The following is the text of *Perceval, or the Story of the Grail*, by Chrétien de Troyes.

The left column is the line number, corresponding to the original Old French text. The middle column is the Old French, and the right column is the English. The line breaks are such so the Old French and English correspond. They are not to be construed as actual breaks in the text; any section break is indicated by a long series of dashes.

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<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Old French</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Ce fu au tans qu’arbre florissent,</td>
<td>IT WAS THE TIME when the trees were in bloom,</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Foillent boschage, pre verdissent,</td>
<td>when new leaves grew lush in the woods,</td>
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<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Et cil oisel en lor latin</td>
<td>and the meadows were grassy green;</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Cantent douceum au matin</td>
<td>when the birds twittered sweet songs</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Et tote riens de joie aflame,</td>
<td>to welcome the dawn,</td>
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<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Que li fix a la veve dame</td>
<td>and all things were ardent with joy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>De la gaste forest soutaine</td>
<td>The son of the Widowed Lady</td>
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<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Se leva, et ne li fu paine</td>
<td>of the Forsaken Forest</td>
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<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Que il sa sele ne meïst</td>
<td>arose and cheerfully</td>
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<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Sor son chaceor et preïst</td>
<td>saddled his hunting horse,</td>
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<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Trois gavelos, et tout issi</td>
<td>grabbed three javelins</td>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Fors del manoir sa mere issi.</td>
<td>and left his mother’s manor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Il pensa que veoir iroit</td>
<td>He thought he would visit the farmers</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Herceors que sa mere avoit,</td>
<td>who cultivated her grain,</td>
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<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Qui ses avaines li herçoient;</td>
<td>with their twelve oxen and six plows.</td>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Buês xii. et .vi. herces avoient.</td>
<td>As soon as he entered the forest</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>Ensi en la forest s’en entre,</td>
<td>his heart was filled with delight,</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>Et maintenant li cuers del ventre</td>
<td>feeling the pleasant weather</td>
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<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Por le dolç tans li resjoï,</td>
<td>and hearing the joy in the birds’ songs.</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Et por le chant que il oï</td>
<td>All these things made him happy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Des osiâx qui joie faisoient;</td>
<td>Since the weather was mild and calm,</td>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Toutes ces choses li plaisoient.</td>
<td>he took the bridle from his horse</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>Por la douçor del tans serain</td>
<td>and let it graze as it pleased</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>Osta au chaceor le frain,</td>
<td>among the fresh green grass.</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>Si le laissa aler paissant</td>
<td>He was skillful with a javelin,</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>Par l’erbe fresche verdoiant.</td>
<td>and he practiced throwing</td>
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<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Et cil qui bien lancier savoit</td>
<td>the javelins he had brought</td>
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<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Des gavelos que il avoit,</td>
<td>all around him:</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>Aloit environ lui lanchant,</td>
<td>one behind him, one in front,</td>
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<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Une eure [arriere,] et autre avant,</td>
<td>one above and another below.</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Une eure en bas et autre en haut,</td>
<td>Then he heard in the woods</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>Tant qu’il oï parmi le gaut</td>
<td>five knights, armed from head to toe,</td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Venir v. chevaliers armez,</td>
<td>their weapons making such a racket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>De totes armes acesmez.</td>
<td>cracking often against the branches</td>
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<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Et molt grant noise demenoient</td>
<td>of oaks and hornbeams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Les armes de ciax qui venoient,</td>
<td>Wood banging against steel,</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Que sovent hurtoient as armes</td>
<td>spears against shields,</td>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Li rain des chaines et des carmes.</td>
<td>coats of mail clinking;</td>
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<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Les lances as escus hurtoient</td>
<td>everything resounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Et tout li hauberc fremissoient;</td>
<td>The boy heard, but could not see,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Sone li fus, sone li fers</td>
<td>the knights coming toward him quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Et des escus et des haubers.</td>
<td>Awestruck he said “My mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Li vallês oit et ne voit pas</td>
<td>spoke the truth, by my soul,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Ciax qui vienent plus que le pas;</td>
<td>when she said that devils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Molt se merveille et dist: «Par m’aime,</td>
<td>were the most frightening things in the world!</td>
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<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Voir se dist ma mere, ma dame,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Qui me dist que deable sont</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Plus esfreé que rien del mont;</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
She told me more, she taught me
that to protect myself I must
make the sign of the Cross.

No! I'll strike the strongest one
with one of my javelins
when he saw their sparkling mail
and their bright shining helmets,
their spears and shields,
things he had never seen before;
when he saw the white and red
gleaming in the sunlight,
and the gold, blue and silver;
more beautiful than all, except for God.

My mother said
that we must believe in God and worship him,
bow down before him and honor him.
I will worship this God
and all His angels, too."
he then threw himself to the ground
and started reciting all the prayers,
his mother had taught him.
The leader of the knights saw him,
and said to the others, “Stop where you are!
This boy is so frightened of us
that he has fallen to the ground.
He bid greetings and tried to reassure him
saying, “Young boy, fear not!”
They all stopped, and the leader hurried to the boy.
Cor fuissete je ore autretiex, If only I could be like you,
Ausy luisanz et ausy fais. so bright and magnificent.
Maintenant pres de lui s’est trais, As he spoke, the knight approached, and asked,
Et li chevaliers li demande: and had so many questions to ask.
«Veës tu hui par ceste lande “Have you seen five knights and three maidens,
.V. chevaliers et .iii. puceles?” pass today through this moor?”
Li vallés a autres noveles But the boy had other things on his mind,
Enquerre et demander entent; and had so many questions to ask.
A sa lance sa main li tent, He reached out his hand and took hold of the lance,
Sel prent et dist: “Biax sire chiers, “Have you seen five knights and three maidens,
Vos qui avez non chevaliers, you, whose name is Knight,
Que est iche que vos tenez?” what is this that you are holding?”
— Or sui je molt bien assenez, “Or so it seems.
Fait li chevaliers, ce m’est vis. “Have you seen five knights and three maidens,
Je quidoie, biax dols amis, It was I, my kind friend, who hoped
Noveles aprendre de toi, to get tidings from you,
Et tu les vels oïr de moi. and here you are asking me questions.
Jel te dirai: ce est ma lance. “If only I could be like you,
— Dîtes vos, fait il, c’on la lance “And do you throw it the same
Si com je faz mes gavelos? as I throw my javelins?”
— Naie, vallet, tu iez toz sos! “Not at all, my young friend, how foolish you are!
Ains en fiert on tot demanois. You strike from close range.
— Dont valt miex li .i. de ces .iii. “Then even one of these three javelins,
Gavelos que vos veez chi; that you see, is better than that.
Que quanques je weil en ochi, “Have you seen five knights and three maidens,
Oisiaux et bestes au besoing, birds or beasts, whatever I need,
Et si les ochi de si loing and I kill from as far away
Come on porroit d’un bozon traire. as you would shoot a longbow.”
— Vallet, de che n’ai je que faire, “I don’t care, young man,” said the knight,
Mais des chevaliers me respont. “Answer my question about the knights,
Di moi se tu sez ou il sont, tell me if you know where they are.
Et les puceles veïs tu?” And have you seen the maidens?”
— Vallet, fait il, ce est abés, “You mock me, changing the subject
Ne le doi mie tenir vil, from that which I seek.
Car il m’est tant de bone foi that I would get news from you,
Que se nus lance ou trait a moi, instead of having to answer all your questions.
Que tu les vels oïr de moi. Do you want to know everything about me?
Jel te dirai, coment qu’il praigne, Well, I’ll tell you, for I like you.
Car a toi volentiers m’acort: This object I carry is called a shield.”
Escu a non ce que je port. “A shield?” “Indeed,” said the knight,
— Escu a non? — Voire, fait cil, “One I respect,
Ne le doie mi tenir vil, and a faithful one, at that.
Escu a non ce que je port. “If only I could be like you,
Ne le doie mi tenir vil, and a faithful one, at that.
Car il m’est tant de bone foi if someone shoots an arrow, or throws a spear
Que se nus lance ou trait a moi, it comes between me and the blow.
Encontre toz les cops se met. “That is its purpose.”
C’est li services qu’il me fet.» Then the knights who had stayed behind
S’en vindrent tote la charriere came walking along the road,
Vers lor seignor plus que le pas, rapidly, up to their lord,
Si dient nisellepas: and said to him,
— Il ne set pas totes les Lois. “My Lord, what has this Welshman told you?”
Sire, que vos dist cist Galois? “He knows nothing of our ways,”
— Il ne set pas totes les Lois. said the knight, “God help me.
Ains mendef de quanqu’il voit He has answered none of my questions properly,
C’a rien nule que li demant, but, for each thing he sees,
Ne me responf onques a droit, asks its name and what it’s used for.”
Ains que de moi les apreïsses, “Have you seen five knights and three maidens,
Et tu les vels oïr de moi. and here you are asking me questions.
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Car a toi volentiers m’acort: This object I carry is called a shield.”
C'est aussi comme une beste. and this one, especially, looks as thick as could be.

Fols est qui dalez lui s'areste, It's crazy to waste your time

S'a la muse ne velt muser unless you wish to have a good laugh

Et le tans en folie user, listening to his foolish remarks.

— Ne sai, fait il, mais se Dieu voie, "I know only too well," said the knight,

Ains qui soie mis a la voie, "But, may God be my witness,

Quanqui'voldra tot li dirai; before we get back on the road,

Ja autrement n'en partirai.» Unless you wish to have a good laugh

Lors li demande de rechien: listening to his foolish remarks.

«Vallet, fait il, ne te soit grief, "Young man, take no offense,

Mais des v. chevaliers mi di But tell me about the five knights,

Et des puceles auresi and the maidens as well.

Sui les encontra ne veis.» Have you met them or seen them?

Et li vallés le tenoit pris The young man held tight

to the edge of his coat of mail, and tugged at it.

Or me dites, fait il, biax sire, "And now tell me, my lord,

Que c'est que vos avez vestu?

— Vallet, fait il, dont nel ses tu? "Young man," said he, "don't you know?"

— Je non. — Vallet, c'est mes haubers, "No." "This is my hauberk,

S'est aussi pesans come fers, it's as heavy as iron.

— De fer est il? — Ce vois tu bien "Is it made of iron?" "As you well see.

— «De ce, fait il, ne sai je rien, I've never seen one before,

— Naie, vallet, ce ne puet estre "Of course not, boy, that's impossible!

Qu'ensi peüst rule riens estre. Nothing in the world could be born like this.

— Qui vos atorna dont ensi? "Who, then, gave you such equipment?"

— Vallet, je te dirai bien qui. "Young man, I will tell you who.

— Dites le dont. — Molt volentiers: "Well, do so." "With pleasure.

N'a pas encor .v. ans entiers It was not five years ago

Que tost cest harinois me dona made me a present of all these accoutrements.

Et li chevaliers li redit: The knight then said,

Et cil dist: «Fustes vos ensi nez? If you threw a javelin at me,

And the boy, who was not very bright,

— Naie, vallet, ce ne puet estre "My lord, Sir knight, may God never give

Gart Diex les bisses et les cers, such armor to fawns and deer!

Que nule oicirre n'en porroie For I would no longer be able to kill them.

Ne jamais après ne corroie. It would be a waste to run after them then."

Et li chevaliers li redit: The knight then said,

Et cil qui petit fu senez And the boy, who was not very bright,

Li dist: «Fustes vos ensi nez? "Were you born like that?"

— Naie, vallet, ce ne puet estre "Of course not, boy, that's impossible!

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N'a pas encor .v. ans entiers It was not five years ago

Que tost cest harinois me dona made me a present of all these accoutrements.

Et li chevaliers li redit: The knight then said,
The young man jumped on his horse, and rode to where the farmers were plowing the land. As soon as they saw their lord, they all shook with fear. Because of the heavily armed knights, they saw with him. They knew well that if the knights told him what they did and who they were, he would want to be a knight. And his mother would lose her senses. They had thought they could avoid his ever seeing a knight or ever hearing of their doings! The young man said to the herdsmen, "Have you seen five knights and three maidens come by here?" They went through the pass, all day long," answered the herdsmen. On those words, the knight rode away at full gallop, in his eagerness and where he can usually be found."
"Young man," he said, "I will tell you. The King is residing in Carduel. Not five days ago, he was resting there, I was there myself and I saw him. And if you do not find him there, someone will tell you where he has gone." On those words, the knight rode away at full gallop, in his eagerness to catch up to the knights and maidens. The young man did not linger and went home to the manor where his mother waited sadly, because of his lateness. Her heart was gladdened as soon as she saw him! It was impossible for her to hide the joy that she felt. Being the loving mother she was, she ran to meet him and more than a hundred times called out, "Oh! My son! My beloved son!"
"My beloved son, your lateness anguished my heart so. I was overcome with sadness, It almost killed me. Where have you been today, for so long?"
"Where, mother? I'll tell you, without a false word," from something that I've seen has given me great joy. The young man did not linger and went home to the manor where his mother waited sadly, with a heavy heart, because of his lateness. Her heart was gladdened as soon as she saw him! It was impossible for her to hide the joy that she felt. Being the loving mother she was, she ran to meet him and more than a hundred times called out, "Oh! My son! My beloved son!"
"My beloved son, your lateness anguished my heart so. I was overcome with sadness, It almost killed me. Where have you been today, for so long?"
"Where, mother? I'll tell you, without a false word," from something that I've seen has given me great joy. Haven't you always told me that our Lord God's angels are so beautiful, that Nature has never made any creatures as beautiful, and that there's nothing more beautiful in the world?" "I have said so, my beloved son,
Jel di por vor, et di encor.» I have said so and say it again.
— Taisiez, mere, ne vi je or “Quiet, mother! Haven’t I seen
Les plus beles choses qui sont, the most beautiful things alive
Qui par le gaste forest vont? go by in the Forsaken Forest?
Il sont plus bel, si com je quit, Yes, more beautiful, I think
Que Diex ne que si angle tuit.» than God and all His angels.”
La mere entre ses bras le prent His mother took him in her arms and said,
Et dist: «Biax fix, a Dieu te rent, “You are in God’s hands now, my beloved son,
Que molt ai grant paor de toi. and I fear greatly for you.
Tu as veû, si com je cri, I think you have seen
Les angles dont la gent se plaignent, the angels that people grieve about;
Qui oient quanqu’il ataingnent.” the ones who kill all they meet.”
— Non ai, voir, mere, non ai, non! “No, mother, I didn’t! Not at all!
Chevalier dient qu’il ont non.» Knights; that’s what they said they’re called.”
La mere se pasme a cest mot, His mother swooned,
Que chevalier nomer li ot; hearing him say the word Knight.
Et quant ele fu redrechiee, When she got up,
Dist comme feme correchiee: she was very upset. She said,
«Ha! lasse! com sui malbaillie! “Alas! What sad fate is mine.
Biax dols fix, de chevalerie Oh, my sweet child, I had hoped to protect you
Vos quidoie si bien garder from this business of knighthood;
Que ja n’en oïssiez parler you would never have heard me speak of it,
Ne que ja nul n’en velissiez. nor would you ever have seen any knights.
Chevaliers estre deüssiez, A knight! You should have been one,
Biax fix, se Damedieu pleüst, as your father and all your other friends!
Qui vostre pere vos ēat que vos ne dechaez de rien you need not feel any shame
De son lignage ne del mien, for his lineage, nor for mine.
Que je sui de chevaliers nee, Because I descend from knights,
Des meillors de ceste contree. from the best in this land.
Es illes de mer n’ot lignage in the islands of the sea, in my time,
Meillor del mien en mon eage, there was no lineage higher than mine.
Mais li meillor sont decheü, But sometimes even the great may fall.
S’est bien en pluisors lius veü It is well known everywhere
Que les mescheances avienent that misfortune strikes good men,
As preudomes qui se maintienent those who persevere
En grant honor et en proce. in honor and in valiance.
Malvestiez, honte ne pereche The cowards, the shameful, the idle
Ne dechiet pas, qu’ele ne puet, need not fear their downfall, they cannot fall.
Mais les buens dechaoir estuet. But the fate of the good is to fall.
Vostre pere, si nel savez, You do not know this, but your father
Fu parmi la jambe navrez received a wound between his legs,
Si que il mehaigna del cors. that maimed him.
Sa grant terre, ses grans tresors, His vast lands, his great wealth,
Que il avoit come preudom, which his valor had earned him,
En litiere aporter s’i fist, after the death of Uhter Pendragon, who was king,
Ichi en ceste forest gaste; the lands were ravaged,
Ne pot fuîr, mais en grant haste and father of the good king Arthur.
En litiere aporter s’i fist, The lands were ravaged,
Apovri et deshireté and the poor people disparaged.
Et escillé furent a tort this is what happened, unjustly, to the noble families,
Vostre pere cest manoir ot in honor and in valiance.
Utherpandragon qui rois fu after the death of Uhter Pendragon, who was king,
Les terres furent escillies and father of the good king Arthur.
Et les povres gens avillies, The lands were ravaged,
Si s’en fut qui fuîr pot. and the poor people disparaged.
Vostre pere cest manoir ot Those who could, escaped.
Ichi en ceste forest gaste; Your father owned this manor,
Ne pot fuîr, mais en grant haste here in the Forsaken Forest.
En litiere aporter s’i fist, He was unable to flee, so hurriedly

Qu’aillors ne sot ou il fuïst.  
for he didn’t know where else to run.

Et vos, qui petis estieiez,  
And you, who were young,

.J. molt biax freres avieiez;  
you had two handsome brothers.

Petis estiez, alaitans,  
You were young, still at my breast,

Peu avieiez plus de .ii. ans.  
you were barely two years old.

Quant grant furent vostre dui frere,  
When your two brothers were grown,

Au los et au conseil lor pere  
following your father’s advice and desire,

Alerent a .ii. cors roiaus  
they visited the courts of two kings,

Por avoir armes et chevax.  
to receive arms and horses.

Au roi d’Eschavalon ala  
Your older brother went to the king of Escavalon

Li aisnez, et tant servi l’a  
and served him so well

Que chevaliers fu adoubez;  
he was dubbed a knight.

Et li autres, qui puis fu nez,  
Your other brother, the younger of the two

Fu au roi Ban de Gomorret.  
went to king Ban of Gomorret.

En .i. jor ala  
The same day, the two young men

Adoube et chevalier furent,  
were dubbed and made knights,

Et en .i. jor meïsme murent  
and that same day they both left

Por revenir a lor repaire,  
to return home;

Que joie me voloient faire  
they wanted to bring joy to me,

As well as to their father,

Et lor pere, qui pues nes vit,  
but he never saw them again,

Qu’a armes furent desconfit.  
for they were killed in battle.

A armes furent mort andui,  
They both died because of their arms,

Dont j’ai grant doel et grant anui.  
and I am still full of sorrow and grief.

De l’ainsné avinrent merveilles,  
Wondrous things happened to your older brother:

Que li corbel et les corneilles  
ravens and crows gouged out his eyes.

Ambesdeus les oex li creverent;  
That is how he was found dead.

Einsi les gens mort le troverent.  
their father died from mourning their death,

Et je ai vie molt amere  
and I have lived a bitter life since his.

Sofferte puis que il fu mors.  
the only thing left to me,

Car il n’i avoit plus des miens;  
because all of my family was gone.

Rien plus ne m’avoit Diex laissie  
God had not left me anything else

Et si ot cote et caperon,  
made of deerskin which covered him well.

De cuir de cerf close environ.  
and I am still full of sorrow and grief.

Li vallés entent molt petit  
That is how he was found dead.

A che que sa mere li dist.  
to what his mother told him.

"A mengier, fait il, me donez;  "Bring me something to eat,” he said.

Ne sai de coi m’araisonnez.  “I don’t know what you’re talking about.

Mes molt iroie volentiers  
But I’ll go with pleasure

Au roi qui fait les chevaliers,  
to the King who makes knights

Et je irai, cui qu’il em poist.»  
no matter what you say."

La mere, tant come il li loist,  
His mother did all she could

Et lor pere, qui puis nes vit,  
but he never saw them again,

Car il n’i avoit plus des miens;  
because all of my family was gone.

Rien plus ne m’avoit Diex laissie  
God had not left me anything else

And so she prepared his trappings:

Et braies faites a la guise  
Welsh-style trousers,

De canevas grosse chemise  
a heavy homespun shirt,

Et braies et cauces, ce me samble;  
if I am not mistaken.

Et si ot cote et caperon,  
There was also a tunic and a cape

De cuir de cerf close environ.  
which covered him well.

Einsi la mere l’atorna.  
His mother outfitted him like this,

Trois jors sanz plus le demora,  
but she could only keep him three days, no longer!

Que plus n’i ot mestier losenge.  
Her cajoling became useless.

Lors ot la mere doel estrange,  
Then his mother was seized by a strange mourning.

Sel baise et acole en plorant  
In tears, kissing him, embracing him,

Et dist: «Ore ai je doel molt grant,  
she said, “I feel very sad

Biax fix, quant aler vos en voi.  
my beloved son, seeing you leave.

Vos irez a la cort le roi,  
you will go to the King’s court,

Se li dirés qu’armes vos doinst.  and you will ask him to give you arms.

De contredit n’i ara point,  
He won’t argue,

Mais quant ce vennra a l’essai  
But when the time comes to bear them
D'armes porter, coment ert donques? and to use them, what will happen then?

Ce que vos ne feïstes onques, How will you succeed

Ne autrui nel veïstes faire, in something you have never done,

Coment en sarez a chief traire? nor seen another do?

Malaisement, voire, ce dout. You will not, I'm afraid;

Mal serez afaitiez del tout, you'll be helpless with them.

Qu’ïl n’est merveille, ce m’est vis, There is nothing surprising, in my eyes,

S’en ne set che c’on n’a apris; to not know what you have never been taught.

Mais merveille est quant on n’aprent What is surprising is to not learn

Ce que on ot et voit sovent; what you see and hear often.

Biax fix, .i. sens vos weil aprendre I want to teach you something, my beloved son,

Ou il vos fait molt bon entendre, something worthy of your attention.

Et si’l vos plaist a retenir, If you truly remember this,

Grans biens vos en porra venir. you should fare well.

Chevaliers serez jusqu’a po, Soon you will be a knight,

Fix, se Dieu plaist, et je le lo. if God be willing, and you have my blessing.

Se vos trovez ne pres ne loing If, in your wanderings,

Dame qui d’aïe ait besoig, you meet a lady in need

Or a maid in distress,

La vostre aide appareilie give them your assistance,

Lor soit, s’ele[v] vos en requierent, if they so much as ask you,

Car totes honors i affierent. for your honor depends on it.

Qui as dames honor ne porte, He who does not honor women

La soe honor doit estre morte. loses his own honor.

Dames et puçeles servez, Serve ladies and maidens honorably,

Si serez partout honerez; and you will be esteemed everywhere.

Mais se vos alcunne en proiez, And if you ask one for her favors in love,

Gardez que ne li anuiez be wary of offending her,

De nule rien qui li desplaise; do nothing that may vex her.

De pucele a molt qui le baise. If you obtain a kiss from a maiden,

She will give much more.

S’ele le baisier vos consent, But if she does agree to this kiss,

Le sorplus je vos en desfent, I forbid you what may ensue;

Se laissier le volez por moi. please, for me, renounce it.

Mais s’ele a anel en son doi If she wears a ring on her finger

Or a purse on her waist,

Et par amor ou par proiere and she offers these to you

Le vos done, bon m’ert et bel out of love for you or on your asking,

Que vos em portez son anel. I would agree that you may accept the ring.

Pour l’anel prendre vos doinz gié For the ring you have my permission,

Et de l’aumosniere congïé. the purse as well.

Le sorplus je vos en desfent, I forbid you what may ensue;

Que en chemin ne en hostel, on the road, or at an inn,

Que vos ne demandez son non; do not fail to ask him his name.

Et ce sachiez a la parsome, It is by his name that one knows a man.

Par le sornon connoist on l’ome. and consort with men of honor.

Biax fix, as preudomes parlez My beloved son, you must speak with

Et lor compaignie tenez; and consort with men of honor.

Preudom ne forconseille mie A man of honor never gives bad advice

Ciax qui tienent sa compaignie. to those who accompany him.

Sor tote vos veïstes proier But above all, I beg you now

Que a l’egele et al mostier to go to churches and abbeys

Alez proier nostre Seignor and pray to our Lord

Qu’en cest siecle vos doinst honor, that he may grant you honor in this world

Et si vos doinst contenir and allow you to follow the right path

Qu’a bone fin puissiez venir. so that you will come to a good end."

—Mere, fait li, que est eglise? “But mother, what is a church?”

— Uns lius ou l’en fait le servise, “A place where masses are held

Celui qui cie et terre fist in glory of Him who created heaven and earth

Et homes et fomes i mist. and the men and animals that inhabit it."

— Et mostiers, coi? — Fix, ce mêisme: “And an abbey, what is that?”

— Et mostiers, col? — Fix, ce mêisme: “It is this, my son: a glorious and holy place,

Et mais bele et saintisme full of relics and treasures,

Ou il a cors sains et tresors, where the body of Jesus Christ,
Jhesu Crist, le prophète sainte

the holy prophet is sacrificed.

He was humiliated by the Jews,

betrayed and condemned unjustly.

He suffered the torments of death

to save men and women

whose souls went to Hell,

after leaving their bodies.

He was tied to a pole,

beaten and then crucified

wearing a crown of thorns.

I advise you to go to church

to hear masses and matins

and worship the Lord.”

“From now on,” said the young man,

“I will go willingly

to churches and abbeys,

I promise you.”

There was no reason to dawdle any longer.

He said goodbye to his mother, and she cried.

He was fitted out in the Welsh manner,

wearing large hobnailed boots,

and carrying, as he always did

wherever he went, three javelins.

In his right hand he held a wicker switch
to whip his horse.

It was time to leave.  His mother, who loved him,
kissed him while crying,

and prayed that God might guide him.

“My beloved son,” she said, “may God be with you!

and may he grant you, wherever you go,

more happiness than I have left to me!”

Once he was a stone’s throw away,

the young man turned and saw his mother fallen,
at the end of the drawbridge,

lying there, in a faint,

who jumped ahead

and carried him away speedily

through the dark forest.

That night, he slept in the forest,

until the morning light shone forth.