
She thoughte, "as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a frendes chere,
And haue a thonk, as grucche and thanne a-bide —
ffor hom to gon, it may nought wel bitide."

"I wol," quod she, "myn vncele lief and deere,
Syn that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but a game I wolde go."
"I-wys, graunt mercy, Nece," quod he tho,
"Were it a game or no, soth forto telle,
Now am I glad, syn that yow list to dwelle."

Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright
The newe iote and al the feste agayn;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he myght,
He wolde han hyed hire to bedde fayn,
And seyde, "lord, this is an huge rayn!
This were a weder for to slepen inne —
And that I rede vs soone to bygynne.

"And Nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
ffor that we shul nat liggen far a-sonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,  
Heren noyse of reynes nor of thonder?  
By god, right in my litel closet yonder.  
And I wol in that outer hous alone  
Be wardein of youre wommen euerichone.

"And in this myddel chambre that ye se  
Shal youre wommen slepen wel and softe;  
And there I seyde shal youre seluen be;  
And if ye liggen wel to-nyght, com ofte,  
And careth nought what weder is a-lofte.  
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,  
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste."

Ther nys no more, but here-after soone,  
The voide dronke, and trauers drawe anon,  
Gan euery wight that hadde nought to done  
More in the place out of the chaumbre gon;  
And euere mo so sterneliche it ron,  
And blew ther-with so wondirliche loude,  
That wel neigh no man heren other koude.

Tho Pandarus, hire Em, right as hym oughte,  
With wommen swiche as were hire most aboute,  
fful glad vnto hire beddes syde hire broughte,  
And took his leue and gan ful lowe loute,  
And seyde, "here at this closet dore with-oute,  
Right ouere-thwart, youre wommen liggen alle,  
That whom yow list of hem ye may hire calle."

So whan that she was in the closet leyde,  
And alle hire wommen forth by ordinaunce  
Abedde weren, ther as I haue seyde,  
Ther was nomore to skippen nor to trauce,  
But boden go to bedde, with meschaunce,  
If any wight was steryng any where,  
And lat hem slepen that a-bedde were.

But Pandarus that wel koude ech a deel  
The olde daunce and euery point ther-inne,  
Whan that he sey that alle thyng was wel,  
He thought he wolde vp-on his werk bigynne,  
And gan the stuwe doore al softe vpynne,  
And stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette,  
By Troilus a-down right he hym sette.
And shortly to the point right forto gon,
Of al this werk he tolde hym word and ende,
And seyde, "make the redy right anon,
ffor thow shalt in-to heuene blisse wende."
"Now blisful Venus, thow me grace sende," 705
Quod Troilus, "for neuere yet no nede
Hadde ich er now, ne haluendel the drede."

Quod Pandarus, "ne drede the neuere a deel,
ffor it shal be right as thou wolt desire;
So thryue I, this nyght shal I make it weel,
Or casten al the gruwel in the fire."
"Yet, blisful Venus, this nyght thow me enspire," 710
Quod Troilus, "as wys as I the serue,
And euere bet and bet shal til I sterue.

"And if ich hadde, O Venus ful of myrthe,
Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thow combust or let were in my birthe,
Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne
Of grace and that I glad ayein may turne,
ffor loue of hym thow louedest in the shawe —
I meene Adoun, that with the boor was slawe. 720

"O Ioue ek, for the loue of faire Europe,
The which in forme of bole awey thow fette,
Now help; O Mars, thow with thi blody cope,
ffor loue of Cipres, thow me nought ne lette;
O Phebus, thynk whan Dane hire seluen shette
Under the bark and laurer wax for drede,
Yet for hire loue, O help now at this nede. 725

"Mercurie, for the loue of Hierse eke,
ffor which Pallas was with Aglawros wroth,
Now helpe, and ek Diane, I the biseke,
That this viage be nought to the looth;
O fatal sustren, which er any cloth
Me shapen was, my destine me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bygonne." 730

Quod Pandarus, "thow wrecched mouses herte,
Artow agast so that she wol the bite?
Why, don this furred cloke vp-on thy sherte,
And folwe me, for I wol haue the wite; 735
But bide, and lat me gon bifor a lite,
And with that word he gan vndon a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe.

The sterne wynd so loude gan to route,
That no wight oother noise myghte heere;
And they that layen at the dore with-oute
fful sikerly they slepten alle y-fere;
And Pandarus with a ful sobre cheere
Goth to the dore anon, with-outen lette,
Ther as they laye, and softely it shette.

And as he com ayeynward Pryuely,
His Nece a-wook and axed, "who goth there?"
"My dere Nece," quod he, "it am I.
Ne wondreth nought, ne haue of it no fere."
And ner he com and seyde hire in hire ere,
"No word, for loue of god, I yow biseche:
Lat no wight rise and heren of oure speche."

"What, which wey be ye comen, benedicite?"
Quod she, "and how thus vnwist of hem alle?"
"Here at this secre trappe dore," quod he.
Quod tho Criseyde, "lat me som wight calle."
"I, god forbede that it sholde falle."
Quod Pandarus, "that ye swich folye wrought;
They myghte demen thyng they neuere er thought.

"It is nought good a slepyng hound to wake,
Ne yeue a wight a cause to deuyne;
Youre wommen slepen alle, I vnertake,
So that for hem the hous men myghte myne,
And slepen wollen til the sonne shyne;
And whan my tale brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende.

"Now Nece myn, ye shul wel vnderstonde,"
Quod he, "so as ye wommen demen alle,
That forto holde in loue a man in honde,
And hym hire lief and deere herte calle,
And maken hym anhowue abooue a calle —
I meene, as loue another in this while —
She doth hire self a shame and hym a gyle.

"Now wherby that I telle yow al this:
Ye woot youre self as wel as any wight
How that youre loue al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knyght,
Oon of this world, and therto trouthe y-plight,
That, but it were on hym alonge, ye nolde
Hym neuere falsen while ye lyuen sholde.

"Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly forto seyn,
Is thorugh a goter by a pryue wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of euery manere wight, certeyn,
Saue of my self, as wisly haue I ioye,
And by that feith I shal Priam of Troie.

"And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to woodnesse,
But if god helpe, and cause whi this is:
He seith hym told is of a frend of his,
How that ye sholden louen oon that hatte Horaste,
ffor sorwe of which this nyght shal ben his laste."

Criseyde, which that all this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hire herte colde,
And with a sik she sorwfully answerde,
"Allas, I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My deere herte wolde me nought holde
So lightly fals — allas, conceytes wronge,
What harm they don! for now lyue I to longe.

"Horaste! allas, and falsen Troilus?
I knowe hym nowt, god helpe me so," quod she,
"Allas, what wikked spirit tolde hym thus?
Now certes, Em, to-morwe and I hym se,
I shal therof as ful excusen me
As euere dide womman, if hym like."
And with that word she gan ful soore sike.

"O god," quod she, "so worldly selynesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
I-medled is with many a bitternesse!
fful angwissous than is, god woot," quod she,
"Condicioun of veyn prosperitee;
ffor either ioies comen nought yfeere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

"O brotel wele of mannes ioie vnstable! With what wight so thow be or how thow pleye, Either he woot that thow, ioie, art muable, Or woot it nought, it mot ben oon of tweye. Now if he woot it nought, how may he seye That he hath verray ioie and selynesse, That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

"Now if he woot that ioie is transitorie, As euery ioye of worldly thyng mot flee, Than euery tyme he that hath in memorie, The drede of lesyng maketh hym that he May in no perfitt selynesse be; And if to lese his ioie he sette a myte, Than semeth it that ioie is worth ful lite.

"Wherfore I wol diffyne in this matere, That trewely, for aught I kan espie-Ther is no verray weele in this world heere. But O thow wikked serpent, jalousie, Thow mysbyleued, enuyous folie, Why hastow Troilus made to me vntriste, That neuere yet agylt hym that I wiste?"

Quod Pandarus, "thus fallen is this cas."
"Why, Uncle myn," quod she, "who tolde hym this? Why doth my deere herte thus, allas?"
"Ye woot, ye, Nece myn," quod he, "what is. I hope al shal be wel that is amys; ffor ye may quenche al this if that yow lest — And doth right so, for I holde it the beste."

"So shal I do to-morwe, ywys," quod she, "And god to-forn, so that it shal suffise." "To-morwe? allas, that were a faire," quod he; "Nay, nay, it may nat stonden in this wise. ffor, Nece myn, thus writen clerkes wise, That peril is with drecchyng in y-drawe — Nay, swiche abodes ben nought worth an hawe.

"Nece, alle thyng hath tyme, I dar avowe, ffor whan a chaumbre a-fire is, or an halle, Wel more nede is it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute and axe amonges alle  
How this candele in the strawe is falle.  
A, benedicite, for al among that fare  
The harm is don, and fare-wel feldefare!

"And Nece myn, ne take it naught a-grief:  
If that ye suffre hym al nyght in this wo,  
God help me so, ye hadde hym neuere lief,  
That dar I seyn now ther is but we two.  
But wel I woot that ye wol nat do so—  
Ye ben to wys to doon so gret folie,  
To putte his lif al nyght in iupertie."

"Hadde I hym neuere lief? by god, I weene  
Ye hadde neuere thyng so lief," quod she.  
"Now, by my thrift," quod he, "that shal be seene;  
ffor syn ye make this ensaumple of me,  
If ich al nyght wolde hym in sorwe se,  
ffor al the tresour in the town of Troie,  
I bidde god I neuere mote haue ioie."

"Now loke thanne, if ye that ben his loue  
Shul putte his lif al night in iupertie  
ffor thyng of nought, now, by that god aboue,  
Naught oonly this delay comth of folie,  
But of malice, if that I shal naught lie.  
What! platly, and ye suffre hym in destresse,  
Ye neyther bounte don ne gentilesse."

Quod tho Criseyde, "wol ye don o thyng,  
And ye ther-with shal stynte al his disese?  
Haue heere and bereth hym this blewe ryng,  
ffor ther is no thyng myghte hym bettre plese,  
Saue I my self, ne more his herte a-pese;  
And sey my deere herte that his sorwe  
Is causeles, that shal be sen to-morwe."

"A ryng?" quod he, "ye, haselwodes shaken!  
Ye, Nece myn, that ryng moste han a stoon  
That myghte dede men alyue maken,  
And swich a ryng trowe I that ye haue non:  
Discrecioun out of youre hed is gon,  
That fele I now," quod he, "and that is routhe—  
O tyme i-lost, wel maistow corsen slouthe!
"Woot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth nought, ne stynteth ek, for lite?
But if a fool were in a ialous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But feffe hym with a fewe wordes white
A-nothir day, whan that I myghte hym fynde;
But this thyng stant al in another kynde.

"This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deth he wol his sorwes wreke;
ffor trusteth wel, how sore that hym smerte,
He wol to you no ialous wordes speke.
And forthi, Nece, er that his herte breke,
So speke youre self to hym of this matere —
ffor with a word ye may his herte stere.

"Now haue I told what peril he is inne,
And his comynge vnwist is to euery wight;
Ne, parde, harm may ther be non, ne synne —
I wol my self be with yow al this nyght.
Ye knowe ek how it is youre owen knyght,
And that bi right ye moste vp-on hym triste —
And I al prest to fecche hym whan yow liste."

This accident so pitous was to here,
And ek so like a sooth at prime face,
And Troilus hire knyght to hir so deere,
His priue commyng and the siker place,
That though that she did hym as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thynges as they stoode,
No wonder is, syn she did al for goode.

Criseyde answerde, "as wisly god at reste
My soule brynge, as me is for hym wo;
And Em, i-wis, fayn wolde I don the beste,
If that ich hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for hym go,
I am, til god me bettre mynde sende,
At dulcarnoun, right at my wittes ende."

Quod Pandarus, "yee, Nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnoun called is 'flemynge of wrecches.'
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol nought lere,
ffor verray sloute or other wilfull tecches.
This seyd by hem that ben nought worth two fecches;
But ye ben wis, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard ne skilful to withstonde."

"Than Em," quod she, "doth her-of as yow liste;
But er he come, I wil vp first arise;
And, for the loue of god, syn al my triste
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wise,
So werketh now in so discret a wise
That I honour may haue and he plesaunce;
ffor I am here al in youre gouernaunce."

"That is wel seyd," quod he, "my Nece deere.
Ther good thrift on that wise gentil herte!
But liggeth stille and taketh hym right here —
It nedeth nought no ferther for hym sterte.
And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte,
ffor loue of god, and Venus I the herye,
ffor soone hope I we shul ben alle merye."

This Troilus ful soone on knees hym sette
fful sobrely, right be hyre beddes hede,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette; 955
But lord, so she wex sodeynliche rede!
Ne though men sholde smyten of hire hede,
She kouthe nought a word a-right out brynge
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn comynge.

But Pandarus, that so wel koude feele 960
In euery thyng, to pleye anon bigan,
And seyde, "Nece, se how this lord kan knele:
Now, for youre trouthe, se this gentil man."
And with that word he for a quysshen ran,
And seyde, "kneleth now, while that yow lest,
%ere god youre hertes brynge soone at reste."

Kan I naught seyn, for she bad hym nought rise,
If sorwe it putte out of hire remembraunce,
Or elles that she took it in the wise
Of dewete, as for his obseruaunce;
But wel fynde I she dede hym this plesaunce,
That she hym kiste, al-though she siked sore,
And bad hym sitte adown with-outen more.

Quod Pandarus, "now wol ye wel bigynne;
Now doth hym sitte, goode Nece deere,
Up-on youre beddes syde al ther with-inne,
That eche of yow the bet may other heere."
And with that word he drow hym to the feere,
And took a light and fond his contenaunce,
As forto looke vpon an old romaunce.

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,
And clere stood on a grounde of sikernesse,
Al thoughte she hire seruant and hire knyght
Ne sholde of right non vntrouthe in hire gesse,
Yet natheles, considered his distresse,
And that loue is in cause of swich folie,
Thus to hym spak she of his ialousie:

"Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of loue, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte ek goodly, make resistence,
And ek by-cause I felte wel and say
youre grete trouthe and seruise euery day,
And that youre herte al myn was, soth to seyne,
This drof me forto rewe vp-on youre peyne.

"And youre goodnesse haue I founde alwey yit,
Of which, my deere herte and al my knyght,
I thonke it yow as fer as I haue wit,
Al kan I nought as muche as it were right;
And I emforth my connyng and my might
Haue, and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool with al myn herte;

"And dredeles that shal be founde at preue.
But herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye nought yow greue,
Though I to yow right on youre self compleyne;
ffor therwith mene I fynaly the peyne,
That halt youre herte and myn in heuynesse,
ffully to slen and euery wrong redresse.

"My goode myn, noot I for why ne how
That ialousie, alas, that wikked wyuere,
Thus causeles is cropen in-to yow,
The harm of which I wolde fayn delyuere.
Allas, that he, al hool or of hym slyuere,
Shuld han his refut in so digne a place —
Ther loue hym sone out of youre herte arace!

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"But O thow Ioue, O auctour of nature,  
Is this an honour to thi deyte,  
That folk vngiltif suffren hire iniure,  
And who that giltif is al quyt goth he?  
O, were it lefull forto pleyn on the,  
That vndeserued suffrest ialousie,  
Of that I wolde vp-on the pleyne and crie.

"Ek al my wo is this, that folk now vsen  
To seyn right thus: 'ye, ialousie is loue’;  
And wolde a busshel venym al excusen,  
ffor that o greyn of loue is on it shoue.  
But that woot heighe god that sit a-boue,  
If it be likkere loue or hate or grame —  
And after that it oughte bere his name.

"But certeyn is, som manere ialousie  
Is excusable more than som, i-wys,  
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasie  
With piete so wel repressed is  
That it vnethe doth or seyth amys,  
But goodly drynketh vp al his distresse —  
And that excuse I for the gentilesse.

"And som so full of furie is and despit  
That it sourmounteth his repressioun;  
But, herte myn, ye be nat in that plit,  
That thonke I god, for which youre passioun  
I wol nought calle it but illusioun,  
Of habundaunce of loue and besy cure,  
That doth youre herte this disese endure.

"Of which I am right sory but nought wrothe;  
But, for my deuoir and youre hertes reste,  
Wher so yow list, by ordal or by othe,  
By sort, or in what wise so yow lest,  
ffor loue of god lat preue it for the beste;  
And if that I be gilte, do me deye.  
Allas, what myght I more don or seye?"

With that a fewe brighte teris newe  
Owt of hire eighen fille, and thus she seyde:  
"Now god, thow woost, in thought ne dede vntrewe  
To Troilus was neuere yet Criseyde."
With that here heed down in the bed she leyde,
And with the sheete it wreigh and sighte soore,
And held hire pees; nought o word spak she more—

But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe:
So hope I that he shal for he best may;
ffor I haue seyn of a ful misty morwe
ffolowen ful ofte a myrie someris day,
And after wynter foloweth grene May;
Men sen alday, and reden ek in stories,
That after sharpe shoures ben victories.

This Troilus, whan he hire wordes herde,
Haue ye no care, hym liste nought to slepe;
ffor it thought hym no strokes of a yerde
To heere or seen Criseyde, his lady, wepe;
But wel he felt aboute his herte crepe
ffor eueri tere which that Criseyde asterte,
The crampe of deth, to streyne hym by the herte.

And in his mynde he gan the tyme acorse
That he com there, and that he was born;
ffor now is wikke torned in-to worse,
And al that labour he hath don by-forn,
He wende it lost, he thought he nas but lorn.
"O Pandarus," thoughte he, "allas, thi wile
Serueth of nought, so weylaway the while."

And therwith-al he heng adown the hede,
And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte;
What myghte he seyn? he felte he nas but dede,
ffor wroth was she that sholde hise sorwes lighte.
But naetheles, whan that he spoken myghte,
Than seyde he thus, "god woot that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I nought to blame."

Ther-with the sorwe so his herte shette
That from his eyen fil ther nought a tere,
And eueri spirit his vigour in knette,
So they astoned or oppressed were;
The felyng of his sorwe or of his fere,
Or of aught elles, fled was out of towne,
And down he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

This was no litel sorwe forto se;
But al was hust, and Pandare vp as faste,
"O Nece, pes, or we be lost," quod he,
"Beth naught agast"; but certeyn, at the laste,
ffor this or that, he in-to bed hym caste,
And seyde, "O thef, is this a mannes herte?"
And of he rente al to his bare sherte,
And seyde, "Nece, but ye helpe vs now,
Allas, youre owen Troilus is lorn."
"I-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
fful fayn," quod she, "allas, that I was born."
"Yee, Nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?" quod Pandare,
"Sey 'al foryeue,' and stynt is al this fare."
"Ye, that to me," quod she, "ful leuere were
Than al the good the sonne a-boute gooth."
And therwith-al she swor hym in his ere,
"I-wys, my deere herte, I am nought wroth,
Haue here my trouthe," and many an other oth;
"Now speke to me, for it am I, Criseyde" —
But al for nought; yit myght he nought a-breyde.
Therwith his pous and paumes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples tweyne;
And to deliueren hym fro bittre bondes,
She ofte hym kiste and, shortly forto seyne,
Hym to reuoken she did al hire peyne.
So at the laste, he gan his breth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe,
And gan bet mynde and reson to hym take,
But wonder soore he was abayst, i-wis;
And with a sik, whan he gan bet a-wake,
He seyde, "O mercy, god, what thynge is this?"
"Why do ye with youre seluen thus amys?"
Quod tho Criseyde, "is this a mannes game?
What, Troilus, wol ye do thus for shame?"
And therwith-al hire arme ouere hym she leyde,
And al foryaf and ofte tyme hym keste.
He thonked hire and to hire spak and seyde
As fil to purpos for his hertes reste;
And she to that answerd hym as hire lest,
And with hire goodly wordes hym disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to conforte.

Quod Pandarus, "for aught I kan aspien,
This light nor I ne seruen here of nought;
Light is nought good for sike folkes yen;
But for the loue of god, syn ye ben brought
In thus good plit, lat now no heuy thought
Ben hangyng in the hertes of yow tweye" —
And bar the candel to the chymeneye.

Soone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she swiche othes as hire leste deuyse
Hadde of hym take, hire thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause ek non, to bidde hym thennes rise.
Yet lasse thyng than othes may suffise
In many a cas; for euery wyght, I gesse,
That loueth wel meneth but gentilesse.

But in effect she wolde wite anon
Of what man, and ek wheer, and also why,
He ialous was, syn ther was cause non,
And ek the sygne that he took it by,
She badde hym that to telle hire bisily;
Or elles, certeyn, she bar hym on honde,
That this was don of malice, hire to fonde.

Withouten more, shortly forto seyne,
He most obeye unto his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm he moste feyne.
He seyde hire, whan she was at swiche a feste,
She myght on hym han loked at the leste —
Noot I nought what, al deere ynough a rysshe,
As he that nedes most a cause fisshe.

And she anserde, "swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, syn I non yvel mene?
ffor, by that god that bought vs bothe two,
In alle thyng is myn entente cleene.
Swiche argumentes ne ben naught worth a beene.
Wol ye the childish ialous contrefete?
Now were it worthi that ye were y-bete."

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to sike;
Lest she be wroth hym thoughte his herte deyde,
And seyde, "allas, vp-on my sorwes sike
Haue mercy, swete herte myn, Criseyde.
And if that in tho wordes that I seyde
Be any wrong, I wol nomore trespace.
Doth what yow list, I am al in youre grace."

And she answere, "of gilt misericorde —
That is to seyn, that I foryeue al this;
And euere more on this nyght yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do namore amys."
"Nay, dere herte myn," quod he, "i-wys,"
"And now," quod she, "that I haue don yow smerte,
ffor-yeue it me, myn owene swete herte."

This Troilus, with blisse of that supprised,
Putte al in goddes hand, as he that mente
No thing but wel, and sodeynly auysed,
He hire in armes faste to hym hente.
And Pandarus with a ful good entente
Leyde hym to slepe and seyde, "if ye be wise,
Swouneth nought now, lest more folk arise."

What myghte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sperhauk hath it in his foot?
I kan namore, but of thise ilke tweye —
To whom this tale sucre be or soot —
Though that I tarie a yer, som tyme I moot,
After myn auctour, tellen hire gladnesse,
As wel as I haue told hire heuynesse.

Criseyde, which that felte hire thus i-take —
As writen clerkes in hire bokes olde —
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
Whan she hym felte hire in his armes folde.
But Troilus, all hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes seuene:
Thus sondry peynes bryngen folk to heuene.

This Troilus in armes gan hire streyne,
And seyde,"O swete, as euere mot I gon,
Now be ye kaught, now is ther but we tweyne,
Now yeldeth yow, for other bote is non."
To that Criseyde answerde thus anon,
"Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,
Ben yolde, i-wis, I were now nought heere."
O sooth is seyd, that heled forto be,
As of a fevre or other gret siknesse,
Men moste drynke, as men may ofte se,
fful bittre drynke; and forto han gladnesse,
Men drynken ofte peyne and gret distresse —
I mene it here as for this auentre,
That thorugh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assaied was byforn;
ffor out of wo in blisse now they flete,
Non swich they felten syn they were born.
Now is this bet than bothe two be lorn:
ffor loue of god, take euery woman heede
To werken thus, if it comth to the neede.

Criseyde, al quyt from euery drede and tene,
As she that iuste cause hadde hym to triste,
Made hym swich feste it ioye was to seene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste;
And as aboute a tree with many a twiste
Bytrent and writhe the swote wodebynde,
Gan ech of hem in armes other wynde.

And as the newe abaysed nyghtyngale,
That stynteth first whan she bygynneth to syngge,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wyght stirynge,
And after siker doth hire vois out rynge,
Right so Crisyde, whan hire drede stente,
Opned hire herte and tolde hym hire entente.

And right as he that seth his deth y-shapen,
And dyen mot in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth hym escapen,
And from his deth is brought in sykernesse,
ffor al this world, in swych present gladnesse,
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete:
With worse hap god lat vs neuere mete.

Hire armes smale, hire streghte bak and softe,
Hire sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hire snowissh throte, hire brestes rounde and lите;
Thus in this heuene he gan hym to delite,
And ther-with-al a thousand tyme hire kiste,
That what to don for ioe vnnethe he wiste.

Than seyde he thus, "O Loue, O Charite,
Thi moder ek, Citheria the swete,
After thi self next heried be she —
Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete;
And next that, Imeneus, I the grete:
ffor neuere man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde.

"Benigne loue, thow holy bond of thynges,
Who-so wol grace and list the nought honouren,
Lo, his desire wol fle with-outen wynges;
ffor noldestow of bownte hem socouren
That seruen best, and most alwey laboure,
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn certes,
But if thi grace passed oure desertes.

"And for thow me, that koude leest disserue
Of hem that noumbred ben vn-to thi grace,
Hast holpen, ther I likly was to sterue,
And me bistowed in so heigh a place
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I kan namore, but laude and reuerence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence."

And therwith-al Criseyde anon he kiste,
Of which certein she felte no disese;
And thus seyde he, "now wolde god I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow myghte plese.
What man," quod he, "was euere thus at ese
As I, on which the faireste and the beste
That euere I say deyneth hire herte reste?

"Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of this is felt in me,
That am vnworthi to so swete a wight.
But, herte myn, of youre benignite,
So thynketh, though that I vnworthi be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right thorugh the vertue of youre heigh seruyse.

"And for the loue of god, my lady deere,
Syn god hath wroght me for I shall yow serue —
As thus I mene, he wol ye be my steere,
To do me lyue, if that yow liste, or sterue —
So techeth me how that I may disserue
Youre thonk, so that I thorugh myn ignoraunce
Ne do no thyng that yow be displesaunce. 1295

"ffor certes, fresshe wommanliche wif,
This dar I seye, that trouth and diligence,
That shal ye fynden in me al my lif;
Ny wol nat, certein, breken youre defence;
And if I do, present or in absence,
ffor loue of god, lat sle me with the dede,
If that it like vnto youre wommanhede."

"I-wys," quod she, "myn owen hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte deere,
Gramercy, for on that is al my trist;
But lat vs falle awey fro this matere,
ffor it suffiseth this that seyd is heere,
And at o word, with-outen repentaunce,
Welcome my knyght, my pees, my suffisaunce." 1305

Of hire delit or ioies oon the leeste 1310
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But iuggeth ye that han ben at the feste
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye.
I kan namore, but thus thise ilke tweye
That nyght bitwixen drede and sikernesse
ffelten in loue the grete worthynesse.

O blisful nyght of hem so longe i-soughte,
How blithe vnto hem bothe two thow weere!
Why nad I swich oon with my soule y-boughte,
Ye, or the leeste ioie that was theere?
Awey, thou foule daunger and thow feere,
And lat hem in this heuene blisse dwelle,
That is so heigh that al ne kan I telle.

But sooth is, though I kan nat tellen all,
As kan myn auctour of his excellence,
Yet haue I seyd, and god to-forn, and shal
In euery thyng al holly his sentence;
And if that ich, at loues reuerence,
Haue eny word in-eched for the beste,
DOTH therwith-al right as youre seluen leste. 1330
ffor myne wordes, heere and euery parte,
I speke hem alle vnder correccioun
Of yow that felyng han in loues arte,
And putte it al in youre discrecioun
To encresse or maken dymynucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow biseche —
But now to purpos of my rather speche.

Thise ilke two, that ben in armes lafte,
So loth to hem a-sonder gon it were,
That ech from other wenden ben birafte,
Or elles, lo, this was hir mooste feere:
That al this thyng but nyce dremes were;
ffor which ful ofte ech of hem seyde, "O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus or elles I it meete?"

And lord, so he gan goodly on hire se,
That neuere his look ne bleynte from hire face,
And seyde, "O deere herte, may it be
That it be soth, that ye ben in this place?"
"Yee, herte myn, god thank I of his grace,"
Quod tho Criseyde, and ther-with-al hym kiste,
That where his spirit was for ioie he nyste.

This Troilus ful ofte hire eyen two
Gan forto kisse and seyde, "O eyen clere,
It weren ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady deere.
Though ther be mercy writen in youre cheere,
God woot the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde;
How koude ye with-outen bond me bynde?"

Therwith he gan hire faste in armes take,
And wel a thousand tymes gan he syke,
Naught swiche sorfull sikes as men make
ffor wo, or elles when that folk ben sike,
But esy sykes, swiche as ben to like,
That shewed his affeccioun with-inne;
Of swiche sikes koude he nought blynne.

Soone after this they spake of sondry thynges,
As fel to purpos of this auenture,
And pleyinge entrechaungeden hire rynges,
Of whiche I kan nought tellen no scripture;
But wel I woot a broche, gold and asure,
In which a rubye set was lik an herte
Criseyde hym yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

Lord, trowe ye a coueytous or a wrecche,
That blameth loue and halt of it despite,
That of tho pens that he kan mokre and cretche,
Was euere yit y-yeuen hym swich delite,
As is in loue, in o poymt, in som plite?
Nay, douteles, for also god me saue,
So perfit ioie may no nygard haue.

They wol seyn "yis," but lord, so that they lye,
Tho besy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
Thei callen loue a woodnesse or folie;
But it shall falle hem as I shal yow rede:
They shal forgon the white and ek the rede,
And lyue in wo, ther god yeue hem meschaunce,
And euery louere in his trouthe auaunce.

As wolde god tho wrecches that dispise
Seruise of loue hadde erys also longe
As hadde Mida, ful of coueuytise,
And therto dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
As Crassus didde for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vice,
And loueres nought, al-though they holde hem nyce.

Thise ilke two of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hire hertes wel assured were,
Tho gonne they to spoken and to pleye,
And ek rehercen how and whan and where
Thei knewe hem first, and euery wo or feere
That passed was; but al swich heuynesse,
I thank it god, was torned to gladnesse.

And euere mo when that hem fel to speke
Of any wo of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissyng al that tale sholde breke
And fallen in a newe ioye anoon,
And diden al hire myght, syn they were oon,
ffor to recoueren blisse and ben at eise,
And passed wo with ioie contrepeise.

Resoun wol nought that I speke of slepe.
ffor it acordeth nought to my matere —
God woot they took of that ful litel kepe;
But lest this nyght, that was to hem so deere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was byset in ioie and bisynesse
Of al that souneh in-to gentilesse.

But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete and after crowe,
And Lucyfer, the dayes messanger,
Gan for to rise and out hire bemes throwe,
And estward roos, to hym that koude it knowe,
ffortuna Maior, that anoon Criseyde,
With herte soor to Troilus thus seide,

"Myn hertes lif, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas, what me is wo,
That day of vs moot make disseueraunce;
ffor tyme it is to ryse and hennes go,
Or ellis I am lost for euere mo.
O nyght, allas, why nyltow ouere vs houe,
As longe as whan Almena lay by Ioue?

"O blake nyght, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by god this world to hide
At certeyn tymes wyth thi derke wede,
That vnder that men myghte in reste abide,
Wel oughten bestes pleyne and folk the chide,
That there as day wyth labour wolde vs breste,
That thow thus fleest and deynest vs nought reste.

"Thow doost, allas, to shortly thyn office,
Thow rakle nyght, ther god, maker of kynde,
The for thyn haste and thyn vnkynde vice
So faste ay to oure hemysperie bynde,
That neuere more vnder the ground thow wynde:
ffor now, for thow so hiest out of Troie,
Haue I forgon thus hastili my ioie."

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte hym tho, for pietous distresse
The blody teris from his herte melte,
As he that neuere yet swich heuynesse
Assayed hadde, out of so gret gladnesse,
Gan ther-with-al Crisyde, his lady deere,
In armes streyne and seyde in this manere:

"O cruel day, accusour of the ioie
That nyght and loue han stole and faste i-wryen,
Acorsed be thi comyng in-to Troye,
ffor every bore hath oon of thi bryghte yen.
Enuyous day, what list the so to spien?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place,
Ther god thi light so quenche for his grace? 1450

"Allas, what haue thise loueris the agylte,
Dispitous day? thyn be the peyne of helle!
ffor many a louere hastow slayn and wilte:
Thy pourynge in wol nowher lat hem dwelle.
What profrestow thi light here forto selle?
Go selle it hem that smale selys graue —
We wol the nought, vs nedeth no day haue."

And ek the sonne, Titan, gan he chide,
And seyde, "O fool, wel may men the dispise,
That hast the dawyng al nyght by thi syde,
And suffrest hire so soone vp fro the rise,
fforto disesen loueris in this wyse.
What, holde youre bed ther, thow, and ek thi Morwe,
I bidde god, so yeue yow bothe sorwe."

Ther-with ful soore he syghte and thus he seyde,
"My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The welle and roote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
And shal I rise, allas, and shal I so?
Now fele l that myn herte moot a-two,
ffor how sholde I my lif an houre saue,
Syn that with yow is al the lif ich haue? 1460

"What shal I don? for certes I not how,
Ne whan, allas, I shall the tyme see,
That in this plit I may ben eft with yow;
And of my lif, god woot how that shal be,
Syn that desire right now so biteth me,
That I am ded anon, but I retourne.
How sholde I longe, allas, fro yow soiourne?

"But natheles, myn owen lady bright,
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, youre humble seruant and youre knyght,
Were in youre herte i-set so fermely
As ye in myn — the which thyng, trewely,
Me leuere were than thise worldes tweyne —
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne."

To that Criseyde answere right anon,
And with a sik she seyde, "O herte deere,
The game, y-wys, so ferforth now is gon,
That first shal Phebus fallen fro his speere,
And euerich egle ben the dowues feere,
And euerich roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte.

"Ye ben so depe in-with myn herte graue,
That, though I wolde it torne out of my thought,
As wisly verray god my soule saue,
To dyen in the peyne, I koude nought;
And for the loue of god that vs hath wrought,
Lat in youre brayn non other fantasie
So crepe that it cause me to dye.

"And that ye me wolde han as faste in mynde
As I haue yow, that wolde I yow biseche;
And if I wiste sothly that to fynde,
God myghte nought a poynt my ioies eche.
But herte myn, with-outen more speche,
Beth to me trewe, or ellis were it routhe,
ffor I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe.

"Beth glad forthy, and lyue in sikernesse;
Thus seyde I neuere er this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
To torne aygeyn soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye that it were so,
As wisly god myn herte brynge at reste" —
And hym in armes tok and ofte keste.

Agayns his wil, sith it mot nedes be,
This Troilus vp ros and faste hym cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hondred tyme and on his wey hym spedde,
And with swich voys as though his herte bledde
He seyde, "fare wel, dere herte swete,
Ther god vs graunte sownde and soone to mete."
To which no word for sorwe she anwerde,
So soore gan his partyng hire distreyne;
And Troilus vn-to his paleys ferde,
As wo-bygon as she was, soth to seyne; 1530
So harde hym wrong of sharp desire the Peyne
fforto ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
Thut it may neuere out of his remembraunce.

Returned to his real paleys soone,
He softe in-to his bed gan forto slynke, 1535
To slepe longe, as he was wont to doone;
But al for nought — he may wel ligge and wynke,
But slep ne may ther in his herte synke,
Thynkyng how she, for whom desire hym brende,
A thousand fold was worth more than he wende. 1540

And in his thought gan vp and down to wynde
Hire wordes alle, and euery countenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his mynde
The leeste point that to him was plesaunce;
And verraylich of thilke remembraunce 1545
Desire al newe hym brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hire herte shette 1550
His worthynesse, his lust, hised dedes wise,
His gentilesse, and how she with hym mette,
Thonkyng loue he so wel hire bisette,
Desiryng eft to han hire herte deere
In swich a plit she dorste make hym cheere.

Pandare, o-morwe which that comen was
Unto his Nece and gan hire faire grete,
Seyde, "al this nyght so reyned it, allas,
That al my drede is that ye, Nece swete,
Han litel laiser had to slepe and mete;
Al nyght," quod he, "hath reyn so do me wake, 1560
That som of vs, I trowe, hire hedes ake."

And ner he com and seyde, "how stant it now
This mury morwe, Nece, how kan ye fare?"
Criseyde anserde, "neuere the bet for yow,
ffox that ye ben, god yeue youre herte kare!
God help me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trowe I," quod she; "for al youre wordes white,  
O, who-so seeth yow, knoweth yow ful lite."

With that she gan hire face forto wrye  
With the shete, and wax for shame al reede;  
And Pandarus gan vnder forto prie,  
And seyde, "Nece, if that I shal be dede,  
Haue here a swerd and smyteth of myn hede."

With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste  
Under hire nekke and at the laste hire kyste.

[I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye —  
What! god for-yaf his deth, and she al-so  
ffor-yaf, and with here vncele gan to pleye,  
ffor other cause was ther noon than so.  
But of this thing right to the effect to go,  
Whan tyme was, hom to here hous she wente,  
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.]  

Now torne we ayeyn to Troilus,  
That resteles ful longe a-bedde lay,  
And pryuely sente after Pandarus  
To hym to com in al the haste he may;  
He com anon, nought ones seyde he nay,  
And Troilus ful soberly he grette,  
And down vp-on his beddes syde hym sette.

This Troilus, with al thaffecioun  
Of frendes loue that herte may deuyse,  
To Pandarus on knowes fil a-down,  
And er that he wolde of the place arise,  
He gan hym thonken in his beste wise  
An hondred sythe, and gan the tyme blesse  
That he was born to brynge hym fro destresse.

He seyde, "O frend of frendes the alderbeste  
That euere was, the sothe for to telle,  
Thow hast in heuene y-brought my soule at reste  
ffro Flegitoun, the fery flood of helle;  
That, though I myght a thousand tymes selle  
Up-on a day my lif in thi seruise,  
It myghte naught a moote in that suffise.

"The sonne, which that al the world may se,  
Saugh neuere yet my lif, that dar I leye,
So inly faire and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, tyl that I deye.
And that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthynesse
Of loue, and ek thi kynde bysynesse.

"Thus hastow ne no litel thing y-yiue,
ffor which to the obliged be for ay
My lif, and whi? for thorugh thyn helpe I lyue,
Or elles ded hadde I ben many a day."
And with that word down in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus ful sobrelly hym herde,
Tyl al was seyd, and than he thus anwerde:

"My deere frend, if I haue don for the
In any cas, god wot, it is me lief;
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God help me so; but take it nat a-grief
That I shal seyn: be war of this meschief,
That, there as thow now brought art in thy blisse,
That thow thi self ne cause it nat to misse.

"ffor of fortunes sharpe aduersitee
The worste kynde of infortune is this,
A man to han ben in prosperitee,
And it remembren whan it passed is.
Thart wis ynough, forthi do nat amys;
Be naught to rakel, theigh thow sitte warme,
ffor if thow be, certeyn, it wol the harme.

"Thow art at ese and holde the wel ther-inne,
ffor also seur as reed is euery fire,
As grete a craft is kepe wel as wynne.
Bridle alwey wel thi speche and thi desire;
ffor worldly ioie halt nought but by a wire.
That preueth wel, it brest al day so ofte;
ffor-thi nede is to werken with it softe.

Quod Troilus, "I hope, and god toforn,
My deere frend, that I shal so me beere
That in my gilt ther shal no thyng be lorn,
Ny nyl nought rakle as forto greuen heere.
It nedeth naught this matere ofte steere;
ffor wyystestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot of this thow woldest litel care."
Tho gan he telle hym of his glade nyght,
And wher-of first his herte dred, and how.
And seyde, "frend, as I am trewe knyght,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it neuere half so hote as now;
And ay the more that desire me biteth
To loue hire best the more it me deliteth.

"I not my self naught wisly what it is,
But now I feele a newe qualitee,
Yee, al a-nother than I didde er this."
Pandare answerd and seyde thus, that "he
That ones may in heuene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye."

This is a word for al: this Troilus
Was neuere ful to speke of this matere,
And forto preisen vnto Pandarus
The bounte of his righte lady deere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken cheere;
This tale was ay span newe to bygynne,
Til that the nyght departed hem atwynne.

Soon after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
There he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete;
ffor which he felte his herte in ioie flete,
And feithfully gan alle the goddes herie —
And lat se now if that he kan be merie.

And holden was the forme and al the wise
Of hire commyng, and ek of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought deuyse.
But pleynly to theeffect right for to go,
In ioie and suerte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde brought whan that hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quyete and in reste.

Nought nedeth it to yow, syn they ben mette,
To axe at me if that they blithe were,
ffor if it erst was wel, tho was it bette
A thousand fold, this nedeth nought enquere.
A-gon was euery sorwe and euery feere,
And bothe, y-wys, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche ioie as herte may comprende.

This is no litel thyng of for to seye;
This passeth euery wit for to deuyse;
ffor ech of hem gan otheres lust obeye.
ffelicite, which that thise clerkes wise
Comenden so, ne may nought here suffise;
This ioie may nought writen be with inke;
This passeth al that herte may bythynke.

But cruel day, so wailaway the stounde,
Gan for taproche, as they by sygnes knewe,
ffor which hem thoughte feelen dethis wownde;
So wo was hem that chaungen gan hire hewe,
And day they gonnen to despise al newe,
Callyng it traitour, enuyous, and worse,
And bitterly the dayes light thei corse.

Quod Troilus, "allas, now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte steedes thre,
Which that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han gon som bipath in dispit of me;
That maketh it so soone day to be;
And for the sonne hym hasteth thus to rise,
Ne shal I neuere don hym sacrifise."

But nedes day depert hem moste soone,
And whan hire speche don was and hire cheere,
They twynne anon as they were wont to doone,
And setten tyme of metyng eft y-feere;
And many a nyght they wroughte in this manere.
And thus fortune a tyme ledde in ioie
Criseyde and ek this kynges sone of Troie.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singynges,
This Troilus gan al his lif to lede;
He spendeth, iousteth, maketh festeyinges;
He yeueth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute hym alwey, out of drede,
A world of folk, as com hym wel of kynde,
The fresshest and the beste he koude fynde;

That swich a vois of hym was and a steuene
Thorugh-out the world, of honour and largesse,  
That it vp rong vnto the yate of heuene.  
And as in loue he was in swich gladnesse,  
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse,  
That ther nys louere in this world at ese  
So wel as he, and thus gan loue hym plese.

The goodlihede or beaute which that kynde  
In any other lady hadde ysette  
Kan nought the montance of a knotte vnbynde,  
Aboute his herte of al Criseydes nette;  
He was so narwe y-masked and y-knette,  
That it vndon on any manere syde,  
That nyl naught ben, for aught that may bitide.

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take  
This Pandarus, and in-to gardyn lede,  
And swich a feste and swich a proces make  
Hym of Criseyde, and of hire wommanhede,  
And of hire beaute, that, with-outen drede,  
It was an heuene his wordes forto here;  
And thanne he wolde synge in this manere:

\[\text{Canticus Troili}\]

"Loue that of erthe and se hath gouernaunce,  
Loue, that his hestes hath in heuenes hye,  
Loue, that with an holsoom alliaunce  
Halt peples ioyned, as hym lest hem gye,  
Loue, that knetteth lawe of compaignie,  
And couples doth in vertue forto dwelle,  
Bynd this acord that I haue told and telle."

"That that the world with feith which that is stable,  
Diuerseth so his stowndes concordyng,  
That elementz that ben so discardable  
Holden a bond perpetuely duryng,  
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bryng,  
And that the mone hath lordshipe ouer the nyghtes —  
Al this doth loue, ay heried be his myghtes!"

"That that the se, that gredy is to flowen,  
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so  
His flodes that so fiersly they ne grow  
To drenchen erthe and al for euere mo;"
And if that loue aught lete his bridel go,
All that now loueth asondre sholde lepe,
And lost were al that loue halt now to hepe.

"So wolde god, that auctour is of kynde,
That with his bond loue of his vertue liste
To cerclen hertes alle and faste bynde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste;
And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem loue, and that hem liste ay rewe
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe."

In alle nedes, for the townes werre,
He was, and ay, the first in armes dyght,
And certeyynly, but if that bokes erre,
Saue Ector, most y-dred of any wight;
And this encresse of hardynesse and myght
Com hym of loue, his ladies thank to wynne,
That altered his spirit so with-inne.

In tyme of trewe, on haulyng wolde he ride,
Or elles honte boor, beer, or lyoun —
The smale bestes leet he gon biside;
And whan that he com ridyng in-to town,
fful ofte his lady from hire wyndow down,
As fresshe as faukoun comen out of muwe,
fful redy was hym goodly to saluwe.

And moost of loue and vertue was his speche,
And in despit hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And douteles, no nede was hym biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthynesse,
And esen hem that weren in destresse;
And glad was he if any wyght wel ferde,
That louere was, whan he it wiste or herde.

ffor soth to seyne, he lost held euery wyght
But if he were in loues heigh seruise —
I mene folk that oughte it ben of right.
And ouere al this, so wel koude he deuyse
Of sentement, and in so vnkouths wise
Al his array, that euery louere thoughte
That al was wel what so he seyde or wroghte.

And though that he be come of blood roial,
Hym liste of pride at no wight for to chace;  
Benigne he was to ech in general,  
ffor which he gat hym thank in euery place.  
Thus wolde loue, y-heried be his grace,  
That pride, enuye, ire, and auarice  
He gan to fle, and euerich other vice.  

1805

Thow lady bright, the daughter to Dyone,  
Thy blynde and wynged sone ek, daun Cupide,  
Yee sustren nyne ek, that by Elicone  
In hil Pernaso listen for tabide,  
That Ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,  
I kan namore, but syn that ye wol wende,  
Ye heried ben for ay with-outen ende.

1810

Thorugh yow haue I seyd fully in my songe  
Theffect and ioie of Troilus seruise,  
Al be that ther was som disese amonge,  
As to myn auctour listeth to deuise.  
My thridde boke now ende ich in this wyse;  
And Troilus in luste and in quiete  
Is with Criseyde, his owen herte swete.  

1815

1820

Explicit liber tercius.
Book IV

*Incipit prohemium quarti libri*

But al to litel, weylaway the whyle,
Lasteth swich ioie, y-thonked be fortune,
That semeth trewest whan she wol bygyle,
And kan to fooles so hire song entune;
That she hem hent and blent, traitour comune;
And whan a wight is from hire whiel y-throwe,
Than laugheth she and maketh hym the mowe.

**ffrom Troilus she gan hire brighte face**
Awey to writhe and tok of hym non heede,
But caste hym clene out of his lady grace,
And on hire whiel she sette vp Diomede;
**ffor which right now myn herte gynneth blede,**
And now my penne, allas, with which I write,
Quaketh for drede of that I moste endite.

**ffor how Criseyde Troilus for-sook —**
Or at the leeste how that she was vnkynde —
Moot hennes-forth ben mater of my book,
As writen folk thorugh which it is in mynde.
Allas, that they sholde euere cause fynde
To speke hire harm, and if they on hire lye,
I-wis, hem self sholde han the vilanye.

O ye Herynes, Nyghtes doughtren thre,
That endeles compleignen euere in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and ek Thesiphone,
**Thow cruel Mars ek, fader to Quyryne,**
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
So that the losse of lyf and loue y-feere
Of Troilus be fully shewed heere.

*Explicit prohemium quarti libri*

*Incipit liber quartus*

Liggyng in oost, as I haue seyd er this,
The Grekes stronge a-boute Troie town,
Byfel that whan that Phebus shynyng is
Upon the breste of Ercules lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekis forto fighte,
As he was wont to greue hem what he myghte. 35

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighten mente;
But on a day, wel armed brighte and shene,
Ector and many a worthi wight out wente,
With spere in honde and bigge bowes bente;
And in the berd, with-outen lenger lette,
Hire fomen in the felde anon hem mette.

The longe day, with speres sharpe i-grounde,
With arwes, darters, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde,
And with hire axes out the braynes quelle;
But in the laste shour, soth for to telle,
The folk of Troie hem seluen so mysledden
That with the wors at nyght homward they fledden.

At whiche day was taken Antenore,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedoun, Polynestore,
Polite, or ek the Troian daun Rupheo,
And other lasse folk as Phebuseo;
So that for harm that day the folk of Troie
Dredden to lese a gret part of hire ioie.

Of Priamus was yeue at Grekes requeste
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete
Hire prisoners to chaungen, meste and leste,
And for the surplus yeuen sommes grete.
This thing anon was couth in euery strete,
Bothe in thassege, in town and euery where,
And with the firste it com to Calkas ere.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie among the Grekes soone
He gan in thringe forth with lordes olde,
And sette hym there as he was wont to doone,
And with a chaunged face hem bad a boone,
ffor loue of god, to don that reverence,
To stynte noyse and yeue hym audience.
Than seyde he thus, "Io, lordes myn, ich was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to youre nede,
And tolde wel how that ye shulden spede —
ffor dredeles, thorugh yow shal in a stownde
Ben Troie y-brend and beten down to grownde.

"And in what fourme or in what manere wise
This town to shende and al youre lust tacheue,
Ye han er this wel herd me yow deuyse;
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leue.
And for the Grekis weren me so leeue,
I com my self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to doone,

"Hauyng vn-to my tresore ne my rente
Right no resport to respect of youre ese;
Thus al my good I lefte and to yow wente,
Wenyng in this, my lordes, yow to plese.
But al that los ne doth me no disese —
I vouche-sauf as wisly haue I ioie,
ffor yow to lese al that I haue in Troie,

"Saue of a doughter that I lefte, allas,
Slepyng at hom whan out of Troie I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How myghte I haue in that so hard an herte?
Allas, I ne hadde i-brought hire in hire sherte!
ffor sorwe of whiche I wol nought lyue to-morwe,
But if ye lordes rewe vp-on my sorwe.

"ffor by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hire to deliuere, ich holden haue my pees;
But now or neuere, if that it like yow,
I may hire haue right soone, douteles;
O help and grace amonges al this prees —
Rewe on this olde caytif in destresse,
Syn I thorugh yow haue al this heuynesse.

"Ye haue now kaught and fetered in prisoun
Troians ynowe, and if youre willes be,
My child with oon may han redempcioun.
Now for the loue of god and of bounte,
Oon of so fele, allas, so yeue hym me.
What nede were it this preiere forto werne,
Syn ye shul bothe han folk and town as yerne?

"On peril of my lif I shal nat lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfullye;
I haue ek founde it be astronomye,
By sort and by augurye ek trewelye,
And dar wel say the tyme is faste by
That fire and flaumbe on al the town shal sprede,
And thus shal Troie torne to asshen dede.

"ffor certein, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the town,
Ben with the folk of Troie alwey so wrothe,
That they wol brynge it to confusioun,
Right in despit of kyng Lameadoun:
By-cause he nolde payen hem here hire,
The town of Troie shal ben set on fire."

Tellyng his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in his speche and in his lokyng eke,
The salte teris from his eyen tweye
fful faste ronnen down by either cheke.
So longe he gan of socour hem biseke,
That forto hele hym of his sorwes soore,
They yaue hym Antenor with-outen moore.

But who was glad ynough but Calkas tho?
And of this thyng ful soone hise nedes leyde
On hem that sholden for the tretis go;
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To brynge hom kyng Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Priam his saue garde sente,
Thembassadours to Troie streight they wente.

The cause i-tolde of hire comyng, the olde
Priam the kyng ful soone in general
Let her-vpon his perlement to holde,
Of which theffect reheercen yow I shal:
Thembassadours ben answerd for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem liketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
ffor which ful soone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde;
But natheles he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye,
And ful of angwissh and of grisly drede
Abod what lordes wolde vnto it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Theschaunge of hire, than thoughte he thynes tweye:
ffirst, how to saue hire honour, and what weye
He myghte best theschaunge of hire withstonde;
fful faste he caste how al this myghte stonde.
Loue hym made al prest to don hire byde,
And rather dyen than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde hym on that other syde:
"With-outen assent of hire ne do nat so,
If thow debate it, lest she be thy fo,
And seyn that thorugh thy medlynge is i-blowe
Youre bother loue, ther it was erst vnknowe.'
ffor which he gan deliberen for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
He wolde lat hem graunte what hem lest,
And telle his lady first what that they mente;
And whan that she hadde seyd hym hire entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyue,
Theigh al the world ayeyn it wolde stryue.
Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
ffor Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde and sobrely answerde:
"Syres, she nys no prisonere," he seyde;
"I not on yow who that this charge leyde,
But on my part ye may eft-sones hem telle,
We vsen here no wommen forto selle.'
The noyse of peple vp stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw i-set on fire;
ffor infortune it wolde for the nones
They sholden hire confusioun desire.
"Ector," quod they, "what goost may yow enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and don vs leese
Daun Antenor — a wrong wey now ye chese —
"That is so wys and ek so bold baroun? 
And we han nede of folk, as men may se: 
He is ek on the grettest of this town. 
O Ector, lat tho fantasies be. 
O kyng Priam,’ quod they, "thus sygge we, 
That al oure vois is to forgon Criseyde." 
And to deliueren Antenor they preyde.

O Iuuenal, lord, soth is thy sentence, 
That litel wyten folk what is to yerne, 
That they ne fynde in hire desire offence; 
ffor cloude of errour lat hem nat discerne 
What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne: 
This folk desiren now deliueraunce 
Of Antenor that brought hem to meschaunce.

ffor he was after traitour to the town 
Of Troye; allas, they quytte hym out to rathe. 
O nyce world, lo thy discrecioun! 
Criseyde, which that neuere dide hem scathe, 
Shal now no lenger in hire blisse bathe; 
But Antenor, he shal com hom to towne, 
And she shal out; thus seyde here and howne.

ffor which delibered was by perlement, 
ffor 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, 
It was for nought; it moste ben and sholde, 
ffor subsstaunce of the perlement it wolde.

Deperted out of parlement echone, 
This Troilus with-outen wordes mo 
Into his chambre spedde hym faste allone, 
But if it were a man of his or two, 
The which he bad out faste forto go, 
By-cause he wolde slepen as he seyde, 
And hastily vp-on his bedde hym leyde.

And as in wynter leues ben birafta, 
Ech after other til the tree be bare, 
So that ther nys but bark and braunche i-lafta, 
Lith Troilus byraft of eche welfare,
I-bounden in the blake bark of care,  
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,  
So sore hym sat the chaungynge of Criseyde.

He rist hym vp, and euery dore he shette  
And wyndow ek, and tho this sorwful man  
Up-on his beddes syde adown hym sette,  
fful like a dede ymage, pale and wan;  
And in his brest the heped wo bygan  
Out breste, and he to werken in this wise  
In his woodnesse, as I shal yow deuyse.

Right as the wylde bole bygynneth sprynge,  
Now her, now ther, i-darted to the herte,  
And of his deth roreth in compleynynge,  
Right so gan he aboute the chambre sterte,  
Smytyng his brest ay with his fistes smerte;  
His hed to the wal, his body to the grounde,  
fful ofte he swapte, hym seluen to confounde.

His eyen two, for piete of herte,  
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;  
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte  
His speche hym refte; vnnethes myghte he seye,  "O deth, allas, why nyltow do me deye?  
Acorsed be that day which that nature  
Shop me to ben a lyues creature."

But after, whan the furie and al the rage  
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,  
By lengthe of tyme somwhat gan aswage,  
Upon his bed he leyde hym down to reste;  
But tho bygonne his teeris more out breste,  
That wonder is the body may suffise  
To half this wo which that I yow deuyse.

Than seyde he thus, "fortune, allas the while!  
What haue I don, what haue I thus a-gylte?  
How myghtestow for rowthe me by-gile?  
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilte?  
Shal thus Creisyde away for that thow wilte?  
Allas, how maistow in thyn herte fynde  
To ben to me thus cruwel and vnkynde?"

"Haue I the nought honoured al my lyue,
As thow wel woost, aboue the goddes alle?
Whi wiltow me fro ioie thus depréu?
O Troilus, what may men now the calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
Into miserie, in which I wol be-waille
Creiseyde, allas, til that the breth me faille?

"Allas, fortune, if that my lif in ioie
Displesed hadde vnto thi foule enuye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, kyng of Troye,
Byraft the lif or don my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my self that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre-world, that may of no thyng serue,
But euere dye and neuere fulli sterue?

If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thow woldest me steere;
And hire, allas, than hastow me biraft.
But euere more, lo, this is thi manere,
To reue a wight that most is to hym deere,
To preue in that thi gerful violence:
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no diffence.

"O verrey lord of loue, O god, allas,
That knowest best myn herte and al my thoughte,
What shal my sorwful lif don in this cas,
If I for-go that I so deere haue boughte?
Syn ye Criseyde and me han fully broughte
In-to youre grace and bothe oure hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas, it be repeled?

"What shal I don? I shal, while I may dure
On lyue in torment and in cruwel peyne,
This in-fortune or this disauenture
Allone as I was born, i-wys, compleyne;
Ne neuere wol I seen it shyne or reyne,
But ende I wol as Edippe in derknesse
My sorwful lif and dyen in distresse.

"O wery goost that errest to and fro,
Why nyltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body that euere myghte on grounde go?
O soule, lurkynge in this wo, vnneste,
ffle forth out of myn herte and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thi lady dere;
Thi righte place is now no lenger here.

"O woful eyen two, syn youre disport
Was al to sen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye don but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for naught and wepen out youre sighte,
Syn she is queynt that wont was yow to lighte?
In vayn fro this forth haue ich eyen tweye
I-fourmed, syn youre vertue is aweye.

"O my Criseyde, O lady souereigne
Of thilke woful soule that thus crieth,
Who shal now yeuen comfort to the peyne?
Allas, no wight; but whan myn herte dieth,
My spirit, which that so vnto yow hieth,
Receyue in gree, for that shal ay yow serue;
ffor-thi no fors is though the body sterue.

"O ye loueris, that heigh yp on the whiel
Ben set of fortune in good auenture,
God leue that ye fynde ay loue of stiel,
And longe mote youre lif in ioie endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that youre felawe resteth there,
ffor I loued ek, though ich vnworthi were.

"O oold, vnholsom and myslyued man —
Calkas I mene — allas, what eiled the
To ben a Grek, syn thow art born Troian?
O Calkas, which that wolt my bane be,
In corsed tyme was thow born for me.
As wolde blisful Ioue for his ioie
That I the hadde wher I wolde in Troie."

A thousand sikes hotter than the gleede
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes new his wo to feede,
ffor which his woful teris neuere stente;
And shortly, so his peynes hym to-rente
And wex so mat, that ioie nor penaunce
He feleth non, but lith forth in a traunce.

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

A certeyn knyght that for the tyme kepte
The chambre door vndid it hym anon;
And Pandare, that ful tendrelche wepte,
In-to the derke chambre, as stille as ston,
Toward the bed gan softlye to gon,
So confus that he nyste what to seye —
ffor verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chiere and lokyng al to-torne
ffor sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus by-forne,
And on his pitous face he gan byholden;
But, lord, so ofte gan his herte colden,
Seyng his frend in wo, whos heuynesse
His herte slough, as thoughte hym, for destresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His frend Pandare y-comen hym to se,
Gan as the snow ayeyn the sonne melte,
ffor which this sorwful Pandare of pitee
Gan forto wepe as tendrelche as he;
And specheles thus ben thise ilke tweye,
That neither myghte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Neih ded for smert gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noise he seyde thus,
Amonge hise sobbes and his sikes sore:
"Lo, pandare, I am ded with-outen more.
Hastow nat herd at parlement," he seyde,
"ffor Antenore how lost is my Criseyde?"

This Pandarus, ful dede and pale of hewe,
fful pitously answerde and seyde, "yis,
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I haue herd and woot al how it is.
O mercy, god, who wolde haue trowed this?
Who wolde haue wend that in so litel a throwe
ffortune oure ioie wold han ouere-throwe?
"ffor in this world ther is no creature,  
As to my dome, that euere saugh ruyne  
Straunger than this thorugh cas or auenture.  
But who may all eschue or al deuyne?  
Swich is this world; forthi I thus diffyne:  
Ne trust no wight to fynden in fortune  
Ay propretee — hire yiftes ben comune.

"But telle me this, whi thow art now so mad  
To sorwen thus? Whi listow in this wise,  
Syn thi desire al holly hastow had,  
So that by right it outhte ynough suffise?  
But I that neuere felte in my seruyse  
A frendly cheere or lokyng of an eye,  
Lat me thus wepe and wailen til I deye.

"And ouere al this, as thou wel woost thi selue,  
This town is ful of ladys al aboute;  
And to my doom, fairer than swiche twelue  
As euere she was shal I fynde in some route,  
Yee, on or two, with-outen any doute.  
ffor-thi be glad, myn owen deere brother;  
If she be lost, we shal recouere an other.

"What, god forbede alwey that eche plesaunce  
In o thing were and in non other wight:  
If oon kan synge, an other kan wel daunce;  
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;  
And this is faire, and that kan good aright:  
Eche for his vertue holden is for deere,  
Both herouner and faucoun for ryuere.

"And ek as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,  
'The newe loue out chaceth ofte the olde',;  
And vp-on newe cas liith newe auys.  
Thenk ek thi lif to sauen artow holde.  
Swich fir by proces shal of kynde colde;  
ffor syn it is but casuel plesaunce,  
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.

"ffor also seur as day comth after nyght,  
The newe loue, labour, or oother wo,  
Or elles selde seynge of a wight,  
Don olde affecciouns alle ouere-go.  
And for thi part thow shalt haue oon of tho
Tabregge with thi bittre peynes smerte;  
Absence of hire shal dryue hire out of herte.”

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,  
To help his frend lest he for sorwe deyde;  
ffor douteles to don his wo to falle  
He roughte nought what vnthrift that he seyde.  
But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,  
Took litel heede of al that euere he mente;  
Oon ere it herde, at tother out it wente.

But at the laste he answerde and seyde, “frende,  
This lechecraft, or heeled thus to be,  
Were wel sittyng if that I were a fende —  
To traysen a wight that trewe is vnto me.  
I pray god lat this conseil neuere y-the;  
But do me rather sterue anon right here,  
Er I thus do as thow me woldest leere.

"She that I serue, i-wis, what so thow seye,  
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,  
Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.  
ffor Pandarus, syn I haue trouthe hire hight,  
I wol nat ben vntrewe for no wight;  
But as hire man I wol ay lyue and sterue,  
And neuere other creature serue.

"And ther thow seist thow shalt as faire fynde  
As she — lat be, make no comparisoun  
To creature y-formed here by kynde.  
O leue Pandare, in conclusioun  
I wol nat ben of thyn opynyoun  
Touchyng al this; for which I the biseche,  
So holde thi pees: thow sleest me with thi speche.

"Thow biddest me I shulde loue an other  
Al fresshly newe and lat Criseyde go.  
It lith nat in my power, leeue brother;  
And though I myght, I wolde nat do so.  
But kanstow playen raket to and fro,  
Nettle in, dok out, now this, now that. Pandare?  
Now foule falle hire for thi wo that care.

"Thow fairest ek by me, thow Pandarus,  
As he that whan a wight is wo bygon,
He cometh to hym a paas and seith right thus,  
"Thynk nat on smert and thow shalt fele non."
Thow moost me first transmewen in a ston,  
And reue me my passiones alle,  
Er thow so lightly do my wo to falle.

"The deth may wel out of my brest departe  
The lif, so longe may this sorwe myne;  
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte  
Out neuere mo, but down with Proserpyne,  
Whan I am ded, I wol go won in pyne;  
And ther I wol eternaly compleyne  
My wo and how that twynned be we twyne.

"Thow hast here made an argument for fyne,  
How that it sholde lasse peyne be  
Criseyde to forgon, for she was myne,  
And lyued in ese and in felicite —  
Whi gabbestow, that seydest vn-to me,  
That hym is wors that is fro wele ythrowe,  
Than he hadde erst noon of that wele y-knowe?

"But telle me now syn that the thynketh so light  
To changen so in loue ay to and fro,  
Whi hastow nat don bisily thi myght  
To chaungen hire that doth the al thi wo?  
Whi nyltow lete hire fro thyn herte go?  
Whi nyltow loue an othere lady swete,  
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?"

["If thow hast had in loue ay yet myschaunce,  
And kanst it not out of thyn herte dryue,  
I that leuede yn lust and in plesaunce  
With here as muche as creature on lyue,  
How sholde I that foryte and that so blyue?  
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,  
That kanst so wel and formely arguwe?"

"Nay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thi red,  
ffor which, for what that euere may by-falle,  
With-outen wordes mo I wol be ded.  
O deth that endere art of sorwes alle,  
Com now syn I so ofte after the calle;  
ffor sely is that deth, soth for to seyne,  
That ofte ycleped cometh and endeth peyne."
"Wel wot I, whil my lyf was in quyete,
Er thow me slowe I wolde haue yeuen hire;
But now thi comynge is to me so swete
That in this world I no thing so desire:
O deth, syn with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou other do me anoon yn teris drenche,
Or with thi colde strok myn hete quencheth.

"Syn that thow sleest so fele in sondry wyse
A-yens hire wil vnpreyed day and nyght,
Do me at my requeste this servise:
Delyuere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me that am the wofulleste wyght
That euere was; for tyme is that I sterue,
Syn in this world of right nought may I serue."

This Troylus in teris gan distille,
As licour out of a lambyc ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen doun he caste;
But natheles, thus thought he at the laste:
"What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I som-what more vn-to hym seye."

And seyde, "frend, syn thow hast swych distresse,
And syn the list myn argumentz to blame,
Why nylt thi seluen helpen don redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this grame?
Go rauysshe here ne kanstow not for shame?
And other lat here out of towne fare,
Or hold here stille and leue thi nyce fare.

"Artow in Troie and hast non hardymente
To take a womman which that loueth the,
And wolde hire seluen ben of thyn assente?
Now is nat this a nyce vanitee?
Ris vp anon and lat this wepyng be,
And kith thow art a man, for in this houre
I wol ben ded or she shal bleuen our.

To this answerde hym Troilus ful softe
And seyde, "perde, leue brother deere,
Al this haue I my self yet thought ful ofte,
And more thyng than thow deuysest here."
But whi this thing is laft thow shalt wel here,
And whan thow me hast yeue an audience,
I her-after maystow telle al thi sentence.

"ffirst, syn thow woost this town hath al this werre
ffor rauysshynyng of wommen so by myght,
It sholde nought be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne don so gret vnright:
I sholde han also blame of euery wight,
My fadres graunt if that I so with-stoode,
Syn she is chaunged for the townes goode.

"I haue ek thought, so it were hire assent,
To axe hire at my fader of his grace;
Than thynke I this were hire accusement,
Syn wel I woot I may hire nought purchace:
ffor syn my fader in so heigh a place
As parlement hath hire eschaunge enseled,
He nyl for me his lettre be repeled.

"Yet drede I moost hire herte to pertorbe
With violence, if I do swich a game;
ffor if I wolde it openly destorbe,
It mooste be disclaundre to hire name.
And me were leuere ded than hire diffame —
As nolde god but if I sholde haue
Hire honour leuere than my lif to saue.

"Thus am I lost for aught that I kan see;
ffor certeyn is, syn that I am hire knyght,
I moste hire honour leuere han than me
In euery cas, as loue ought of right.
Thus am I with desire and reson twight:
Desire forto destourben hire me redeth,
And reson nyl nat, so myn herte dredeth."

Thus wepyng that he koude neuere cesse,
He seyde, "allas, how shal I, wrecche, fare?
ffor wel fele I alwey my loue encresse,
And hope is lasse and lasse alway, Pandare;
Encressen ek the causes of my care.
So weilaway, whi nyl myn herte breste?
ffor as in loue ther is but litel reste."

Pandare answerde, "frend, thow maist for me
Don as the list; but hadde ich it so hoote, 
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me, 
Though al this town cride on this thyng by note: 585
I nolde sette at al that noys a grote,
ffor whan men han wel cryed, than wol they rowne;
Ek wonder last but nyne nyght neuere in towne.

"Deuyne nat in resoun ay so depe
Ne corteisly, but help thi selue anon. 590
Bet is that othere than thi seluen wepe,
And namely, syn ye two ben al on,
Ris vp, for by myn hed she shal not goon;
And rather be in blame a lite i-founde
Than sterue here as a gnat with-outen wounde.

"It is no shame vn-to yow ne no vice
Hire to witholden that ye loue moost.
Peraunter she myghte holde the for nyce
To late hire go thus to the Grekis oost.
Thenk ek fortune, as wel thi seluen woost,
Helpeth hardy man to his enprise
And weyueth wrecches for hire cowardise.

"And though thy lady wolde a lite hire greue,
Thow shalt thi self thi pees here-after make;
But as for me, certeyn, I kan nat leue
That she wolde it as now for yuel take.
Whi sholde thanne of fered thyn herte quake?
Thenk ek how Paris hath, that is thi brother,
A loue, and whi shaltow nat haue another?

"And Troilus, o thyng I dar the swere,
That if Criseyde, which that is thi lief,
Now loueth the as wel as thow dost here,
God help me so, she nyl nat take a-grief
Theigh thow do boote a-non in this meschief;
And if she wilneth fro the for to passe,
Thanne is she fals, so loue hire wel the lasse.

"ffor-thi take herte and thynk right as a knyght,
Thorugh loue is broken al day euery lawe.
Kith now somwhat thi corage and thi myght;
Haue mercy on thi self, for eny awe.
Lat nat this wrecched wo thyn herte gnawe,
But manly sette the world on six and seuene,
And if thow deye a martyr, go to heuene.

"I wol my self ben with the at this dede, 
Theigh ich and al my kyn vp-on a stownde 
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede, 
Thorugh-girt with many a wide and blody wownde; 
In every cas I wol a frend be founde. 
And if the list here steruen as a wrecche, 
A-dieu, the deuel spede hym that it recche."  

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quyken, 
And seyde, "frend, graunt mercy, ich assente. 
But certeynly thow maist nat so me priken, 
Ne peyne non ne may me so tormente, 
That for no cas it is nat myn entente, 
At shorte wordes, though I deyen sholde, 
To rauysshe hire, but if hire self it wolde."

"Whi so mene I," quod Pandare, "al this day. 
But telle me thanne, hastow hire wil assayed, 
That sorwest thus?" and he answerde hym, "nay." 
"Wherof artow," quod Pandare," thanne amayed — 
That nost nat that she wol ben yuele appayed — 
To rauysshe hire, syn thow hast nought ben there, 
But if that Ioue tolde it in thyn ere?"

"fforthi ris vp as nought ne were anon, 
And wasshe thi face and to the kyng thow wende, 
Or he may wondren whider thow art goon. 
Thow most with wisdom hym and othere blende, 
Or vp-on cas he may after the sende 
Er thow be war; and shortly, brother deere, 
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere."

"ffor I shal shape it so that sikerly 
Thow shalt this nyght som tyme, in som manere, 
Com speken with thi lady pryuely, 
And by hire wordes ek as by hire cheere 
Thow shalt ful sone aperceyue and wel here 
Al hire entente, and in this cas the beste; 
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste."

The swifte fame, which that false thynes 
Egal reporteth lik the thynes trewe, 
Was thorugh-out Troye y-fled with preste wynges
ffro man to man and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas daughter with hire brighte hewe,
At parlement with-outen wordes more
Y-graunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

The whiche tale anon right as Criseyde
Hadde herd, she which that of hire fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne whan he deyde,
fful bisily to Jupiter bisoughte
Yeue hem meschaunce that this tretis broughte;
But shortly, lest thise tales sothe were,
She dorst at no wight asken it for fere,

As she that hadde hire herte and al hire mynde
On Troilus i-set so wonder faste,
That al this world ne myghte hire loue vnbynde,
Ne Troilus out of hire herte caste;
She wol ben his while that hire lif may laste.
And thus she brenneth both in loue and drede,
So that she nyste what was best to reede.

But as men seen in towne and al aboute
That wommen vsen frendes to visite,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
ffor pitous ioie and wenden hire delite;
And with hire tales deere ynough a myte,
Thise wommen which that in the Cite dwelle,
They sette hem down and seyde as I shall telle.

Quod first that oon, "I am glad, trewely,
By-cause of yow that shal youre fader see.'
Another seyde, "ywys, so nam nat I,
ffor al to litel hath she with vs be."
Quod tho the thridde, "I hope, ywis, that she
Shal bryngen vs the pees on euery syde,
That, whan she goth, almyghty god hire gide."

Tho wordes and tho wommanyshe thynges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were;
ffor, god it woot, hire herte on othir thyng is:
Al-though the body sat among hem there,
Hire aduertence is alwey elles-where;
ffor Troilus ful faste hire soule soughte;
With-outen word on hym alwey she thoughte.
Thise wommen, that thus wenden hire to plese,
Aboute naught gonne alle hire tales spende;
Swich vanyte ne kan don hire non ese,
As she that al this mene while brende
Of other passioun than that they wende,
So that she felte almost hire herte dye,
ffor wo and wery of that compaignie.

[ffor which no lenger myghte she restreyne
Hir teeris, so they gonnen vp to welle,
That yauen signes of the bittre peyne
In which hir spirit was and moste dwelle,
Remembryng hir fro heuen into which helle
She fallen was, syn she forgoth the syghte
Of Troilus, and sorwfully she sighte.] 705

And thilke fooles sittynge hire a-boute
Wenden that she wepte and siked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Deperte and neuere pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde y-knownen hire of yore
Seigh hire so wepe and thoughte it kyndenesse,
And ech of hem wepte ek for hire destresse.

And bisyly they gonnen hire comforten
Of thyng, god woot, on which she litel thoughte,
And with hire tales wenden hire disporten,
And to be glad they often hire bysoughte.
But swiche an ese therwith they hire wroughte
Right as a man is esed forto feele,
ffor ache of hed to clawen hym on his heele.

But after al this nyce vanyte
They toke hire leue and hom they wenten alle.
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pite,
In-to hire chambre vp went out of the halle,
And on hire bed she gan for ded to falle,
In purpos neuere thennes for to rise;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow deuyse.

Hire ownded heer that sonnyssh was of hewe
She rente, and ek hire fyngeres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte and bad god on hire rew,
And with the deth to doon boote on hire bale;
Hire hewe whilom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witnesse of hire wo and hire constreynte;
And this she spak, sobbyng in hire compleynte,

"Allas,' quod she, "out of this regioun
I, woful wrecche and in-fortuned wight,
And born in cored constellacioun,
Moot goon and thus deperten from my knyght.
Wo worth, allas, that ilke dayes light
On which I saugh hym first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me — and ich hym — al this peyne!"

Ther-with the teris from hire eyen two
Down fille as shoure in Aperil ful swithe;
Hire white brest she bet and for the wo
After the deth she cryed a thousand sithe,
Syn he that wont hire wo was for to lithe,
She moot forgon; for which disauenture
She held hire self a forlost creature.

She seyde, "how shal he don and ich also?
How sholde I lyue if that I from hym twynne?
O deere herte eke, that I loue so,
Who shal that sorwe slen that ye beninne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this synne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyue,
Wo worth that day that thow me bere on lyue!

"To what fyn sholde I lyue and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fissh with-outen water dure?
What is Criseyde worth from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyues creature
Lyue with-outen his kynde noriterture?
ffor which ful ofte a byword here I seye,
That "rooteles moot grene soone deye."

"I shal doon thus, syn neither swerd ne darte
Dar I noon handle for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nyl nat my bane be,
Thanne shal no mete or drynke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste vnshethe,
And thus my seluen wol I don to dethe.

"And Troilus, my clothes euerychon
Shul blake ben in tokennyng, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre ay til deth me mete,
The obseruance euere in youre absence
Shal sorwe ben, compleynt and abstinence.

"Myn herte and ek the woful goost ther-inne
Byquethe I with youre spirit to compleyne
Eternaly for they shal neuere twynne;
ffor though in erthe y-twynned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pite, out of peyne,
That highte Elisos, shal we ben y-feere,
As Orpheus with Erudice his feere.

"Thus, herte myn, for Antenor, allass,
I soone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas?
How shal youre tendre herte this sustene?
But, herte myn, foryete this sorwe and tene,
And me also, for sothly forto seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche naught to deye."

How myghte it euere y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte that she made in hire destresse? I not; but as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discryuen wolde hire heuynesse,
It sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childissishly deface
Hire heigh compleynte, and therfore ich it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde — as ye han herd deuyse,
That for the beste it was acorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon hym that seruyse —
Unto Criseyde in a ful secrew wise,
Ther as she lay in torment and in rage,
Come hire to telle al holly his message.

And fond that she hire seluen gan to trete
fful pitously, for with hire salte teris
Hire brest, hire face, y-bathed was ful wete;
The myghty tresses of hire sonnysshe heeris
Unbroiden hangen al aboute hire eeris,
Which yaf hym verray signal of martire
Of deth which that hire herte gan desire.
When she hym saugh she gan for sorwe anon
Hire tery face atwixe hire armes hide,
ffor which this Pandare is so wo-bygon
That in the hous he myghte vnnethe abyde,
As he that pite felt on euerie syde:
ffor if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned soore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

And in hire aspre pleynte thus she seyde,
"Pandare first of ioies mo than two
Was cause causyng vnto me, Criseyde,
That now transmewed ben in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow welcom or no,
That alderfirst me broughte vnto seruyse
Of loue,allas, that endeth in swich wise?

"Endeth thanne loue in wo? ye, or men lieth,
And alle worldly blisse as thynketh me:
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupieth.
And who-so troweth nat that it so be,
Lat hym vp-on me, woful wrecche, ysee,
That my self hate and ay my burthe a-corse,
ffelyng alwey fro wikke I go to worse.

"Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al atonys,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As angwissh, langour, cruel bitternesse,
Anoy, smert, drede, fury and ek siknesse.
I trowe, ywys, from heuene teeris reyne
ffor pite of myn aspre and cruel peyne."

"And thow my suster, ful of discomfort,"
Quod Pandarus, "what thynkestow to do?
Whi ne hastow to thy seluen som resport?
Whi wiltow thus thi self, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and take now heede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne of good entente
This which by me thi Troilus the sente."

Tornede hire tho Criseyde, a wo makynge
So gret that it a deth was forto see.
"Allas," quod she, "what wordes may ye brynge?
What wol my deere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede neuere mo to see?
Wol he han pleynte or teris er I wende?
I haue ynoough if he ther-after sende."

She was right swich to seen in hire visage
As is that wight that men on beere bynde:
Hire face, lik of Paradys the ymage,
Was al ychaunged in a-nother kynde;
The pleye, the laughter, men was wont to fynde
In hire, and ek hire ioies euerichone,
Ben fled, and thus lith now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hire eyen two a purpre ryng
By-trent in sothfast tokenyg of hire peyne,
That to biholde it was a dedly thyng,
ffor which Pandare myghte nat restreyne
The teeris from hise eighen forto reyne.
But natheles, as he best myghte, he seyde
ffrom Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde.

"Lo, Nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The kyng with othere lordes for the beste
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this vnreste.
But how this cas dooth Troilus moleste,
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
ffor verray wo his wit is al aweye.

"ffor which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That in-to litel bothe it hadde vs slawe;
But thorugh my conseyl this day finaly,
He somwhat is fro wepynge now withdrawe,
And semeth me that he desireth fawe
With yow to ben al nyght forto deuyse
Remedie in this, if ther were any wyse.

"This, shorte and pleyn, theffect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit kan comprehende;
ffor ye that ben of torment in swich rage
May to no longe prologe as now entende;
And here-vpon ye may answere hym sende —
And for the loue of god, my Nece deere,
So leue this wo er Troilus be here."

"Gret is my wo," quod she and sighte soore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse,  
"But yit to me his sorwe is muchel more,  
That loue hym bet than he hym self, I gesse.  
Allas, for me hath he swich heuynesse?  
Kan he for me so pitously compleyne?  
I-wis, his sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

"Greuous to me, god woot, is forto twynne,"  
Quod she, "but yet it harder is to me  
To sen that sorwe which that he is inne,  
ffor wel woot I it wol my bane be,  
And deye I wol in certeyn," tho quod she;  
"But bid hym come er deth, that thus me threteth,  
Dryue out that goost which in myn herte beteth."

Thise wordes seyd, she on hire armes two  
ffil gruf and gan to wepen pitously.  
Quod Pandarus, "allas, whi do ye so,  
Syn wel ye woot the tyme is faste by  
That he shal come? Aris vp hastily,  
That he yow nat bywopen thus ne fynde,  
But ye wole haue him wood out of his mynde.

"ffor wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,  
He wolde hym seluen sle; and if I wende  
To han this fare, he sholde nat come here  
ffor al the good that Priam may dispende.  
ffor to what fyn he wolde anon pretende,  
That knowe ich wel, and forthi yet I seye,  
So lef this sorwe or platly he wol deye.

"And shapeth yow his sorwe for tabregge,  
And nought enchresse, leue Nece swete;  
Beth rather to hym cause of flat than egge,  
And with som wisdom ye his sorwes bete.  
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,  
Or though ye bothe in salte teeris dreynte?  
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynete.

"I mene thus: whan ich hym hider brynge,  
Syn ye be wise and bothe of oon assente,  
So shapeth how destourbe youre goynge,  
Or come ayeyn soon after ye be wente —  
Wommen ben wise in short auysemente —  
And lat sen how youre wit shal now auaille,
And what that I may helpe, it shal nat faille.

"Go," quod Criseyde, "and Uncle, trewely, I shal don al my myght me to restreyne ffrom wepyng in his sighte, and bisily Hym forto glade I shal don al my peyne, And in myn herte seken euery veyne; If to his sore ther may be fonden salue, It shal nat lakke, certeyn, on my halue."

Goth Pandarus and Troilus he soughte, Til in a temple he fond hym al allone, As he that of his lif no lenger roughte; But to the pitouse goddes euerichone fful tendrely he preyde and made his mone, To doon hym sone out of this world to pace, ffor wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe forto seye, He was so fallen in despeir that day, That outrely he shop hym forto deye. ffor right thus was his argument alway: He seyde he nas but lorn, so weylaway — "ffor al that comth, comth by necessitee, Thus to ben lorn, it is my destinee.

"ffor certeynly, this wot I wel," he seyde, "That for-sight of diuine purueyaunce Hath seyn alwey me to forgon Criseyde, Syn god seeth euery thyng, out of doutaunce, And hem disponyth, thorugh his ordinaunce, In hire merites sothly for to be, As they shul comen by predestyne.

"But natheles, allas, whom shal I leeue? ffor ther ben grete clerkes many oon, That destyne thorugh argumentes preue; And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon, But that fre chois is yeuen vs euerychon. O welaway, so sleighe arn clerkes olde That I not whos opynyoun I may holde.

"ffor som men seyn, if god seth al biforn — Ne god may nat deceyued ben, parde — Than moot it fallen, theigh men hadde it sworn,
That purueiance hath seyn byfore to be.
Wherfore I sey that from eterne if he
Hath wist byforn oure thought ek as oure dede,
We han no fre chois, as thise clerkes rede.

"ffor other thought, nor other dede also,
Myghte neure ben, but swich as purueyaunce,
Which may nat ben deceyued neuere mo,
Hath feled byforn, with-outen ignoraunce.
ffor if ther myghte ben a variaunce
To writhen out fro goddis purueyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thyng comynge.

"But it were rather an opynyoun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseynge;
And certes, that were an abusioun,
That god sholde han no parfit clere wytyng
More than we men that han doutous wenynge:
But swich an errour vp-on god to gesse
Were fals and foul and wikked corsednesse.

"Ek this is an opynyoun of some
That han hire top ful heigh and smothe yshore:
They seyn right thus, that thyng is nat to come
ffor that the prescience hath seyn by-fore
That it shal come; but they seyn that therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purueyaunce
Woot it byforn, with-outen ignoraunce.

"And in this manere this necessite
Retorneth in his part contrarie agayne;
ffor nedfully byhoueth it nat to bee
That thilke thynges fallen in certayne
That ben purueyd; but nedly, as they sayne,
Byhoueth it that thynges whiche that falle,
That they in certayn ben purueyed alle.

"I mene as though I laboured me in this
To enqueren which thyng cause of which thyng be:
As wheither that the prescience of god is
The certeyn cause of the necessite
Of thynges that to comen ben, parde;
Or if necessite of thyng comynge
Be cause certeyn of the purueyinge.
"But now nenforce I me nat in shewynge
How the ordre of causes stant; but wel woot I
That it byhoueth that the byfallynge
Of thynges wiste byforn certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it nat therby
That prescience putte fallynge necessaire
To thyng to come, al falle it foule or faire.

"ffor if ther sitte a man yond on a see,
Than by necessite bihoueth it
That, certes, thyn opynyoun sooth be
That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And further ouere now ayeynward yit,
Lo, right so is it of the part contrarie,
As thus — now herkne, for I wol nat tarie:

"I sey that if the opynyoun of the
Be soth for that he sitte, than sey I this:
That he mot siten by necessite;
And thus necessite in eyther is.
ffor in hym nede of sittynge is, ywys,
And in the nede of soth; aud thus, forsothe,
There mot necessite ben in yow bothe.

"But thow mayst seyn the man sit nat therfore
That thyn opynyoun of his sittynge soth is;
But rather for the man sit ther byfore,
Therfore is thyn opynyoun soth, ywys.
And I seye, though the cause of soth of this
Comth of his sittyng, yet necessite
Is entrechaunged both in hym and the.

"Thus in the same wise, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resonyng of goddes purueyaunce
And of the thynges that to comen be;
By which resoun men may wel y-se
That thilke thynges that in erthe falle,
That by necessite they comen alle.

"ffor al-though that, for thynge shal come, y-wys,
Therfore is it purueyed, certeynly —
Nat that it comth for it purueyed is —
Yet natheles bihoueth it nedfully
That thing to come be purueyd, trewely;
Or elles thynges that purveyed be,
That they bitiden by necessite.

"And this suffiseth right ynough, certeyn,
fforto destruye oure fre chois euery del.
But now is this abusioun to seyn
That fallyng of the thynges temporel
Is cause of goddes prescience eternal.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thyng to come sholde cause his prescience.

"What myght I wene, and I hadde swich a thought,
But that god purveyeth thyng that is to come
ffor that it is to come, and ellis nought?
So mygte I wene that thynges alle and some,
That whilom ben byfalle and ouercome,
Ben cause of thilke souereyne purveyaunce
That for-woot al with-outes ignoraunce.

"And ouere al this, yet sey I more herto,
That right as whan I wot ther is a thyng,
I-wys, that thyng moot nedfully be so;
Ek right so whan I woot a thyng comyng,
So mot it come; and thus the bifallyng
Of thynges that ben wist bifore the tyde,
They mowe nat ben eschued on no syde."

Thanne seyde he thus, "al-myghty Ioue in trone,
That woost of al thys thyng the sothfastnesse,
Rewe on my sorwe and do me deyen sone,
Or bryng Criseyde and me fro this destresse."
And whil he was in al this heuynesse,
Disputyng with hym self in matere,
Com Pandare in and seyde as ye may here.

"O myghty god," quod Pandarus, "in trone,
I! who say euere a wis man faren so?
Whi Troilus, what thinkestow to doone?
Hastow swich lust to ben thyyn owen fo?
What, perde, yet is nat Criseyde a-go!
Whi list the so thi self fordoon for drede,
That in thyyn hed thyne eyen semen dede?

"Hastow nat lyued many a yer byforn
With-outes hire and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artoy for hire and for noon other born?
Hath kynde the wrought al only hire to plese?
Lat be, and thynk right thus in thi dise:
That in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in loue ther come and gon plesaunces.

"And yet this is my wonder moste of alle,
Whi thow thus sorwest, syn thow nost nat yit,
Touchyng hire goyng, how that it shal falle,
Ne yif she kan hire self destourben it.
Thow hast nat yet assayed al hire wit;
A man may al by-tyme his nekke beede
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the neede.

"ffor-thi tak hede of that I shal the seye:
I haue with hire y-spoke and longe y-be,
So as acorded was bitwixe vs tweye.
And euere mor me thynketh thus that she
Hath somwhat in hire hertes priuete,
Wher-with she kan, if I shal right arede,
Destourbe al this of which thow art in drede.

"ffor which my counseil is, what it is nyght,
Thow to hire go and make of this an ende,
And blisful Iuno thorugh hire grete myght
Shal as I hope hire grace vnto vs sende.
Myn herte seyth certeyn she shal nat wende;
And forthi put thyn herte a while in reste,
And holde this purpos, for it is the beste."

This Troilus answered and sighte soore,
"Thow seist right wel, and I wol don right so."
And what hym liste, he seyde vn-to it more.
And whan that it was tyme for to go,
fful pryuely hym self, with-outen mo,
Unto hire com as he was wont to doone,
And how they wroughte, I shal yow tellen soone.

Soth is, that whan they gonnen first mete,
So gan the Peyne hire hertes forto twiste,
That neyther of hem other myghte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse woful of hem bothe nyste
Wher that he was, ne myghte o word out bryng,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbyng.
The woful teeris that they leten falle
As bittre weren out of teris kynde,
ffor peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle:
So bittre teeris weep nought, as I fynde,
The woful Mirra thorugh the bark and rynde;
That in this world ther nys so hard an herte
That nolde han rewed on hire peynes smerte.

But whan hire woful weri goostes tweyne
Retourned ben ther as hem owe to dwelle,
And that somwhat to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teeris and the herte vnswelle,
With broken vois, al hours for-shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

"O Ioue, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!" and ther-with-al hire face
Up-on his brest she leyde and loste speche —
Hire woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey o poynt to pace —
And thus she lith with hewes pale and grene,
That whilom fresshe and fairest was to sene.

This Troilus, that on hire gan biholde,
Clepyng hire name — and she lay as for dede,
Withoute answere, and felte hire lymes colde,
Hire eyen throwen vpward to hire hede —
This sorwful man kan now noon other rede,
But ofte tyme hire colde mowth he kiste:
Wher hym was wo, god and hym self it wiste!

He rist hym vp and long streght he hire leyde;
ffor signe of lif, for aught he kan or may,
Kan he non fynde in no thyng on Criseyde,
ffor which his song ful ofte is "weylaway."
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorweful vois and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this worlde y-fare.

So after that he longe hadde hire compleyned,
His hondes wrong and seyde that was to seye,
And with hire teeris salt hire brest byreynd,
He gan tho teeris wypen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, "O lord that set art in thi trone, 1175
Rewe ek on me, for I shal folwe hire sone."

She cold was and with-outen sentement,
ffor aught he woot, for breth ne felte he non;
And this was hym a pregnant argument
That she was forth out of this world a-gon. 1180
And whan he say ther was non other woon,
He gan hire lymes dressse in swich manere
As men don hem that shal ben layde on beere.

And after this with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd anon out of his shethe he twighte, 1185
Hym self to slen, how sore that hym smerte,
So that his soule hire soule folwen myghte,
Ther as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Syn loue and cruel fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he lenger lyuen sholde. 1190

Than seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
"O cruel Ioue, and thow fortune aduerse, 1195
This al and som, that falsly haue ye slayn
Criseyde, and syn ye may do me no werse,
ffy on youre myghte and werkes so dyuerse!
Thus cowardly ye shul me neuere wynne;
Ther shal no deth me fro my lady twynne.

"ffor I this world, syn ye haue slayn hire thus,
Wol lete and folwe hire spirit low or hye; 1200
Shal neuere louere seyn that Troilus
Dar nat for fere with his lady dye;
ffor certeyn, I wol beere hire compaignie.
But syn ye wol nat suffre vs lyuen here,
Yet suffreth that oure soules ben y-fere.

"And thow, Cite, which that I leue in wo, 1205
And thow, Priam, and bretheren alle yfeere,
And thow, my moder, far wel, for I go;
And Atropos, make redy thow my beere.
And thow Criseyde, O swete herte deere,
Receyue now my spirit," wolde he seye, 1210
With swerd at herte, al redy forto deye.

But as god wolde, of swough therwith shabreyde,
And gan to sike and "Troilus" she cride,
And he answorde, "lady myn, Criseyde,
Lyue ye yeet?" and leet his swerd down glide.
"Ye, herte myn, that thonked be Cipride,"
Quod she, and ther-with-al she soore syghte,
And he bigan to glad hire as he myghte;
Took hire in armes two and kiste hire ofte,
And hire to glade he did al his entente;
ffor which hire goost, that flikered ay o-lofte,
In-to hire woful herte ayeyn it wente.
But at the laste, as that hire eye glente
A-syde, anon she gan his swerd espie,
As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye,
And asked hym whi he it hadde out drawe?  
And Troilus anon the cause hire tolde,
And how hym self therwith he wolde han slawe;
ffor which Criseyde vp-on hym gan biholde,
And gan hym in hire armes faste folde,
And seyde, "O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!
Ailas, how neigh we weren bothe dede!
"Than if I nadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn youre self auon?" quod she.
"Yee, douteles"; and she answerde, "allas,
ffor by that ilke lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey on lyue haue be
After youre deth, to han ben crowned Queene
Of al that lond the sonne on shyneth sheene.
"But with this selue swerd which that here is,
My selue I wolde han slayne," quod she tho.
"But hoo, for we han right ynoough of this,
And lat vs rise and streght to bedde go,
Aud there lat vs speken of oure wo —
ffor by the morter which that I se brenne,
Knowe I ful wel that day is nat far henne."
Whan they were in hire bed in armes folde,
Naught was it lik tho nyghtes here by-forn;
ffor pitously ech other gan by-holde,
As they that hadden al hire blisse y-lorn,
Bywaylinge ay the day that they were born,
Til at the laste this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

"Lo, herte myn, wel woot ye this," quod she,
"That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen forto be,
It nys but folie and encresse of peyne;
And syn that here assembled be we twyne,
To fynde boote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme soone to bygynne."

"I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am auysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow while it is hoot:
Me thynketh thus, that nouther ye nor I
Ought half this wo to maken skilfully;
ffor ther is art ynough forto redresse
That yet is mys and slen this heuynesse.

"Soth is, the wo the which that we ben inne,
ffor aught I woot, for no-thyng ellis is
But for the cause that we sholden twynne:
Considered al, ther nys namore amys.
But what is thanne a remede vnto this,
But that we shape vs soone forto meete?
This al and som, my deere herte sweete.

"Now that I shal wel bryngen it a-boute
To come ayeyn soone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no manere thyng in doute;
ffor dredeles, with-inne a wowke or two,
I shal ben here; and that it may be so
By alle right and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heep of weyes shewe.

"ffor which I wol nat make long sermoun,
ffor tyme y-lost may nought recouered be;
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste in aught that I kan see.
And for the loue of god foryeue it me,
If I speke aught ayeyns youre hertes reste;
ffor trewely, I speke it for the beste,

"Makyng alwey a protestacioun
That now thise wordes which that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewen yow my mocioun"
To fynde vnto oure help the beste weye;
And taketh it non other wise, I preye.
ffor in effect what so ye me comaunde,
That wol I don, for that is no demaunde.

"Now herkneth this: ye han wel vnderstonde,
My goyng graunted is by parlement
So ferforth that it may nat be withstonde
ffor al this world, as by my iugement;
And syn ther helpeth non auisement
To letten it, lat it passe out of mynde,
And lat vs shape a bettre wey to fynde.

"The soth is this: the twynnyng of vs tweyne
Wol vs disese and cruelich anoye;
But hym byhoueth som tyme han a peyne,
That serueth loue, if that he wol haue ioye.
And syn I shal no ferther out of Troie
Than I may ride ayeyn on half a morwe,
It oughte lesse causen vs to sorwe.

"So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
That day by day, myn owne herte deere,
Syn wel ye woot that it is now a trewe,
Ye shal ful wel al myn estat y-heere.
And er that trewe is doon I shal ben heere;
And thanne haue ye both Antenore y-wonne,
And me also; beth glad now if ye konne.

"And thenk right thus, "Criseyde is now agon,
But what! she shal come hastiliche ayeyn."
And whanne, allas? by god, lo, right anon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn.
And than at erstel shal we be so feyn,
So as we shal to-gideres euere dwelle,
That al this world ne myghte oure blisse telle.

"I se that ofte tyme there as we ben now,
That for the beste oure counseyl for to hide,
Ye speke nat with me nor I with yow
In fourtenyght, ne se yow go ne ride.
May ye naught ten dayes thanne abide,
ffor myn honour in swich an auenture?
I-wys, ye mowen ellis lite endure.
"Ye knowe ek how that al my kynne is heere,
But if that onliche it my fader be,
And ek myn othere thynge alle yfeere —
And nameliche, my deere herte, ye,
Whom that I nolde leuen forto se
ffor al this world, as wyde as it hath space —
Or ellis se ich neuere Ioues face.

"Whi trowe ye my fader in this wise
Coueyteth so to se me, but for drede
Lest in this town that folkes me despise
By-caurse of hym for his vnhappy dede?
What woot my fader what lif that I lede?
ffor if he wiste in Troie how wel I fare,
Us neded for my wendyng nought to care.

"Ye sen that euery day ek more and more
Men trete of pees and it supposid is
That men the queene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekis vs restoren that is mys;
So though ther nere comfort non but this,
That men purposen pees on euery syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

"ffor if that it be pees, myn herte deere,
The nature of the pees moot nedes dryue
That men moost entrecomunen yfeere,
And to and fro ek ride and gon as blyue
Alday as thikke as been fleen from an hyue,
And euery wight han liberte to bleue
Where-as hym liste the bet withouten leue.

"And though so be that pees ther may be non,
Yet hider, though ther neuere pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I gon,
Or how meschaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes euere in feere?
ffor which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I kan nat sen wher-of ye sholden drede.

"Haue here another wey, if it so be
That al this thyng ne may yow nat suffise:
My fader as ye knowen wel, parde,
Is old, and elde is ful of coueytise;
And I right now haue founden al the gise,
With-outen net, wherwith I shal hym hente;  
And herkeneth how, if that ye wol assente.

"Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is  
The wolf ful and the wether hool to haue;  
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, i-wys,  
Mote spenden part the remenant for to saue;  
ffor ay with gold men may the herte graue  
Of hym that set is vp-on coueytise;  
And how I mene, I shal it yow deuyse.

"The moeble which that I haue in this town  
Unto my fader shal I take and seye  
That right for trust and for sauacioun  
It sent is from a frend of his or tweye,  
The whiche frendes feruentliche hym preye  
To senden after more and that in hie,  
Whil that this town stant thus in iupartie.

"And that shal ben an huge quantite —  
Thus shal I seyn — but lest it folk aspide,  
This may be sent by no wyght but by me.  
I shal ek shewen hym, yf pes by-tyde,  
What frendes that ich haue on euery syde  
Toward the Court, to don the wrathe pace  
Of Priamus and don hym stonde in grace.

"So what for o thyng and for other, swete,  
I shal hym so enchaunten with my sawes,  
That right in heuene his sowle is, shal he mete;  
ffor al Appollo or his clerkes lawes,  
Or calkullynge, auayleth nought thre hawes;  
Desir of gold shal so his soule blende,  
That as me lyst I shal wel make an ende.

"And yf he wolde ought by hys sort it preue  
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde  
Distorben hym and plukke hym by the sleue,  
Makynge his sort, and beren hym on honde  
He hath not wel the goddes vnderstonde;  
ffor goddes spoken in amphibologies,  
And for a soth they tellen twenty lyes.

"Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose —  
Thus shal I seyn — and that his coward herte
Made hym amys the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for fered out of Delphos sterte.
And but I make hym soone to conuerte,
And don my rede with-inne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye."

And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde,
That al this thyng was seyd of good entente;
And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
Towards hym and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh whan she wente,
And was in purpos euere to be trewe:
Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and erys spradde,
Herde al this thyng deuysen to and fro,
And verrayliche hym semed that he hadde
The selue wit, but yet to late hire go
His herte mys-foryaf hym euere mo.
But fyndaly he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hire and took it for the beste.

ffor which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and therwith hem bitwene
Bigan for ioie thamorouse daunce;
And as the briddes whanne the sonne is shene
Deliten in hire song in leues grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake y-feere
Delited hem and made hire hertes clere.

But natheles, the wendyng of Criseyde
ffor al this world may nat out of his mynde;
ffor which ful ofte he pitously hire preyde
That of hire heste he myghte hire trewe fynde,
And seyde hire, "certes, if ye be vnkynde,
And but ye come at day set in-to Troye,
Ne shal I neuere haue hele, honour ne ioye.

"ffor also soth as sonne vp-rist o-morwe,
And god so wisly thow me, woful wrecche,
To reste brynge out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol my seluen sle if that ye drecche.
But of my deth though litel be to recche,
Yet er that ye me causen so to smerte,
Dwelle rather here, myn owen swete herte."
"ffor trewely, myn owne lady deere,
Tho sleghetes yit that I haue herd yow stere
fful shaply ben to faylen alle y-feere.
ffor thus men seyth: "that on thenketh the beere,
But al another thenketh his ledere.'
Youre syre is wys, and seyd is out of drede:
"Men may the wise at-renne and naught atrede.'

"It is ful hard to halten vnespied
Byfore a crepel, for he kan the crafte;
Youre fader is in sleght as Argus eyed;
ffor al be that his moeble is hym birafte,
His olde sleighte is yet so with hym lafte:
Ye shal nat blende hym for youre wommanhede,
Ne feyne aright, and that is al my drede.

"I not if pees shal euere mo bitide;
But pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, syn Calkas on the Grekis syde
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name,
He dar nomore come here aeyyn for shame;
ffor which that wey, for aught I kan espie,
To trusten on nys but a fantasie.

"Ye shal ek sen youre fader shal yow glose
To ben a wif and, as he kan wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel allose,
That rauysshen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow don by force as he shal teche;
And Troilus, of whom ye nyl han routhe,
Shal causeles so steruen in his trouthe.

"And ouere al this, youre fader shal despise
Us alle and seyn this Cite nys but lorne,
And that thassege neuere shal aryse,
ffor whi the Grekis han it alle sworne,
Tyl we be slayn and down oure walles torne.
And thus he shal yow with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I that ye wol bleuen there.

"Ye shal ek seen so many a lusty knyghte
Amonge the Grekis, ful of worthynesse,
And ech of hem with herte, wit and myghte,
To plesen yow don al his bisynesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of vs sely Troians, but if routhe
Remorde yow or vertue of youre trouthe.

"And this to me so greuous is to thynke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles in me ther may nat synke
A good opynyoun if that ye wende;
ffor whi youre fadres sleghte wol vs shende.
And if ye gon, as I haue told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but ded, with-oute more.

"ffor which with humble, trewe and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye;
So rueth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somwhat as that I shal yow seye,
And thynk that folie is whan man may chese,
ffor accident his substaunce ay to lese.

"I mene thus, that syn we mowe er day
Wel stele awey and ben togidere so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to youre fader go,
If that ye myghten come ayeyn or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folie
To putte that sikernesse in iupertie.

"And vulgarly to speken of substaunce,
Of tresour may we bothe with vs lede
I-nough to lyue in honour and plesaunce
Til in-to tyme that we shal ben dede;
And thus we may eschuen al this drede.
ffor euerich other wey ye kan recorde,
Myn herte, ywys, may therwith naught acorde.

"And hardily, ne dredeth no pouerte,
ffor I haue kyn and frendes elles-where,
That though we comen in oure bare sherte,
Us sholde neyther lakken gold ne gere,
But ben honoured while we dwelten there.
And go we anon, for as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wol assente."

Criseyde, with a sik right in this wise,
Answerde, "y-wys, my deere herte trewe,
We may wel stele awey as ye deuyse,
And fynden swich vnthrifty wayes newe;
But afterward ful soore it wol vs rewe,
And helpe me god so at my mooste nede,
As causeles ye suffren al this drede.

"ffor thilke day that I for cherisyng
Or drede of fader, or for other wight,
Or for estat, delit or for weddyng,
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knyght,
Saturnes daughter, Iuno, thorugh hire myght,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternalich in Stix, the put of helle.

"And this on euery god celestial
I swere it yow and ek on eche goddesse,
On euery nympe and deite infernal,
On satiry and fawny more and lesse,
That halue goddes ben of wildernesse;
And Attropos my thred of lif to-breste,
If I be fals — now trowe me if yow leste.

"And thow Symois, that as an arwe clere
Thorugh Troie ay rennest downward to the se,
Ber witnesse of this word that seyd is here,
That thilke day that ich vntrewe be
To Troilus, myn owene herte fre,
That thow retourne bakward to thi welle,
And I with body and soule synke in helle.

"But that ye speke awey thus forto go
And leten alle youre frendes, god forbede,
ffor any womman that ye sholden so,
And namely syn Troie hath now swich nede
Of help; and ek of o thyng taketh hede:
If this were wist, my lif lay in balaunce,
And youre honour — god shilde us fro meschaunce!

"And if so be that pees heere after take,
As alday happeth after anger game,
Whi, lord, the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayeyn for shame;
And er that ye iuperten so youre name,
Beth naught to hastif in this hoote fare —
ffor hastif man ne wanteth neuere care.

"What trowe ye the peple ek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light tared:
They wolden seye and swere and it out of doute
That loue ne drof yow naught to don this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, ywys, myn herte deere,
Youre honour which that now shyneth so clere.

"And also thynketh on myn honeste,
That flourith 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 lyued vnto the werldes ende,
My name sholde I neuere ayeynward wynne:
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and synne.

"And for-thi sle with resoun al this hete;
Men seyn, 'the suffrant ouercomith,' parde;
Ek 'who-so wole han lief, he lief moot lete.'
Thus maketh vertue of necessite
By pacience, and thynk that lord is he
Of fortune ay that naught wole of hire recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

"And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the sheene,
The leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I mene, as helpe me Iuno, heuenes quene,
The tenthe day, but if that deth messaile,
I wol yow sen with-outen any faille."

"And now, so this be soth," quod Troilus,
"I shal wel suffre vnto the tenthe day,
Syn that I se that nede it mot be thus.
But for the loue of god, if it be may,
So late vs stelen priueliche away;
ffor euere in oon, as forto liue in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol be the beste."

"O mercy, god, what lif is this?" quod she,
"Allas, ye sle me thus for verray tene.
I se wel now that ye mystrusten me,

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ffor by youre wordes it is wel yseene.  
Now for the loue of Cinthia the sheene,  
Mistrust me nought thus causeles for rourthe,  
Syn to be trewe I haue yow plight my trouthe.  

"And thynketh wel that som tyme it is wit  
To spende a tyme a tyme forto wynne;  
Ne, parde, lorn am I naught fro yow yit,  
Though that we ben a day or two atwynne.  
Drif out tho fantasies yow with-inne,  
And trusteth me and leueth ek youre sorwe,  
Or here my trouthe, I wol naught lyue tyl morwe.  

"ffor if ye wiste how soore it doth me smerte,  
Ye wolde cesse of this; for god thow woste,  
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte  
To se yow wepen that I loue moste,  
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedie  
To come ayeyn, right here I wolde dye.  

"But certes, I am naught so nyce a wight  
That I ne kan ymaginen a wey  
To come ayeyn that day that I haue hight,  
ffor who may holde a thing that wol awey?  
My fader naught, for al his queynte pley.  
And by my thrift, my wendyng out of Troie  
A-nother day shal torne vs alle to ioie.  

"fforthi with al myn herte I yow biseke,  
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,  
And for that loue which that I loue yow eke,  
That er that I deperte fro yow here,  
That of so good a confort and a cheere  
I may yow sen, that ye may brynge at reste  
Myn herte which that is o poynt to breste.  

"And ouere al this I prey yow," quod she tho,  
"Myn owene hertes sothfast suffisaunce,  
Syn I am thyn al hol with-outen mo,  
That whil that I am absent no plesaunce  
Of oother do me fro youre remembraunce:  
ffor I am euere agast, for why men rede  
That loue is thyng ay ful of bisy drede.
"ffor in this world ther lyueth lady non,
If that ye were vntrewe, as god defende,
That so bitraised were or wo bigon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende,
I ner but ded, and er ye cause fynde,
ffor goddes loue, so beth me naught vnkynde."

To this answerte Troilus and seyde,
"Now god, to whom ther nys no cause y-wrye,
Me glad, as wys I neuere vnto Criseyde,
Syn thilke day I saugh hire first with ye,
Was fals ne neuere shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leue;
I kan namore, it shal be founde at preue."

"Grant mercy, goode myn, i-wys," quod she,
"And blisful Venus lat me neuere sterue
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte hym wel that so wel kan deserue;
And while that god my wit wol me conserue,
I shal so don, so trewe I haue yow founde,
That ay honour to meward shal rebounde.

"ffor trusteth wel that youre estat roiale,
Ne veyn delit nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre or torney marcialle,
Ne pompe, array, nobleye or ek richesse,
Ne made me to rewe on youre destresse;
But moral vertue grounded vp-on trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe.

"Eke gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despit
Euery thyng that souned in-to badde,
As rudenesse and poeplissh appetit,
And that youre resoun bridlede youre delit;
This made, abouen euery creature,
That I was youre and shal while I may dure.

"And this may lengthe of yeres naught fordo,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Iuppiter that of his myght may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeue vs grace,
Or nyghtes ten to meten in this place,
So that it may youre herte and myn suffise;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye rise."

And after that they longe ypleyned hadde,
And ofte ykist and streite in armes folde,
The day gan rise and Troilus hym cladde,
And rewfullich his lady gan byholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde,
And to hire grace he gan hym recomaunde:
Wher hym was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

ffor mannes hed ymagynen ne kan,
Nentendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruele peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen euery torment down in helle.
ffor whan he saugh that she ne myghte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
With-outen more out of the chaumbre he wente.

Explicit liber quartus.
Book V

*Incipit liber quintus*

Aprochen gan the fatal destyne
That Ioues hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren thre,
Committeth to don execucioun;
ffor which Criseyde moste out of the town,
And Troilus shal dwellen forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his thred no lenger twyne.

The goldetressed Phebus heighe on lofte
Thries hadde al with hise bemes clene
The snowes molte, and Ypferus as ofte
Ibrought ayeyn the tendre leues grene,
Syn that the sone of Ecuba the queene
Bigan to loue hire first, for whom his sorwe
Was al that she deperte sholde amorwe.

fful redy was at prime Diomede,
Criseyde vn-to the Grekis oost to lede,
ffor sorwe of which she felt hire herte blede,
As she that nyste what was best to rede.
And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste neuere womman han the care,
Ne was so loth out of a town to fare.

This Troilus, with-outen reed or loore,
As man that hath hise ioies ek forlore,
Was waytyng on his lady euere more,
As she that was the sothfast crop and more
Of al his lust or ioies here-bifore.
But Troilus, now far wel al thi ioie,
ffor shallow neuere sen hire eft in Troie.

Soth is that while he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly forto hide,
That wel vnnethe it sene was in his chere.
But at the yate ther she sholde out ride,
With certeyn folk he houed hire tabide,
So wo-bigon, al wolde he naught hym pleyne,
That on his hors vnnethe he sat for peyne.
ffor ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
Whan Diomede on horse gan hym dresse,
And seyde to hym self this ilke sawe:
"Allas," quod he, "thus foul a wrecchednesse,
Whi suffre ich it, whi nyl ich it redresse? 40
Were it nat bet atones for to dye
Than euere more in langour thus to drye?"

"Why nyl I make atones riche and pore
To haue inough to doone er that she go?
Why nyl I brynge al Troie vp-on a roore?
Why nyl I slen this Diomede also?
Why nyl I rather with a man or two
Stele hire away? Whi wol I this endure?
Whil nyl I helpen to myn owen cure?"

But why he nolde don so fel a dede, 50
That shal I seyn and whi hym liste it spare:
He hadde in herte alweyes a manere drede,
Lest that Criseyde in rumour of this fare
Sholde han ben slayn — lo, this was al his care,
And ellis, certeyn, as I seyde yore, 55
He hadde it don with-outen wordes more.

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ride,
fful sorwfully she sighte and seyde "allas."
But forth she moot for aught that may bitide,
Ther nys non other remedie in this cas.
And forth she rit ful sorwfullly a pas.
What wonder is though that hire sore smerte,
Whan she forgoth hire owen dere herte?

This Troilus, in wise of curteysie,
With hauke on honde and with an huge route 65
Of knyghtes, rood and did hire companye,
Passyng al the valeye fer with-oute,
And ferther wolde han riden out of doute
fful fayn, and wo was hym to gon so sone;
But torne he moste, and it was ek to done.

And right with that was Antenor ycome
Out of the Grekis oost, and euery wight
Was of it glad and seyde he was welcome.
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He peyned hym with al his fulle myght
Hym to withhelde of wepyng atte leeste,
And Antenor he kiste and made feste.

And ther-with-al he moste his leue take,
And caste his eye vp-on hire pitously,
And neer he rood his cause forto make,
To take hire by the honde al sobrely;
And lord, so she gan wepen tendrely,
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hire seye,
"Now holde youre day and do me nat to deye."

With that his courser torned he aboute
With face pale, and vnto Diomede
No word he spak, ne non of al his route;
Of which the sone of Tideus took hede,
As he that koude more than the Crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hire hente;
And Troilus to Troie homward he wente.

This Diomede that ledde hire by the bridel,
Whan that he saugh the folk of Troie aweye,
Thoughte, "al my labour shal nat ben on ydel,
If that I may, for somwhat shall I seye;
ffor at the werste it may yet shorte oure weye.
I haue herd seyd ek tymes twyes twelue,
"He is a fool that wol foryete hym selue."

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough,
That, "certeynlich I am aboute nought
If that I speke of loue or make it tough;
ffor douteles, if she haue in hire thought
Hym that I gesse, he may nat ben ybrought
So soon awey; but I shal fynde a meene
That she naught wite as yet shal what I mene.",

This Diomede, as he that koude his good,
Whan tyme was, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and axed whi she stood
In swich disese and gan hire ek biseche,
That if that he encresse myghte or eche
With any thyng hire ese, that she sholde
Comaunde it hym, and seyde he don it wolde.

ffor treweliche he swor hire as a knyght,
That ther nas thyng with which he myghte hire plese,
That he nolde don his peyne and al his myght
To don it for to don hire herte an ese;
And preyde hire she wolde hire sorwe apese,
And seyde, "I-wis, we Greekis kan haue ioie
To honouren yow as wel as folk of Troie."

He seyde ek thus, "I woot yow thynketh straunge —
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe —
Thaquayntauance of thise Troians to chaunge
ffor folk of Grece that ye neuere knewe.
But wolde neuere god but if as trewe
A Grek ye sholde among vs alle fynde
As any Trojan is and ek as kynde."

"And by the cause I swor yow right, lo, now,
To ben youre frend and helply to my myght,
And for that more aquayntauace ek of yow
Haue ich had than another straunger wight,
So fro this forth I pray yow, day and nyght,
Comaundeth me, how soore that me smerte,
To don al that may like vnto youre herte;
And that ye me wolde as youre brother trete,
And taketh naught my frendshipe in despite;
And though youre sorwes be for thynges grete,
Not I nat whi, but out of more respite,
Myn herte hath for tamende it gret delite:
And if I may youre harmes nat redresse,
I am right sory for youre heuynesse.

ffor though ye Troians with vs Grekes wrothe
Han many a day ben, alwey yet, parde,
O god of loue in soth we seruen bothe.
And for the loue of god, my lady fre,
Whom so ye hate, as beth nat wroth with me;
ffor trewely ther kan no wyght yow serue,
That half so loth youre wratthe wold disserue.

"And nere it that we ben so neigh the tente
Of Calcas which that sen vs bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente;
But this enseled til anothir day.
Yeue me youre honde; I am and shal ben ay,
God helpe me so, while that my lyf may dure,
Youre owene abouen euery creature.
"Thus seyde I neuere er now to womman born;
ffor god myn herte as wisly glade so,
I loued neuere womman here-biforn
As paramours, ne neuere shal no mo.
And for the loue of god beth nat my fo,
Al kan I naught to yow, my lady deere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to leere.

"And wondreth nought, myn owen lady bright,
Though that I speke of loue to yow thus blyue;
ffor I haue herd er this of many a wight
Hath loued thyng he neuere saigh his lyue:
Ek I am nat of power forto stryue
Ayeyns the god of loue, but hym obeye
I wole alwey, and mercye l yow preye.

"Ther ben so worthi knyghtes in this place,
And ye so fayre, that euerich of hem alle
Wol peynen hym to stonden in youre grace.
But myghte me so faire a grace falle,
That ye me for youre seruant wolde calle,
So lowely ne so trewely yow serue
Nil non of hem, as I shal, til I sterue."

Criseyde vn-to that purpos lite answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That in effect she naught hise tales herde
But here and ther, now here a word or two.
Hire thoughte hire sorwful herte brast atwo,
ffor whan she gan hire fader fer espie,
Wel neigh down of hire hors she gan to sye.

But natheles she thonketh Diomede
Of alle his trauaille and his goode cheere,
And that hym list his frendshiphe hire to bede;
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And wol do fayn that is hym lief and dere,
And tristen hym she wolde, and wel she myghte,
As seyde she, and from hire hors shalghte.

Hire fader hath hire in hise armes nome,
And twenty tyme he kiste his daughter sweete,
And seyde, "O deere daughter myn, welcome."
She seyde ek she was fayn with hym to mete,
And stood forth muwet, milde and mansuete.
But here I leue hire with hire fader dwelle,
And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.

To Troie is come this woful Troilus,
In sorwe abouen alle sorwes smerte,
With feloun look and face dispitous.
Tho sodeynly doun from his hors he sterte,
And thorugh his paleis with a swollen herte
To chaumbre he wente; of no wight took he hede,
Ne non to hym dar speke a word for drede.

And ther his sorwes that he spared hadde
He yaf an issue large and "deth" he criede;
And in his throwes frenetik and madde
He corseth Ioue, Appollo and ek Cupide,
He corseth Ceres, Bacus and Cipride,
His burthe, hym self, his fate and ek nature,
And, saue his lady, euery creature.

To bedde he goth, and walwith ther and torneth
In furie, as doth he Ixion in helle;
And in this wise he neigh til day soiorneth.
But tho bigan his herte a lite vnswelle
Thorugh teris which that gonnen vp to welle,
And pitously he cryde vpon Criseyde,
And to hym self right thus he spak and seyde:

"Wher is hire white brest, wher is it, where?
"Wher is myn owene lady lief and deere?
Wher ben hire armes and hire eyen cleere,
That yesternyght this tyme with me were?
Now may I wepe allone many a teere,
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
Saue a pilowe, I fynde naught tenbrace.

"How shal I do? Whan shal she come ayeyn?
I not, allas! whi lete ich hire to go?
As wolde god ich hadde as tho ben sleyn!
O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!
O lady myn, that I loue and namo,
To whom for euermo myn herte I dowe,
Se how I dye — ye nyl me nat rescowe.

"Who seth yow now, my righte lode sterre?

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Who sit right now or stant in youre presence?
Who kan conforten now youre hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeue ye audience?
Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
Allas, no wight, and that is al my care,
ffor wel woot I as yuele as I ye fare.

"How sholde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
When I the firste nyght haue al this tene?
How shal she don ek, sorwful creature?
ffor tendernesse how shal she ek sustene
Swich wo for me? O pitous, pale and grene
Shal ben youre fresshe wommanliche face
ffor langoure, er ye torne vnto this place."

And whan he fille in any slomberynges,
Anon bygynne he sholde forto grone,
And dremen of the dredefulleste thynges
That myghte ben: as mete he were allone
In place horrible, makyny ay his mone,
Or meten that he was amonges alle
His enemys and in hire hondes falle.

And therwith-al his body sholde sterte,
And with the sterte al sodeynliche awake,
And swiche a tremour fele aboute his herte,
That of the fere his body sholde quake;
And therwith-al he sholde a noyse make,
And seme as though he sholde falle depe
ffrom heighe o-lofte, and thanne he wolde wepe,

And rewen on hym self so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasie.
Another tyme he sholde myghtyly
Conforte hym self and sein it was folie,
So causeles swich drede forto drye;
And eft bygynne his aspre sorwes newe,
That euery man myght on his sorwes rewe.

Who koude telle aright or ful discryue
His wo, his pleynt, his langoure and his pyne?
Naught alle the men that han or ben on lyue.
Thow redere, maist thi self ful wel deuyne
That swich a wo my wit kan nat diffyne.
On ydel forto write it sholde I swynke,
Whan that my wit is wery it to thynke.

On heuene yet the sterres weren seene,
Al-though ful pale y-woxen was the moone,
And whiten gan the orisonte shene
Al estward as it wont is to doone;
And Phebus with his rosy carte soone
Gan after that to dresse hym vp to fare
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
Ne myghte ham comen Troilus to se,
Al-though he on his hed it hadde sworn —
ffor with the kyng Priam alday was he,
So that it lay nought in his libertee
Nowher to gon — but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus whan that he for hym sente.

ffor in his herte he koude wel deuyne
That Troilus al nygh for sorwe wooke,
And that he wolde telle hym of his pyne—
This knew he wel enough with-oute booke.
ffor which to chaumbre streght the wey he tooke,
And Troilus tho sobrelich he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan hym sette.

"My Pandarus," quod Troilus, "the sorwe
Which that I drye, I may nat longe endure:
I trowe I shal nat lyuen tyl to-morwe.
ffor which I wolde alweys on auenture
To the deuysen of my sepulture
The fourme, and of my moeble thow dispone
Right as the semeth best is forto done.

"But of the fir and flaumbe funeral
In which my body brennen shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I prey the tak good hede
That al be wel and offre Mars my steede,
My swerd, myn helm and, leue brother deere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth cleere.

"The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal torne,
That preye I the thou take and it conserue
In a vessell that men clepeth an vrne
Of gold, and to my lady that I serue,
ffor loue of whom thus pitouslich I sterue,
So yeue it hire and do me this plesaunce,
To preye hire kepe it for a remembraunce.

"ffor wele I fele by my maladie,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certeynly that I mot nedes dye:
The owle ek, which that hette Escaphilo,
Hath after me shright al thise nyghtes two.
And god Mercurye, of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde and, whan the liste, it fecche."

Pandare answerde and seyde, "Troilus,
My deere frende, as I haue told the yore
That it is folye forto sorwen thus,
And causeles, for which I kan namore.
But who-so wil nought trowen reed ne loore,
I kan nat sen in hym no remedie,
But lat hym worthen with his fantasie.

"But Troilus, I prey the tel me now,
If that thow trowe er this that any wight
Hath loued paramours as wel as thow?
Ye, god woot, and fro many a worthi knyght
Hath his lady gon a fourtenyght,
And he nat yet made haluendel the fare.
What nede is the to maken al this care?

"Syn day by day thow maist thi seluen se
That from his loue, or ellis from his wif,
A man mote twynnen of necessite —
Ye, though he loue hire as his owene lif;
Yet nyl he with hym self thus maken strif.
ffor wel thow woost, my leue brother deere,
That alwey frendes may nat ben yfeere.

"How don this folk that seen hire loues wedded
By frendes myght, as it bitit ful ofte,
And sen hem in hire spouses bed y-bedded?
God woot, they take it wisly, faire and softe,
ffor-whi good hope halt vp hire herte o-lofte.
And for they kan a tyme of sorwe endure,
As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure.
"So shuldestow endure and laten slide
The tyme and fonde to ben glad and lighte;
Ten dayes nys so longe nought tabide.
And sen she the to comen hath bihyghte,
She nyl hire heste breken for no wighte.
ffor drede the nat that she nyl fynden weye
To come ayein — my lif that dorste I leye.

"Thi sweuennes ek and al swich fantasie
Drif out and lat hem faren to meschaunce,
ffor they procede of thi malencolie,
That doth the fele in slepe al this penaunce.
A straw for alle sweuenes signifiaunce!
God helpe me so, I counte hem nought a bene;
Ther woot noman aright what dremes mene.

ffor prestes of the temple tellen this,
That dremes ben the reuelaciouns
Of goddes, and as wel they telle, ywis,
That they ben infernals illusionis;
And leches seyn that of complexiouns
Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye —
Who woot in soth thus what thei signifie?

"Ek oother seyn that thorugh impressiouns,
As if a wight hath faste a thyng in mynde,
That ther-of cometh swiche auysiouns;
And other seyn, as they in bokes fynde,
That after tymes of the yere by kynde
Men dreme and that theffect goth by the moone —
But leue no dreme, for it is nought to doone.

"Wel worthe of dremes ay thise olde wiues,
And treweliche ek augurye of thise fowles,
ffor fere of which men wenen lese here lyues,
As rauenes qualm, or shrichyng of these owles:
To twren on it bothe fals and foul is.
Allas, allas, so noble a creature
As is a man shal dreden swiche ordure!

"ffor which with al myn herte I the biseche
Unto thi self that al thi how foryyue;
And ris now vp with-owten more speche,
And lat vs caste how forth may best be dryue
This tyme, and ek how fresshly we may lyue.
Whan that she comth, the which shal be right soone.
God helpe me so, the beste is thus to doone.

"Ris, lat vs speke of lusty lif in Troie
That we han led and forth the tyme dryue;
And ek of tyme comyng vs reioie,
That bryngen shal oure blisse now so blyue;
And langour of thise twyes dayes fyue
We shal ther-with so foryte or oppresse,
That wel vneth it don shal vs duresse.

"This town is ful of lordes al aboute,
And trewes lasten al this mene while.
Go we pleye vs in som lusty route
To Sarpedoun, nat hennes but a myle.
And thus thow shall the tyme wel bygile,
And dryue it forth vnto that blisful morwe
That thow hire se that cause is of thi sorwe.

"Now ris, my deere brother Troilus,
ffor certes it non honour is to the
To wepe and in thi bedde to iouken thus;
ffor trewelich of o thyng truste me:
If thow thus ligge a day or two or thre,
The folk wol seyn that thow for cowardise
The feynest sik and that thow darst nat rise."

This Troilus answerde, "O brother deere,
This knowen folk that han ysuffred peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful cheere,
That feleth harm and smerte in euery veyne,
No wonder is; and though ich euere pleyne
Or alwey wepe, I am no thyng to blame,
Syn I haue lost the cause of al my game.

"But syn of fyne force I mote arise,
I shal arise as soone as euere I may;,
And god, to whom myn herte I sacrifice,
So sende vs hastely the tenthe day:
ffor was ther neuere fowel so fayn of May
As I shal ben whan that she comth in Troie,
That cause is of my torment and my ioie.

"But whider is thi reed," quod Troilus,
"That we may pleye vs best in al this town?"
"By god, my conseil is,' quod Pandarus,
"To ride and playe vs with kyng Sarpedoun.'
So longe of this they spoken vp and down,
Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To rise, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was euere his lyue and ful of heigh largesse,
With al that myghte y-serued ben on table
That deynte was, al coste it gret richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the mooste and ek the leeste,
Was neuere ere that day wist at any feste.

Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious thorugh wynd or touche of corde,
As fer as any wight hath euere ywent,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladys ek so faire a compaignie
On daunce er tho was neuere is-seye with ie.

But what auaileth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe no thyng of it roughte?
nfor euere in on his herte pietous
fful bisyly Criseyde, his lady, soughte.
On hire was euere al that his herte thoughte,
Now this, now that, so faste ymagenynge,
That glade, i-wis, kan hym no festeyinge.

Thise ladies ek that at this feste ben,
Syn that he saugh his lady was aweye,
It was his sorwe vpon hem forto sen,
Or forto here on instrumentes so playe:
ffor she that of his herte berth the keye
Was absent, lo, this was his fantasie —
That no wight sholde maken melodie.

Nor ther nas houre in al the day or nyght,
Whan he was there as no wight myghte hym heere,
That he ne seyde, "O lufsom lady bryght,
How haue ye faren syn that ye were here?
Welcome, ywis, myn owne lady deere."
But weylaway, al this nas but a maze:
ffortune his howue entended bet to glaze.
The lettres ek that she of olde tyme
Hadde hym ysent, he wolde allone rede
An hondred sithe atwixen noon and prime,
Refiguryng hire shap, hire wommanhede,
With-inne his herte, and euery word or dede
That passed was; and thus he drof tanende
The ferthe day and seyde he wolde wende.

And seyde, "leue brother, Pandarus,
Intendestow that we shal here bleue
Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen vs?"
Yet were it fairer that we toke oure leue.
ffor goddes loue, lat vs now soone at eue
Oure leue take, and homward lat vs torne,
ffor treweliche I nyl nat thus soiourne.'

Pandare answerde, "be we comen hider
To fecchen fire and rennen home ayein?
God help me so, I kan nat tellen whider
We myghte gon, if I shal sothly seyn,
Ther any wight is of vs more feyn
Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes hye
Thus sodeynly, I holde it vilanye.

"Syn that we seyden that we wolde bleue
With hym a wowke, and now, thus sodeynly,
The ferthe day to take of hym owre leue,
He wolde wondren on it trewely.
Lat vs holde forth oure purpos fermely;
And syn that ye bihighten hym to bide,
Holde forward now and after lat vs ride."

Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo,
Made hym to dwelle, and at the wikes ende
Of Sarpedoun they toke hire leue tho,
And on hire wey they spedden hem to wende.
Quod Troilus, "now lord me grace sende
That I may fynden at myn hom comyng
Criseyde comen," and ther-with gan he syng.

"Ye, haselwode,' thoughte this Pandare,
And to hym self ful softeliche he seyde,
"God woot, refreyden may this hote fare
Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde."
But natheles he iaped thus and pleyde,
And swor, ywis, his herte hym wel bihighte.
She wolde come as soone as euere she myghte.

Whan they vnto the paleys were ycomen
Of Troilus, they doun of hors alighte,
And to the chambrre hire wey than han they nomen;
And in-to time that it gan to nyghte.
They spaken of Criseyde the brighte;
And after this, whan that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper vnto reste.

On morwe, as soone as day bygan to clere,
This Troilus gan of his slepe tabrayde,
And to Pandare, his owen brother deere,
"ffor loue of god," ful pitously he sayde,
"As go we sen the palais of Criseyde;
ffor syn we yet may haue namore feste,
So lat vs sen hire paleys atte leeste."

And therwith-al his meyne forto blende,
A cause he fond in towne forto go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende,
But lord, this sely Troilus was wo!
Hym thoughte his sorwful herte braste atwo,
ffor whan he saugh hire dores spered alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe adoun he gan to falle.

Therwith whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was euery wyndow of the place,
As frost hym thoughte his herte gan to colde;
ffor which, with chaunged dedlich pale face,
With-outen word he forthby gan to pace,
And as god wolde, he gan so faste ride,
That no wight of his contenance espide.

Than seide he thus, "O paleys desolat,
O hous of houses whilom best i-hight,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thow lanterne of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whilom day, that now art nyght,
Wel oughtestow to falle and I to dye
Syn she is went that wont was vs to gye.

"O paleis, whilom crowne of houses alle,
Enlumyned with sonne of alle blisse,
O ryng fro which the rubie is out falle,
O cause of wo that cause hast ben of lisse,
Yet syn I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And far wel shryne, of which the seynt is oute."

"Ther-with he caste on Pandarus his eye,
With chaunged face and pitous to biholde,
And whan he myghte his tyme aright aspie,
Ay as he rood to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorwe and ek hise ioies olde
So pitously and with so dede an hewe
That euery wight myghte on his sorwe rewe.

"ffro thennes forth he rideth vp and down,
And euery thyng com hym to remembraunce
As he rood forby places of the town
In which he whilom hadde al his plesaunce.
"Lo, yonder saugh ich last my lady daunce,
And in that temple with hire eyen clere
Me kaughte first my righte lady dere.

"And yonder haue I herd ful lustyly
My dere herte laugh and yonder pleye
Saugh ich hire ones ek ful blisfully;
And yonder ones to me gan she seye,
"Now goode swete, loue me wel, I preye’;
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde,
That to the deth myn herte is to hire holde.

"And at that corner in the yonder hous
Herde I myn alder-leuest lady deere,
So wommanly with vois melodious,
Syngen so wel, so goodly and so cleere,
That in my soule yet me thynketh ich here
The blisful sown; and in that yonder place
My lady first me took vnto hire grace."

Thanne thoughte he thus, "O blisful lord Cupide,
Whan I the processe haue in my memorie
How thow me hast wereyed on euery syde,
Men myght a book make of it lik a storie.
What nede is the to seke on me victorie,
Syn I am thyn and holly at thi wille?
What ioie hast thow thyn owen folk to spille?

"Wel hastow, lord, y-wroke on me thyn ire,
Thow myghty god and dredefull for to greue.
Now mercy, lord, thow woost wel I desire
Thi grace moost of alle lustes leeue,
And lyue and dye I wol in thy byleue;
ffor which I naxe in guerdoun but a bone —
That thow Criseyde ayein me sende sone.

"Destreyne hire herte as faste to retorne,
As thow doost myn to longen hire to see,
Than woot I wel that she nyl naught soiorne.
Now blisful lord, so cruel thow ne be
Unto the blood of Troie, I preye the,
As Iuno was vnto the blood Thebane,
ffor which the folk of Thebes caughte hire bane."

And after this he to the yates wente,
Ther as Criseyde out rood a ful good paas,
And vp and down ther made he many a wente,
And to hym self ful ofte he seyde, "allas,
ffro hennes rood my blisse and my solas;
As wolde blisful god now, for his ioie,
I myghte hire sen ayeyn come in-to Troie.

"And to the yonder hille I gan hire gyde,
Allas, and ther I took of hire my leue;
And yond I saugh hire to hire fader ride,
ffor sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleue;
And hider home I com whan it was eue,
And here I dwelle out cast from alle ioie,
And shal til I may sen hire eft in Troie."

And of hym self ymagened he ofte
To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyden softe,
"What may it be? who kan the sothe gesse
Whi Troilus hath al this heuynesse?"
And al this nas but his malencolie,
That he hadde of hym self swich fantasie.

Another tyme ymaginen he wolde
That euery wight that wente by the weye
Hadde of hym routhe and that thay seyn sholde,
"I am right sory Troilus wol deye."
And thus he drof a day yet forth or tweye
As ye haue herd; swich lif right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.

ffor which hym likede in his songes shewe
Thenchesoun of his wo, as he best myghte,
And made a song of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte;
And whan he was from euery mannes syghte,
With softe vois he of his lady deere,
That absent was, gan synge as ye may heere.

Canticus Troili

"O sterre, of which I lost haue al the light,
With herte soore wel oughte I to biwaille,
That euere derk in torment nyght by nyght,
Toward my deth with wynd in steere I saille;
ffor which the tenthe nyght, if that I faille
The gydyng of thi bemes bright an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wol deuoure.'

This song whan he thus songen hadde, soone
He fil ayeyn in to hise sikes olde;
And euery nyght, as was his wone to doone,
He stood the brighte moone to byholde,
And al his sorwe he to the moone tolde,
And seyde, "ywis, whan thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe.

"I saugh thyn hornes olde ek by the morwe
Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
ffor which, O brighte Latona the clere,
ffor loue of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!
ffor whan thyne hornes newe gynnen sprynge,
Than shal she come that may my blisse brynge."

The dayes moore and lenger euery nyghte
Than they ben wont to be, hym thoughte tho,
And that the sonne went his cours vnrighte
Be lenger weye than it was wont to go;
And seyde, "ywis, me dredeth euere mo
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on lyue,
And that his fader carte amys he dryue."

Up-on the walles faste ek wolde he walke,  
And on the Grekis oost he wolde se,  
And to hym self right thus he wolde talke,  
"Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,  
Or ellis yonder ther tho tentes be,  
And thennes comth this eyre that is so soote,  
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote.

"And hardily this wynd, that more and moore  
Thus stoundemele encresseth in my face,  
Is of my ladis depe sikes soore.  
I preue it thus, for in noon other place  
Of al this town, saue onliche in this space,  
Ffele I no wynd that sowneth so lik peyne;  
It seyth, "allas, whi twynned be we tweyne?"

This longe tyme he dryueth forth right thus,  
Til fully passed was the nynthe nyghte;  
And ay bisyde hym was this Pandarus,  
That bisily did al his fulle myghte  
Hym to conforte and make his herte lighte,  
Yeuyng hym hope alwey the tenthe morwe  
That she shal come and stynten al his sorwe.

Up-on that other syde ek was Criseyde,  
With wommen fewe, among the Grekis stronge,  
Ffor which ful ofte a day, "allas," she seye,  
"That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe  
After my deth, for now lyue I to longe.  
Allas, and I ne may it nat amende,  
Ffor now is wors than euere yet I wende.

"My fader nyl for no thyng do me grace  
To gon ayeyn, for naught I kan hym queme;  
And if so be that I my terme pace,  
My Troilus shal in his herte deme  
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme:  
Thus shal ich haue vnthonk on euery side —  
That I was born, so weilaway the tide!

"And if that I me putte in iupertie  
To stele awey by nyght, and it bifalle  
That I be kaught, I shal be holde a spie;
Or elles, lo, this drede I moost of alle,
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I nam but lost, al be myn herte trewe —
Now myghty god, thow on my sorwe rewe!"

fful pale ywexen was hire brighte face,
Hire lymes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste and loked on the place
Ther she was born and ther she dwelt hadde ay;
And al the nyght wepyng, allas, she lay.
And thus despeired out of alle cure
She ladde hire lif, this woful creature.

fful ofte a day she sighte ek for destresse,
And in hire self she wente ay purtrayng
Of Troilus the grete worthynesse,
And al his goodly wordes recordyng
Syn first that day hire loue bigan to spring;
And thus she sette hire woful herte a-fire
Thorough remembraunce of that she gan desire.

In al this world ther nys so cruel herte
That hire hadde herd compleynen in hire sorwe,
That nolde han wepen for hire peynes smerte;
So tendrely she wepte bothe eue and morwe,
Hire nedede no teris forto borwe.
And this was yet the werste of al hire peyne,
Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hire pleyne.

fful rewfully she loked vpon Troie,
Biheld the toures heigh and ek the halles,
"Allas," quod she, "the plesance and the ioie,
The which that now al torned into galle is,
Haue ich had ofte with-inne the yonder walles.
O Troilus, what dostow now?" she seyde;
"Lord, wheyther thow yet thenke vpon Criseyde?"

"Allas, I ne hadde trowed on youre loore,
And went with yow as ye me redde er this,
Than hadde I now nat siked half so soore.
Who myghte han seyd that I hadde don amys
To stele awey with swich oon as he ys?
But al to late comth the letuarie,
Whan men the cors vnto the graue carie.
"To late is now to speke of that matere; 745
Prudence, alas, oon of thyne eyen thre
Me lakked alwey er that I come here:
On tyme y-passed wel remembred me,
And present tyme ek koud ich wel i-se,
But future tyme, er I was in the snare,
Koude I nat sen; that causeth now my care.

"But natheles, bityde what bityde, 750
I shal to-morwe at nyght by est or west
Out of this oost stele on some manere syde,
And gon with Troilus where as hym lest:
This purpos wol ich holde, and this is best.
No fors of wikked tonges ianglerie,
ffor euere on loue han wrecches had enuye.

"ffor who-so wol of euery word take hede, 760
Or reulen hym by euery wightes wit,
Neshal he neuere thryuen, out of drede:
ffor that that som men blamen euere yit,
Lo, other manere folk comenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
ffelicite clepe I my suffissaunce.

"ffor which with-outen any wordes mo, 765
To Troie I wole, as for conclusioun." But god it wot, er fully monthes two
She was ful fer fro that entencioun;
ffor bothe Troilus and Troie town
Shal knotteles thorugh-out hire herte slide,
ffor she wol take a purpos for tabide.

This Diomede, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now with-inne hym self ay arguyng,
With al the sleghte and al that euere he kan,
How he may best with shortest tarying
In-to his net Criseydes herte bryng.
To this entent he koude neuere fyne;
To fisshen hire he leyde out hook and lyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte
That she nas nat with-oute a loue in Troie;
ffor neuere sythen he hire thennes broughte
Ne koude he sen hire laughe or maken ioie.
He nyst how best hire herte for tacoye,
"But for tasay," he seyde, "it naught ne greueth; ffor he that naught nasaieth naught nacheueth."

Yet seyde he to hym self vp-on a nyght, "Now am I nat a fool, that woot wel how Hire wo for loue is of another wight, And here-vpon to gon assaye hire now? I may wel wite, it nyl nat ben my prow. ffor wise folk in bookes it expresse, 'Men shal nat wowe a wight in heuynesse.'"

"But who-so myghte wynnen swich a floure ffrom hym for whom she morneth nyght and day, He myghte seyn he were a conqueroure." And right anon, as he that bold was ay, Thoughte in his herte, "happe how happe may, Al sholde I dye, I wol hire herte seche; I shal namore lesen but my speche."

This Diomede, as bokes vs declare, Was in his nedes prest and corageous, With sterne vois and myghty lymes square, Hardy, testif, strong and chiualrous Of dedes lik his fader Tideus; And som men seyn he was of tonge large, And heir he was of Calydoigne and Arge.

Criseyde mene was of hire stature, Therto of shap, of face and ek of cheere, Ther myghte ben no fairer creature; And ofte tyme this was hire manere, To gon y-tressed with hire heres clere Doun by hire coler at hire bak byhynde, Which with a thred of gold she wolde bynde. And saue hire browes joyneden y-feere, Ther nas no lakke in aught I kan espien; But forto spoken of hire eyen cleere, Lo, trewely, they writen that hire syen, That Paradis stood formed in hire eyen; And with hire riche beaute euere more Strof loue in hire ay which of hem was more.

She sobre was, ek symple, and wys with-al, The best ynorishshed ek that myghte be,
And goodly of hire speche in general;
Charitable, estatlich, lusty and fre,
Ne neuere mo ne lakked hire pite:
Tendre herted, slydynge of corage —
But trewely I kan nat telle hire age.

And Troilus wel woxen was in highte,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel that kynde it nought amenden myghte;
Yong, fressh, strong, and hardy as lyoun,
Tewe as stiel in ech condicioun,
Oon of the beste entecched creature
That is, or shal, whil that the world may dure.

And certeynly in storye it is yfounde,
That Troilus was neuere vnto no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degree secounde
In duryng don that longeth to a knyght,
Al myghte a geant passen hym of myght.
His herte ay with the first and with the beste
Stood peregal to durre don that hym leste.

But forto tellen forth of Diomede:
It fel that after, on the tenthe day
Syn that Criseyde out of the Citee yede,
This Diomede, as fressh as braunche in May,
Come to the tente ther as Calkas lay,
And feyned hym with Calkas han to doone;
But what he mente I shal yow tellen soone.

Criseyde, at shorte wordes forto telle,
Welcomed hym, and down hym by hire sette,
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwelle;
And after this, with-outen longe lette,
The spices and the wyne men forth hem fette,
And forth they speke of this and that y-feere
As frendes don, of which som shal ye heere.

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troie town,
And of thassege he gan hire ek biseche
To telle hym what was hire opynyoun;
ffro that demaunde he so descendeth down
To axen hire if that hire straunge thoughte
The Grekis gise and werkes that they wroughte;
And whi hire fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hire vnto som worthy wight.
Criseyde, that was in hire peynes stronge
ffor loue of Troilus, hire owen knyght,
As ferforth as she konnyng hadde or myght,
Answerde hym tho; but as of his entente,
It seumed nat she wiste what he mente.

But natheles this ilke Diomede
Gan in hym self assured and thus he seyde,
"If ich aright haue taken of yow hede,
Me thynketh thus, O lady myn Criseyde,
That syn I first hond on youre bridel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troie by the morwe,
Ne koude I neuere sen yow but in sorwe.

"Kan I nat seyn what may the cause be
But if for loue of som Troian it were,
The which right sore wolde athynken me
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously youre seluen so bigile —
ffor dredeles, it is nought worth the while.

"The folk of Troie, as who seyth alle and some,
In prisoun ben, as ye youre seluen se;
ffor thennes shal nat oon on lyue come
ffor al the gold atwixen sonne and se.
Trusteth wel and vnderstondeth me:
Ther shal nat oon to mercy gon on lyue,
Al were he lord of worldes twies fyue.

"Swich wreche on hem for fecchynge of Eleyne
Ther shal ben take er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal ben agast that Grekes wol hem shende;
And men shul drede, vnto the worldes ende,
ffrom hennes-forth to rauysshen any queene,
So cruel shal ooure wreche on hem be seene.

"And but if Calkas lede vs with ambages —
That is to seyn with double wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe a word with two visages —
Ye shal wel knowen that I naught ne lye,
And al thi thyng right sen it with youre eye,
And that anon, ye nyl nat trove how sone;
Now taketh hede, for it is forto doone.

"What wene ye youre wise fader wolde
Han yeuen Antenor for yow anon,
If he ne wiste that the Cite sholde
Destroied ben? whi, nay, so mote I gon!
He knew ful wel ther shal nat scapen oon
That Troian is, and for the grete feere,
He dorste nat ye dwelte lenger there.

"What wol ye more, lufsom lady deere?
Lat Troie and Troian fro youre herte pace.
Drif out that bittre hope and make good cheere,
And clepe ayeyn the beaute of youre face,
That ye with salte teris so de-face.
ffor Troie is brought in swich a iupertie,
That it to saue is now no remedie.

"And thenketh wel ye shal in Grekis fynde
A moore perfit loue er it be nyght,
Than any Troian is, and more kynde,
And bet to seruen yow wol don his myght;
And if ye vouche-sauf, my lady bright,
I wol ben he to seruen yow my selue,
Yee, leuere than be kyng of Greces twelue."

And with that word he gan to waxen rede,
And in his speche a litel wight he quoke,
And caste a-syde a litel wight his hede,
And stynte a while, and afterward he woke,
And sobrelieche on hire he threw his loke,
And seyde, "I am, al be it yow no ioie,
As gentil man as any wight in Troie."

"ffor if my fader Tideus," he seyde,
"I-lyued hadde, ich hadde ben er this
Of Calydoyne and Arge a kyng, Criseyde,
And so hope I that I shal yet, i-wis,
But he was slayn, allas, the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymytes and many a man to scathe.

"But, herte myn, syn that I am youre man,
And ben the first of whom I seche grace
To serue yow as hertely as I kan,
And euere shal whil I to lyue haue space,
So er that I deperte out of this place,
That ye me graunte that I may to-morwe
At bettre leyser telle yow my sorwe."

What sholde I telle his wordes that he seyde?
He spak i-nough for o day at the meeste.
It preueth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
Graunted on the morwe at his requeste
fforto speken with hym at the leeste,
So that he nolde speke of swich matere.
And thus to hym she seyde as ye may here,
As she that hadde hire herte on Troilus
So faste that ther may it non arace;
And strangely she spak and seyde thus,
"O Diomede, I loue that ilke place
Ther I was born, and Ioues for his grace
Delyuere it soone of al that doth it care:
God, for thy myght, so leue it wel to fare.

"That Grekis wolde hire wrath on Troie wreke
If that they myght, I knowe it wel, i-wis;
But it shal naught by-fallen as ye speke,
And god to-forn, and forther ouere this,
I woot my fader wys and redy is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So deere, I am the more vnto hym holde.

"That Grekis ben of heigh condicioun
I woot ek wel, but certeyn, men shal fynde
As worthi folk with-inne Troie town,
As konnyng and as perfit and as kynde,
As ben bitwixen Orkades and Inde.
And that ye koude wel yowre lady serue,
I trowe ek wel, hire thank forto deserue.

"But as to speke of loue, ywis," she seyde,
"I hadde a lord to whom I wedded was,
The whos myn herte al was til that he deyde;
And other loue, as help me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nys ne neuere was —
And that ye ben of noble and heigh kynrede,
I haue wel herd it tellen out of drede.

"And that doth me to han so grete a wonder, 
That ye wol scornen any womman so; 
Ek, god woot, loue and I ben fer asonder: 
I am disposed bet, so mot I go, 
Unto my deth to pleyne and maken wo. 
What I shal after don I kan nat seye, 
But trewelich, as yet me list nat pleye.

"Myn herte is now in tribulacioun, 
And ye in armes bisy day by day; 
Herafter, whan ye wonnen han the town, 
Peraunter thanne so it happen may, 
That whan I se that neuere yit I say, 
Than wol I werke that I neuere wroughte: 
This word to yow ynough suffisen oughte.

"To-morwe ek wol I spoken with yow fayn, 
So that ye touchen naught of this matere. 
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayayn; 
And er ye gon, thus muche I sey yow here: 
As help me Pallas with hire heres clere, 
If that I sholde of any Grek han routhe, 
It sholde be youre seluen, by my trouthe.

"I say nat therfore that I wol yow loue, 
Ny say nat nay, but in conclusioun, 
I mene wel, by god that sit aboue." 
And ther-with-al she caste hire eyen down, 
And gan to sike and seyde, "O Troie town, 
Yet bidde I god in quiete and in reste 
I may yow sen, or do myn herte breste."

But in effect, and shortly forto seye, 
This Diomede al fresshly new ayeyn 
Gan presen on and faste hire mercy preye; 
And after this, the sothe forto seyn, 
Hire gloue he took, of which he was ful feyn, 
And finaly, whan it was woxen eue, 
And al was wel, he roos and tok his leue.

The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte 
The wey ther brode Phebus down a-lighte; 
And Cynthea hire chare-hors ouere-raughte
To whirle out of the Leoun if she myghte;
And Signifer hise candels sheweth brighte,
Whan that Criseyde vnto hire bedde wente
Inwith hire fadres faire brighte tente,

Retornyng in hire soule ay vp and down
The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
His grete estat, and perel of the town,
And that she was allone and hadde nede
Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
The cause whi, the sothe forto telle,
That she took fully purpos forto dwelle.

The morwen com and, gostly forto speke,
This Diomede is come vnto Criseyde;
And shortly lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for hym seluen spak and seyde,
That alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde;
And finaly, the sothe forto seyne,
He refte hire of the grete of alle hire peyne.

And after this the storie telleth vs
That she hym yaf the faire baye stede,
The which he ones wan of Troilus;
And ek a broche — and that was litel nede —
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede;
And ek the bet from sorwe hym to releue,
She made hym were a pencel of hire sleue.

I fynde ek in the stories elles-where,
Whan thorugh the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wep she many a teere,
Whan that she saugh hise wyde wowndes blede,
And that she took to kepen hym good hede;
And forto hele hym of his sorwes smerte,
Men seyn — I not — that she yaf hym hire herte.

But trewely the storie telleth vs
Ther made neuere womman moore wo
Than she whan that she falsed Troilus:
She seyde, "allas, for now is clene ago
My name of trouthe in loue for euere mo,
ffor I haue falsed oon the gentileste
That euere was and oon the worthieste.
"Allas, of me vnto the worldes ende
Shal neyther ben ywriten nor ysonge
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
O, rolled shal I ben on many a tonge;
Thorugh-out the world my belle shal be ronge!
And wommen moost wol haten me of alle —
Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle.

"Thei wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I haue hem don deshonour, weylaway!
Al be I nat the first that dide amys,
What helpeth that to don my blame awey?
But syn I se ther is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.

"But Troilus, syn I no bettre may,
And syn that thus deperten ye and I,
Yet prey I god, so yeue yow right good day,
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That euere I say, to seruen feythfully,
And best kan ay his lady honour kepe."
And with that word she braste anon to wepe.

"And certes, yow ne haten shal I neuere,
And frendes loue, that shal ye han of me,
And my good word, al sholde I lyuen euere.
And trewely, I wolde sory be
fforto seen yow in aduersitee;
And gilteles, I woot wel, I yow leue —
But al shal passe, and thus take I my leue."

But trewely, how longe it was bytwene
That she forsok hym for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctour telleth it, I wene.
Take euery man now to his bokes heede;
He shal no terme fynden, out of drede.
ffor though that he bigan to wowe hire soone,
Er he hire wan, yet was ther more to doone.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
fforther than the storey wol deuyse:
Hire name, allas, is punysshed so wide,
That for hire gilt it oughte ynough suffise;
And if I myghte excuse hire any wise,
ffor she so sory was for hire vntrouthe,
I-wis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.

This Troilus, as I byfore haue tolde,
Thus driueth forth as wel as he hath myghte;
But often was his herte hoot and colde,
And namely that ilke nynthe nyghte,
Which on the morwe she hadde hym bighyte
To com ayeyn — god woot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that nyght: nothyng to slepe hym leste.

The laurer-crowned Phebus with his heete
Gan in his cours ay vpward as he wente,
To warmen of the Est se the wawes weete,
And Nysus daughter song with fressh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
And on the walles of the town they pleyde,
To loke if they kan sen aught of Criseyde.

Tyl it was noon they stoden forto se
Who that ther come; and euery maner wight
That com fro fer they seyden it was she,
Til that thei koude knowen hym aright.
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus by-iaped stonden forto stare
Aboute naught, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde,
ffor aught I woot, byfor noon, sikirly,
In-to this town ne comth nat here Criseyde.
She hath ynough to doone, hardlyly,
To wynnen from hire fader, so trowe I;
Hire olde fader wol yet make hire dyne
Er that she go; god yeue his herte pyne!"

Pandare answerde, "it may wel be, certeyn;
And forthi lat vs dyne, I the byseche,
And after noon than maystow com ayeyn."
And hom they go with-oute more speche,
And come ayeyn; but longe may they seche
Er that they fynde that they after cape:
ffortune hem bothe thanketh forto iape.

Quod Troilus, "I se wel now that she
Is taried with hire olde fader so,
That er she come it wol neigh euene be.
Com forth, I wol vnto the yate go:
Thise porters ben vnkonnyng euere mo,
And I wol don hem holden vp the yate
As naught ne were, al-though she come late."

The day goth faste and after that com eue,
And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
He loketh forth by hegge, by tre, by greue,
And fer his hed ouere the walle he leyde,
As naught ne were, al-though she come late."

"Now douteles this lady kan hire goode;
I woot she meneth riden pryuely.
She wol nat maken peple nycely
Gaufre on hire whan she comth, but softly
By nyghte in-to the town she thenketh ride.
And deere brother, thynk nat longe tabide."

"We han naught elles forto don, y-wis,
And Pandarus now woltow trowen me?
Haue here my trouthe, I se hire, yond she is!
Heue vp thyn eyen, man, maistow nat se?"
Pandare answerde, "nay, so mote I the.
Al wronge, by god; what saistow, man, where arte?
That I se yond nys but a fare carte."

"Allas, thou seyst right soth," quod Troilus;
"But hardily it is naught al for nought
That in myn herte I now reioysse thus;
It is ayeyns som good I haue a thought —
Ne felte I swich a comfort, dar I seye;
She comth to-nyght, my lif that dorste I leye."
Pandare answerde, "it may be wel ynough."
And helde with hym of al that euere he seyde.
But in his herte he thought and softe lough,
And to hym self ful sobrecyche he seyde,
"ffrom haselwode, there ioly Robyn pleyde,
Shal come al that that thou abidest heere:
Ye, fare-wel al the snow of ferne yere."
The warden of the yates gan to calle
The folk which that with-oute the yates were,
And bad hem dryuen in hire bestes alle,
Or all the nyght they moste bleuen there.
And fer with-inne the nyght with many a teere
This Troilus gan homward forto ride;
ffor wel he seth it helpeth naught tabide.

But natheles, he gladed hym in this:
He thought he misacounted hadde his day,
And seyde, "I vnderstonde haue al amys:
ffor thilke nyght I last Criseyde say,
She seyde, "I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the moone, O deere herte swete,
The Leoun passe, out of this Ariete."

"ffor which she may yet holde al hire byheste."
And on the morwe vnto the yate he wente,
And vp and down, by west and ek by este,
Upon the walles made he many a wente;
But al for nought, his hope alwey hym blente;
ffor which at nyght in sorwe and sikes sore,
He wente hym hom with-outen any more.

His hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wher-on now lenger forto honge;
But for the peyne hym thoughte his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
ffor whan he saugh that she abood so longe,
He nyste what he iuggen of it myghte,
Syn she hath broken that she hym bihighte.
He ne et ne drank for his malencolye,
And ek from euery compaignye he fledde;
This was the lif that al the tyme he ledde.

He so defet was that no manere man
Unneth hym myghte knowen ther he wente;
So was he lene, and therto pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus hym selue shente.
But who-so axed hym wher-of hym smerte,
He seyde his harm was al aboute his herte.

Priam ful ofte, and ek his moder deere,
Hise bretheren and his sustren gon hym freyne
Whi he so sorwful was in al his cheere,
And what thyng was the cause of al his peyne —
But al for naught: he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde he felte a greuous maladie
Aboute his herte and fayn he wolde dye.

[So on a day he leyde hym doun to slepe,
And so byfel that yn his slep hym thoughte
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
ffor loue of here that hym these peynes wroughte;
And vp and doun as he the forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a bor with tuskes grete,
That slepte ayeyn the bryghte sonnes hete.

And by this bor, faste in his armes folde,
Lay kyssyng ay his lady bryght, Criseyde —
ffor sorwe of which, whan he gan byholde,
And for despit, out of his slep he breyde,
And loude he cride on Pandarus & seyde,
"O Pandarus, now know I crop and roote —
I nam but ded; ther nys non other bote.

"My lady bryght, Criseyde, hath me bytrayed,
In whom I trusted most of ony wight;
She ellis-where hath now here herte apayed.
The blysful goddes thorugh here grete myght
Han in my drem y-shewed it ful right;
Thus yn my drem Criseyde I haue byholde."
And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

"O my Criseyde, allas, what subtilte,
What newe lust, what beaute, what science,
What wrathe of iuste cause haue ye to me?
What gilt of me, what fel experience,
Hath fro me raft, allass, thyn aduertence?
O trust, O feyth, O depe aseuraunce,
Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my plesaunce?

"Allas, whi leet I you from hennes go,
ffor which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?
Who shal now trowe on ony othes mo?
God wot, I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,
That euery word was gospel that ye seyde.
But who may bet bigile, yf hym lyste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

"What shal I don, my Pandarus, allas?
I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne:
Syn that ther lith no remedye in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
My seluen slowh than alwey thus to pleyne:
ffor thorugh the deth my wo shold han an ende,
Ther euery day with lyf my self I shende."

Pandare answerde and seyde, "allas, the while
That I was born! Haue I nat seyd er this,
That dremes many a maner man bigile?
And whi? for folk expounden hem amys.
How darstow seyn that fals thy lady ys,
ffor any drem, right for thyn owene drede?
Lat be this thought; thow kanst no dremes rede.

"Peraunter ther thow dremest of this boor,
It may so be that it may signifie
Hire fader, which that old is and ek hoor,
Ayeyn the sonne lith o poynet to dye,
And she for sorwe gynneth wepe and crie,
And kisseth hym ther he lith on the grounde:
Thus sholdestow thi dreme aright expounde."

"How myghte I than don," quod Troilus,
"To knowe of this, yee, were it neuere so lite?"
"Now seystow wisly," quod this Pandarus.
"My red is this, syn thou kanst wel endite,
That hastily a lettre thou hire write,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bryngyn it aboute,
To know a soth ther thow art now in doute.

"And se now whi: for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she vntrewe be,
I kan nat trowen that she wol write ayeyn.
And if she write, thow shalt ful sone yse
As whethir she hath any liberte
To come ayeyn, or ellis in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

"Thow hast nat writen hire syn that she wente,
Nor she to the, and this I dorste lay,
Ther may swich cause ben in hire entente,
That hardily thow wolt thi seluen say
That hire abod the best is for yow tway.
Now write hire thanne and thow shalt feele sone
A soth of al; ther is namore to done."

Acorded ben to this conclusioun,
And that anon, thise ilke lordes two:
And hastily sit Troilus a-down,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best descryuen hire his wo;
And to Criseyde, his owen lady deere,

He wrot right thus and seyde as ye may here.

"Right fresshe flour whos I ben haue and shal
With-outen parte of elles-where seruyse,
With herte, body, lif, lust, thought and al,
I, woful wyght, in euerich humble wise,
That tonge telle or herte may deuyse,
As ofte as matere occupieth place,
Me recomaunde vnto youre noble grace.

"Liketh yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agon
That ye me lefte in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet boote non
Haue I non had, but euere wors bigon
ffro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle.

"ffor which to yow with dredful herte trewe
I write, as he that sorwe drifth to write,
My wo that euerich houre encresseth newe,
Compleynyng as I dar or kan endite.
And that defaced is, that may ye wite
The teris which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolden speke, if that they koude, and pleyne.

"Yow first biseche I that youre eyen clere
To loke on this defouled ye nat holde,
And ouere al this that ye, my lady deere,
Wol vouche-sauf this lettre to byholde.
And by the cause ek of my cares colde,
That sleth my wit, if aught amys masterte,
fforyeue it me, myn owen swete herte.

"If any seruant dorst or oughte of right
Upon his lady pitously compleyne,
Thanne wene I that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye thise monthes tweyne
Han taried ther ye seyden, soth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in oost soiourne —
But in two monthes yet ye nat retourne.

"But for as muche as me moot nedes like
Al that yow liste, I dar nat pleyne moore,
But humblely, with sorwful sikes sike,
Yow write ich myn vnresty sorwes soore
ffro day to day desiryng euere moore
To knowen fully, if youre wille it weere,
How ye han ferd and don whil ye be theere;

"The whos welfare and hele ek god encresse
In honour swich that vpward in degree
It growe alwey so that it neuere cesse;
Right as youre herte ay kan, my lady free,
Deuyse, I prey to god so moot it be,
And graunte it that ye soone vp-on me rewe,
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

"And if yow liketh known of the fare
Of me whos wo ther may no wit discryue,
I kan namore but, chiste of euery care,
At wrytyng of this lettre I was on lyue,
Al redy out my woful gost to dryue;
Which I delaye and holde hym yet in honde,
Up-on the sighte of matere of youre sonde.
"Myn eyen two, in veyn with whiche I se,  
Of sorwful teris salt arn waxen welles;  
My song, in pleynte of myn aduersitee;  
My good in harm, myn ese ek waxen helle is;  
My ioie in wo — I kan sey yow naught ellis,  
But torned is, for which my lif I warie,  
Eueriche ioie or ese in his contrarie.

"Which with youre commyng hom ayeyn to Troie  
Ye may redresse, and more a thousand sithe  
Than euere ich hadde, encressen in me ioie:  
ffor was ther neuere herte yet so blithe  
To han his lif as I shal ben as swithe  
As I yow se; and though no manere routhe  
Commeue yow, yet thynketh on youre trouthe.

"And if so be my gilt hath deth deserued,  
Or if yow list namore vp-on me se,  
In guerdoun yet of that I haue yow serued,  
Byseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,  
That here-vpon ye wolden write me,  
ffor loue of god, my righte lode sterre,  
That deth may make an ende of al my werre.

"If other cause aught doth yow forto dwelle,  
That with youre lettre ye me recomforte;  
ffor though to me youre absence is an helle,  
With pacience I wol my wo comporte,  
And with youre lettre of hope I wol desporte.  
Now writeth, swete, and lat me thus nat pleyne;  
With hope or deth deliuereth me fro peyne.

"I-wis, myne owene deere herte trewe,  
I woot that whan ye next vpon me se,  
So lost haue I myn hele and ek myn hewe,  
Criseyde shal nought konne knowen me.  
I-wys, myn hertes day, my lady free,  
So thursteth ay myn herte to byholde  
Youre beute that my lif vnnethe I holde.

"I say namore, al haue I forto seye  
To yow wel more than I telle may;  
But wheither that ye do me lyue or deye,  
Yet praye I god, so yeue yow right good day.  
And fareth wel, goodly, faire, fresshe may,
As she that lif or deth may me comande;  
And to youre trouthe ay I me recomande.

"With hele swich that, but ye yeuen me  
The same hele, I shal none hele haue.  
In yow lith, whan yow liste that it so be,  
The day in which me clothen shal my graue;  
In yow my lif, in yow myght forto saue  
Me fro disese of alle peynes smerte;  
And far now wel, myn owen swete herte."

This lettre forth was sent vnto Criseyde,  
Of which hire answere in effect was this:  
fful pitously she wroot ayeyn and seyde,  
That also sone as that she myghte, y-wys,  
She wolde come and mende al that was mys;  
And fynaly she wroot and seyde hym thenne,  
She wolde come, ye, but she nyste whenne.

But in hire lettre made she swich festes,  
That wonder was, and swerth she loueth hym best,  
Of which he fond but botmeles bihestes.  
But Troilus, thow maist now, est or west,  
Pipe in an ivy lef if that the lest.  
Thus goth the world; god shilde vs fro meschaunce,  
And euery wight that meneth trouthe auaunce.

Encressen gan the wo fro day to nyght  
Of Troilus, for tarying of Criseyde,  
And lessen gan his hope and ek his myght,  
ffor which al down he in his bed hym leyde;  
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne slep, ne no word seyde,  
Ymagynyng ay that she was vnkynde,  
ffor which wel neigh he wex out of his mynde.

This drem of which I told haue ek byforn,  
May neuere come out of his remembraunce:  
He thought ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,  
And that loues, of his purueyaunce,  
Hym shewed hadde in slep the signifiaunce  
Of hire vntrouthe and his disauenture,  
And that the boor was shewed hym in figure.

ffor which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre ek al aboute,
And al his drem he tolde hire er he stente,
And hire bisoughte assoilen hym the doute
Of the stronge boor with tuskes stoute;
And fynaly with-inne a litel stounde,
Cassandre hym gan right thus his drem expounde. 1455

She gan first smyle and seyde, "O brother deere,
If thow a soth of this desirest knowe,
Thow most a fewe of olde stories heere,
To purpos how that fortune ouerthrowe
Hath lordes olde, thorugh which with-inne a throwe
Thow wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kynde
He comen is, as men in bokes fynde.

"Diane, which that wroth was and in ire
ffor Grekis nolde don hire sacrifice,
Ne encens vpon hire auter sette afire,
She, for that Grekis gonne hire so despise,
Wrak hire in a wonder cruel wise:
ffor with a boor as gret as ox in stalle,
She made vp frete hire corn and vynes alle. 1460

"To sle this boor was al the contre raysed,
Amonges which ther com this boor to se,
A mayde, oon of this world the beste y-preysed;
And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He loued so this fresshe mayden free,
That with his manhod, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slough and hire the hed he sente. 1470

"Of which as olde bokes tellen vs,
Ther ros a contek and a gret enuye,
And of this lord descended Tideus
By ligne or ellis olde bookes lye;
But how this Meleagre gan to dye
Thorugh his moder wol I yow naught telle,
ffor al to longe it were forto dwelle."

She tolde ek how Tideus, er she stente,
Unto the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleymen kyngdom of the citee wente
ffor his felawe, daun Polymytes,
Of which the brother, daun Ethiocles,
fful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe: 1490
This tolde she by processe al by lengthe.

She tolde ek how Hemonydes asterte
Whan Tideus slough fifty knyghtes stoute;
She tolde ek alle the prophecyes by herte,
And how that seuen kynges with hire route
Bysegeden the citee al aboute;
And of the holy serpent and the welle
And of the furies al she gan hym telle;

Associat profugum Tideo primus Polymytem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus;
Tercius Hemoduden canit et vates latitantes;
Quartus habet reges inuenites preria septem;
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis;
Archymory bustum sexto ludique leguntur;
Dat Grayos Thebes et vatem septimus umbris;
Octauo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgis;
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopea;eacute;
ffulmine percussus, decimo Capaneus superatur;
Undecimbo sese perimunt per vulnera frater;
Argiua flentem narrat duodenus et ignem;

Of Archymoris burying and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil thorugh the grounde,
How Tideus was sleyn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
Was dreyn, and ded Parthonope of wownde;
And also how Capaneus the proude
With thonder dynt was slayn, that cride loude.

She gan ek telle hym how that eyther brother,
Ethiocles and Polymyte also,
At a scarmuche ech of hem slough other,
And of Argyues wepynge and hire wo,
And how the town was brent she tolde ek tho;
And so descendeth down from gestes olde
To Diomede and thus she spak and tolde:

"This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tideus sone, that down descended is
ffro Meleagre that made the boor to blede;
And thy lady, wher-so she be, ywis,
This Diomede hire herte hath and she his —
Wepe if thow wolt or lef, for out of doute,
This Diomede is inne and thow art oute."

"Thow seyst nat soth," quod he, "thow sorceresse. With al thy false goost of prophecye Thow wenest ben a gret deuyneresse. Now sestow nat this fool of fantasie Peyneth hire on ladys forto lye? Awey," quod he, "ther Ioues yeue the sorwe! Thow shalt be fals, peraunter, yet to-morwe.

"As wel thow myghtest lien on Alceste, That was of creatures, but men lye, That euere weren, kyndest and the beste, ffor whan hire housbonde was in iupertye To dye hym self but if she wolde dye, She ches for hym to dye and gon to helle, And starf anon as vs the bokes telle." Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte fforyat his wo for angre of hire speche, And from his bedde al sodeynly he sterte, As though al hool hym hadde ymad a leche. And day by day he gan enquere and seche A sooth of this with al his fulle cure; And thus he drieth forth his auenture.

ffortune — which that permutacioun Of thynges hath, as it is hire comitted Thorugh purueyaunce and disposicioun Of heighe Ioue, as regnes shal be flitted ffro folk in folk or when they shal be smytted — Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troie ffro day to day til they ben bare of ioie. Among al this, the fyn of the parodie Of Ector gan aprochen wonder blyue; The fate wolde his soule sholde vnbodye, And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryue, Ayeyns which fate hym helpeth nat to stryue; But on a day to fighten gan he wende, At which, alas, he caughte his lyues ende. ffor which me thynketh euery manere wight That haunteth armes oughte to biwaille The deth of hym that was so noble a knyght;
ffor as he drough a kyng by thauentaille,
Unwar of this, Achilles thorugh the maille
And thorugh the body gan hym forto ryue;
And thus the worthi knyght was brought of lyue.

ffor whom, as olde bokes tellen vs,
Was made swich wo that tonge it may nat telle,
And namely the sorwe of Troilus,
That next hym was of worthynesse welle;
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle,
That, what for sorwe and loue and for vreste,
fful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.

But natheles, though he gan hym dispaire,
And dradde ay that his lady was vntrewe,
Yet ay on hire his herte gan repaire,
And as thise louers don, he soughte ay newe
To gete ayeyn Criseyde, brighte of hewe;
And in his herte he wente hire excusyng,
That Calkas caused al hire tariyng.

And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete,
Hym seluen like a pilgrym to desgise
To seen hire; but he may nat contrefete
To ben vnknowen of folk that weren wise,
Ne fynde excuse aright that may suffise,
If he amonge the Grekis knowen were;
ffor which he wep ful ofte and many a tere.

To hire he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
fful pitously — he lefte it nought for slouthe —
Bisechyng hire that syn that he was trewe,
That she wol come ayeyn and holde hire trouthe;
ffor which Criseyde vp-on a day for routhe —
I take it so — touchyng al this matere,

Wrot hym ayeyn and seyde as ye may here.

"Cupides sone, ensample of goodly-heede,
O swerd of knyghthod, sours of gentilesse,
How myght a wight in torment and in drede,
And heleles, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I herteles, I sik, I in destresse,
Syn ye with me nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neyther sende ich herte may nor hele."
"Youre lettres ful, the papir al ypleynted,
Conceyued hath myn hertes pietee;
I haue ek seyn with teris al depeynted
Youre lettre, and how that ye requeren me
To come ayeyn, which yet ne may nat be.
But whi, lest that this lettre founden were,
No mencion ne make I now for feere.

"Greuous to me, god woot, is youre vnreste,
Youre haste, and that the goddes ordinaunce
It semeth nat ye take it for the beste;
Nor other thyng nys in youre remembraunce,
As thynketh me, but only youre plesaunce.
But beth nat wroth and that I yow biseche; 1610
ffor that I tarie is al for wikked speche.

"ffor I haue herd wel moore than I wende,
Touchyng vs two, how thynges han y-stonde,
Which I shal with dissymelyng amende;
And beth nat wroth, I haue ek vnderstonde
How ye ne do but holden me in honde;
But now no force, I kan nat in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse.

"Come I wole, but yet in swich disioynte
I stonde as now, that what yer or what day
That this shal be, that kan I naught apoynte.
But in effecte I pray yow as I may,
Of youre good word and of youre frendship ay:
ffor trewely, while that my lif may dure,
As for a frend ye may in me assure.

"Yet prey ich yow on yuel ye ne take
That it is short which that I to yow write;
I dar nat, ther I am, wel lettres make,
Ne neuere yet ne koude I wel endite.
Ek grete effect men write in place lite;
Thentente is al and nat the lettres space.
And fareth now wel, god haue yow in his grace.
This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh and sorwfullich he sighte;
Hym thoughte it lik a kalendes of chaunge.
But fynaly he ful ne trowen myghte
That she ne wolde hym holden that she hyghte; 1635
ffor with ful yuel wille list hym to leue,
That loueth wel, in swich cas, though hym greue.

But natheles men seyn that at the laste,
ffor any thyng men shal the soothe se,
And swich a cas bitidde and that as faste,
That Troilus wel vnderstod that she
Nas nought so kynde as that hire oughte be;
And fynaly he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath ben aboute.

Stood on a day in his malencolie
This Troilus, and in suspicioun
Of hire for whom he wende forto dye.
And so bifel that thorugh-out Troye town,
As was the gise, i-born was vp and down
A manere cote-armure, as seith the storie,
Byforn Deiphebe in signe of his victorie.

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde rent fro Diomede
The same day; and whan this Troilus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Auysyng of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk; but as he gan byholde,
fful sodeynly his herte gan to colde,

As he that on the coler fond with-inne
A broche that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troie moste nedes twynne,
In remembraunce of hym and of his sorwe,
And she hym leyde ayeyn hire feith to borwe
To kepe it ay — but now ful wel he wiste
His lady nas no lenger on to triste.

He goth hym hom and gan ful soone sende
ffor Pandarus; and al this newe chaunce
And of this broche he tolde hym word and ende,
Compleynyng of hire hertes variaunce,
His longe loue, his trouthe and his penaunce;
And after deth, with-outen wordes moore,
fful faste he cride, his reste hym to restore.

Than spak he thus, "O lady bright, Criseyde,
Where is youre feith and where is youre biheste?"
Where is youre loue, where is youre trouthe?" he seyde.
"Of Diomede haue ye now al this feeste;
Allas, I wolde han trowed atte leeste
That syn ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde. 1680

"Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas, I neuer wolde han wend er this
That ye, Criseyde, koude han chaunged so,
Ne, but I hadde agilt and don amys.
So cruel wende I nought youre herte, ywis,
To sle me thus; allas, youre name of trouthe
Is now fordon and that is al my routh.

"Was ther non other broche yow liste lete
To feffe with youre newe loue," quod he,
"But thilke broche that I with teris wete
Yow yaf as for a remembraunce of me?
Non other cause, allas, ne hadde ye
But for despit, and ek for that ye mente
Al outruely to shewen youre entente.

"Thorugh which I se that clene out of youre mynde
Ye han me cast, and I ne kan nor may,
ffor al this world, with-inne myn herte fynde
To vn louen yow a quarter of a day.
In corsed tyme I born was, wellaway,
That yow that doon me al this wo endure
Yet loue I best of any creature. 1695

"Now god," quod he, "me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede;
And trewely, if I haue myght and space,
Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes blede.
O god," quod he, "that oughtest taken heede
To fortheren trouthe and wronges to pynyce,
Whi nyltow don a vengeaunce of this vice?

"O Pandare, that in dremes forto triste
Me blamed hast and wont art oft vp breyde,
Now maistow sen thi self, if that the liste,
How trewe is now thi Nece, brighte Criseyde.
In sondry formes, god it woot," he seyde,
"The goddes shewen bothe ioe and tene
In slep, and by my drem it is now sene.
"And certeynly, with-outen moore speche, ffrom hennes-forth as ferforth as I may, Myn owen deth in armes wol I seche, I recche nat how soone be the day. But trewely, Criseyde, swete may, Whom I haue ay with al my myghte y-serued, That ye thus doon, I haue it nat deserued."

This Pandarus, that al thise thynges herde, And wiste wel he seyde a soth of this, He nought a word ayeyn to hym answerde; ffor sory of his frendes sorwe he is, And shamed for his Nece hath don amys, And stant astoned of thise causes tweye, As stille as ston; a word ne kowde he seye.

But at the laste thus he spak and seyde: "My brother deer, I may do the namore. What sholde I seyn? I hate, ywis, Criseyde, And god woot, I wol hate hire euermore. And that thow me bisoughtest don of yoore, Hauyng vn-to myn honour ne my reste Right no reward, I dide al that the leste."

"If I dide aught that myghte liken the, It is me lief, and of this tresoun now, God woot that it a sorwe is vnto me; And dredeles, for hertes ese of yow, Right fayn I wolde amende it, wiste I how. And fro this world almyghty god I preye Deliuere hire soon, I kan namore seye."
And dredeles, his ire day and nyght
fful cruwely the Grekis ay aboughte,
And alwey moost this Diomede he soughte.

And ofte tyme I fynde that they mette
With blody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hire speres weren whette;
And god it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus vp-on his helm to bete.
But natheles, fortune it naught ne wolde
Of oothers hond that eyther deyen sholde.

And if I hadde ytaken forto write
The armes of this ilke worthi man,
Than wolde ich of his batailles endite;
But for that I to writen first bigan
Of his loue, I haue seyd as I kan —
Hise worthi dedes, who-so list hem heere,
Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle i-feere —

Bysechyng euery lady bright of hewe,
And euery gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Criseyde was vntrewe,
That for that gilt she be nat wroth with me:
Ye may hire gilt in other bokes se,
And gladlier I wol write, if yow leste,
Penelopes trouthe and good Alceste.

Ny sey nat this al oonly for thise men,
But moost for wommen that bitraised be
Thorugh false folk; god yeue hem sorwe, amen!
That with hire grete wit and subtilte
Bytraise yow; and this commeueth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
Beth war of men, and herkneth what I seye.

Go, litel boke, go, litel myn tragedye,
Ther god thi makere yet, er that he dye,
So sende myght to make in some comedye;
But litel book, no makyng thow nenvie,
But subgit be to alle Poyesye,
And kis the steppes where as thow seest space
Uirgile, Ouide, Omer, Lucan and Stace.

And for ther is so gret diuersite
In English and in writing of our tongue, 1795
So pray I God that none miswrite the,
Ne the mysmetre for default of tongue.
And read where-so thou [MS yow] or else songe,
That thou be understood, God I beseech.
But yet to purpose of my rather speech —

The wrath as I began you for to see 1800
Of Troilus the Greek boughten deer;
For thousandes his hondes made dye,
As he that was without any peer,
Save Ector in his day as I can here;
But wealwey, save only God's will,
Despitably him slough the fierse Achille.

And when that he was slain in this manner,
His lighte goost ful blissfully is went 1805
Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere,
In conuers letyng euerych element;
And ther he saw with ful auysement
The erratik sterres, herkenyng armony
With sounds ful of heuenysh melodie.

And down from thennes faste he gan auyse
This litel spot of erthe that with the se 1810
Embraced is, and fully gan despise
This wrecched world, and held all vanite
To respect of the pleyne felicite
That is in heue ne aboue, and at the laste,
Ther he was slain his lokyng down he caste.

And in hym self he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste, 1815
And dampened al oure werk that foloweth so
The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,
And sholden al oure herte on heuen caste;
And forth he went, shortly forto telle,
Ther as Mercurey sorted hym to dwelle.

Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for loue, 1820
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthynesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real aboue,
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false wordes brotelnesse:
And thus began his louynge of Criseyde,
As I haue told, and in this wise he deyde.

O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that loue vp groweth with youre age,
Repeyreth hom fro worldly vanyte,
And of youre herte vp casteth the visage
To thilke god that after his ymage
Yow made, and thynketh al nys but a faire
This world that passeth soone as floures faire.

And loueth hym the which that right for loue
Upon a Croisoure soules forto beye,
ffirst starf and roos and sit in heuene aboue;
ffor he nyl falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al holly on hym leye.
And syn he best to loue is and most meke,
What nedeth feynede loues forto seke?

Lo here, of payens corsed olde rites,
Lo here, what alle hire goddes may auaille;
Lo here, thise wrecched worldes appetites;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdoun for travauille
Of Ioue, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rasaille;
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkis speche
In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche.

O moral Gower, this book I directe
To the, and to the, philosophical Strode,
To vouchen-sauf, ther nede is, to correcte,
Of youre benignites and zeles goode;
And to that sothfast Crist that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy euere I preye,
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye:

Thow oon, and two, and thre, eterne on lyue,
That regnest ay in thre, and two, and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and al maist circumscriue,
Us from visible and in-visible foon
Defende, and to thy mercye, euerichon,
So make vs, Ihesus, for thi mercy digne,
ffor loue of Mayde and moder thyn benigne. Amen.

Explicit liber Troily.