SELECTIONS FROM CHAUCER

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THE HOUS OF FAME

Book I

God turne us every dreem to gode!
For hit is wonder, by the rode,
To my wit, what causeth swevenes
Either on morwes or on evenes;
And why the effect folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal nevere come;
Why that is an avisioun,
And why this a revelacioun;
Why this a dreem, why that a sweven,
And nat to every man liche even;
Why this a fantome, why these oracles,
I noot; but who-so of these miracles
The causes knoweth bet. than I,
Devyne lie; for I certeingly
Ne can hem noght, ne nevere thinke
To besily my wit to swinke
To knowe of hir signifiaunce
The gendres, neither the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causes
For-why this is more than that cause is—
As if folkes complexiouns
Make hem dreme of reflexiouns,
Or elles thus, as other sayn,
For to greet feblenesse of her brayn,
By abstinence or by seeknesse,
Prison, stewe, or greet distresse,
Or elles by disordinaunce
Of naturel acustomaunce,
That som man is to curious
In studie, or melancolious,
Or thus, so inly ful of drede
That no man may him bote bede;
Or elles, that devocioun
Of somme, and contemplacioun
Causeth swiche dremes ofte;
Or that the cruel lyf unsofte
Which these ilke lovers leden
That hopen over muche or drede
That purely hir impressiouns
Causeth hem avisiouns;
Or if that spirits have the might
To make folk to dreme a-night,
Or if the soule, of propre kinde,
Be so parfit as men finde
That hit forwot that is to come,
And that hit warneth alle and somme
Of everich of hir aventures
By avisiouns or by figures,
But that our fleshe ne hath no might
To understonden hit aright,
For hit is warned to derkly—
But why the cause is, noght wot I.
Wel worth of this thing grete clerkes,
That trete of this and other werkes;
For I of noon opioun
Nil as now make mencioun,
But only that the holy rode
Turne us every dreem to gode!
For nevere sith that I was born,
Ne no man elles me biforn
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a dreem as I
The tenthe day did of Decembre,
The which, as I can now remembre,
I wol yow tellen every del.

The Invocation

But at my ginning, trusteth wel,
I wol make invocacioun
With special devocioun
Unto the god of sleep anoon,
That dwelleth in a cave of stoon
Upon a streem that comth fro Lete,
That is a flood of helle unsweete.
Besyde a folk men clepe Cimerie
Ther slepeth ay this god unnerie
With his slepy thousand sones
That alway for to slepe hir wone is,
And to this god that I of rede,
Preye I that he wol me spede
My sweven for to telle aright,
If every dreem stonde in his might.
And He, that mover is of al
That is and was and evere shal,
So yive hem Ioye that hit here
Of alle that they dremè to-yere,
And for to stonden alle in grace
Of hir loves, or in what place
That hem wer levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro poverté and shonde;
And fro unhappe and ech disese,
And sende hem al that may hem plesse,
That take hit wel and scorne hit noght,
Ne hit misdemen in her thoght
Through malicious entencioun.
And who-so through presumpcioun,
Or hate or scorn or through envye,
Dispyt, or Iape, or vilanye,
Misdeme hit, preye I Iesus God
That—dreme he barfoot, dreme he shod—
That every harm that any man
Hath had sithe the world began
Befalle him thereof or he sterve,
And graunte he mote hit ful deserve,
Lo! with swich a conclusioun
As had of his avisioun
Cresus, that was king of Lyde,
That high upon a gebet dyde!
This prayer shal he have of me;  
I am no bet in charite!  
Now herknheth, as I have you seyd, 
What that I mette, or I abreyd.

The Dream

Of Decembre the tenthe day  
Whan hit was night to slepe I lay  
Right ther as I was wont to done, 
And fil on slepe wonder sone  
As he that wery was for-go  
On pilgrimage myles two  
To the corseynt Leonard  
To make lythe of that was hard.

But as I sleep, me mette I was  
Within a temple y-mad of glas,  
In which ther were mo images  
Of gold, stonding in sondry stages,  
And mo riche tabernacles,  
And with perre mo pinacles,  
And mo curious portreytures,  
And queynte maner of figures  
Of olde werk then I saw evere.  
For certeynyly I niste nevere  
Wher that I was, but wel wiste I  
Hit was of Venus redely  
The temple; for in portreyture  
I saw anoon-right hir figure  
Naked fleting in a see,  
And also on hir heed, parde,  
Hir rose-garlonld whyt and reed,  
And hir comb to kembe hir heed,  
Hir dowves, and Daun Cupido,  
Hir blinde sone, and Vulcano,  
That in his face was ful broun.

But as I romed up and doun,  
I fond that on a wal ther was  
Thus writen on a table of bras:
"I wol now singe, if that I can,
The armes and also the man,
That first cam through his destinee,
Fugitif of Troye contree,
In Itaile with moche pyne
Unto the strondes of Lavyne."
And tho began the story anoon,
As I shal telle yow echoon.

First saw I the destruccioun
Of Troye through the Greek Sinoun,
With his false forsweringe,
And his chere and his lesinge,
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Thorgh which Troyens loste al hir Ioye.
And after this was grave, alas!
How Ilioun assailed was
And wonne, and King Priam y-slain,
And Polites his sone, certayn,
Dispitously of Dan Pirrus.

And next that saw I how Venus,
Whan that she saw the castel brende,
Doun fro the hevene gan descende
And bad hir sone Eneas flee;
And how he fledde, and how that he
Escaped was from al the pres,
And took his fader, Anchises,
And bar him on his bak away,
Crying, "Allas, and welaway!"
Ther saw I graven eek how he,
His fader eek and his meynee,
With his shippes gan to sayle
Toward the contree of Itaile.
Ther saw I swich tempest aryse
That every herte mighte agryse
To see hit peynted on the wal.
Ther saw I graven eek withal,
Venus, how ye, my lady dere,
Weping with ful woful chere,
Prayen Iupiter an hye
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Troyan Eneas
Sith that he hir sone was.
Ther saw I Ioves Venus kisse
And graunted of the tempest lisse.
Ther saw I how the tempest stente,
And how with alle pyne he wente
And prevely took arrivage
In the contree of Cartage.
Ther saw I grave how Eneas
Tolde Dido every cas
That him was tid upon the see
And after grave was how she
Made of him, shortly, at oo word,
Hir lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord:
Lo, how a woman doth amis
To love him that unknownen is!
But let us speke of Eneas,
How he betrayed hir, allas!
And lefte hir ful unkindely.
So whan she saw al-utterly
That he wolde hir of trouthe faile,
And wende fro hir to Itaile,
She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
"Allas!" quod she, "What me is wo!"
Tho saw I grave al tharivaile
That Eneas had in Itaile,
And with King Latine his tretee,
And alle the batailles that he
Was at himself and eek his knightes
Or he had al y-wonne his rightes,
And how he Turnus refte his lyf
And wan Lavyna to his wyf,
And al the marvelous signals
Of the goddes celestials,
How, maugre Iuno, Eneas,
For al hir sleighte and hir compas,
Acheved al his aventure,
For Iupiter took of him cure
At the prayere of Venus:
The which I preye alway save us,
And us ay of our sorwes lighte!

When I had seyen al this sighte
In this noble temple thus,
“A, Lord!” thoughte I, “that madest us,
Yet saw I nevere swich noblesse
Of images ne swich richesse
As I saw graven in this chirche;
But not woot I who did hem wirche,
Ne wher I am, ne in what contree.
But now wol I go oute and see
Right at the wiket if I can
See o-whel stering any man
That may me telle wher I am.”

When I out at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me beheld.
Then saw I but a large feld
As fer as that I mighte see,
Withouten toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or gras, or ered lond;
For al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may see yet lye
In the desert of Libye.
Ne I no maner creature
That is y-formed by nature
Ne saw I me to rede or wisse.

“O Crist,” thoughte I, “that art in blisse,
Fro fantome and illusioun
Me save!” and with devocioun
Myn yën to the hevene I caste.

Tho was I war, lo! at the laste,
That faste by the sonne, as hyë
As kenne mighte I with myn yë,
Me thoughte I saw an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyn.
But this as sooth as deeth, certeyn,
Hit was of gold and shoon so brighte
That neve re sawe men such a sighte
But if the hevene had y-wonne
Al newe of gold another sonne.
So shoon the egles fethres brighte,
And somewhat dounward gan hit lighte.

Explicit liber primus.

Book II

Incipit liber secundus.

Proem

Now herkneth, every maner man
That English understonde can,
And listeth of my dreem to lere:
For now at erste shul ye here
So selly an avisoun
That Isaye ne Scipioun
Ne King Nabugodonosor,
Pharo, Turnus, ne Elcanor,
Ne mette swich a dreem as this!
Now faire blisful, O Cipris,
So be my favour at this tyme!
And ye me to endyte and ryme
Helpeth that on Parnaso dwelle
By Elicon the clere welle.
O Thought, that wroot al that I mette,
And in the tresorie hit shette
Of my brayn! now shal men see
If any vertu in thee be
To tellyn al my dreem aright.
Now kyth thyng engyn and might.

Sk. 501–528
The Dream.

This egle, of which I have yow told,
That shoon with fethres as of gold,
Which that so hyē gan to sore,
I gan beholde more and more,
To see hir beautee and the wonder.
But nevere was ther dint of thonder,
Ne that thing that men calle foudre,
That smoot somtyme a tour to poudre
And in his swifte coming brende,
That so swythe gan descendē
As this foul whan hit beheld
That I a-roume was in the feld;
And with his grimme pawes stronge
Within his sharpe nayles longe
Me, fleing, at a swap he hente,
And with his souris agayn up wente
Me carying in his clawes starke
As lightly as I were a larke,—
How high, I can not telle yow,
For I cam up, I niste how.
For so astonied and a-sweved
Was every vertu in my heved,
What with his souris and with my drede,
That al my feling gan to dede,
For-why hit was to greet affray.

Thus I longe in his clawes lay
Til at the laste he to me spak
In mannes vois and seyde, "Awak!
And be not so a-gast, for shame!"
And called me tho by my name.
And for I sholde the bet abreyde,
Me mette "Awak!" to me he seyde
Right in the same vois and stevene
That useth oon I coude nevene;
And with that vois, soth for to sayn,
My minde cam to me agayn,
For hit was goodly seyd to me,
So nas hit nevere wont to be.
And herewithal I gan to stere
And he me in his feet to bere
Til that he felte that I hadde hete
And felte eek tho myn herte bete.
And tho gan he me to disporte
And with wordes to comforte,
And sayde twyes, "Seynte Marie!
Thou are noyous for to carie,
And nothing nedeth hit, pardel!
For al-so wis God helpe me
As thou non harm shalt have of this;
And this cas that betid thee is
Is for thy lore and for thy prow.
Let see! darst thou yet loke now?
Be ful assured, boldely,—
I am thy frend." And therwith I
Gan for to wondren in my minde.
"O God," thoughte I, "that madest kinde,
Shal I non other weyes dye?
Wher Ioves wol me stellifye
Or what thing may this signifie?
I neither am Enok, ne Elye,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganymede
That was y-bore up, as men rede,
To hevene with Dan Iupiter
And maad the goddes boteler."
    Lo! this was tho my fantasey!
But he that bar me gan espaye
That I so thoghte, and sayde this:
"Thou demest of thy-self amis;
For Ioves is not ther-aboute
(I dar wel puttē thee out of doute)
To make of thee as yet a sterre.
But er I berē thee moche ferre,
I wol thee telle what I am

Sk. 564–601
And whider thou shalt and why I cam
To done this, so that thou take
Good herte and not for fere quake.”
“Gladly,” quod I. “Now wel,” quod he,
“First I that in my feet have thee,
Of which thou hast a fere and wonder,
Am dwelling with the god of thonder,
Which that men callen Jupiter,
That dooth me flee ful ofte fer
To done al his comaundement.
And for this cause he hath me sent
To thee: now herke, by thy trouthe!—
Ceretyn, he hath of thee routhe
That thou so longe trewely
Hast served so ententify
His blinde nevew Cupido,
And faire Venus goddesse also,
Withoute guerdoun ever yit,
And nevertheless hast set thy wit—
Although that in thy heed ful lyte is—
To make bokes, songes, dytees,
In ryme or elles in cadence,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love and of his servants eke
That have his servise soght and seke;
And peynest thee to preyse his art,
Althogh thou haddest nevere part:
Wherfore, also God me blesse,
Ioves halt hit greet humblesse
And vertu eek that thou wolt make
A-night ful ofte thyn heed to ake,
In thy studie so thou wrytest
And evere-mo of love endytest
In honour of him and preysinges,
And in his folkes furtheringes,
And in hir matere al devysest
And nght him nor his folk despysest,
Although thou mayst go in the daunce
Of hem that him list not avaunce.

"Wherfore, as I seyde, y-wis,
Iupiter considereth this
And also, beau sir, other thinges:
That is, that thou hast no tydinges
Of Loves folk, if they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that God made;
And noght only fro fer contree
That ther no tydinge comth to thee,
But of thy verray neyghebores,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou herest neither that ne this.
For whan thy labour doon al is,
And hast y-maad thy rekeninges,
In stede of reste and newe thinges
Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon,
And also domb as any stoon
Thou sittest at another book
Til fully daswed is thy look,
And livest thus as an hermyte,
Although thyn abstinence is lyte.

"And therfore Loves through his grace
Wol that Ibere thee to a place
Which that hight THE HOUS OF FAME,
To do thee som dispport and game
In som recompensacioun
Of labour and devocioun
That thou hast had, lo! causeles,
To Cupido, the reccheles!
And thus this god thorgh his meryte
Wol with som maner thing thee quyte,
So that thou wolt be of good chere.
For truste wel that thou shalt here,
When we be comen ther I seye,
Mo wonder thinges, dar I leye,
And of Loves folk mo tydinges,
Bothe soth-sawes and lesinges;
And mo loves newe begonne,
And longe y-served loves wonne,
And mo loves casuelly
That ben betid, no man wot why,
But as a blind man stert an hare;
And more Iolytee and fare,
Whyl that they finde love of stele,
As thinketh hem, and over-al wele;
Mo discords and mo Ielousyes,
Mo murmurs and mo novelryes,
And mo dissimulaciouns
And feyned reparaciouns;
And mo berdes in two houres
Withoute rasour or sisoures
Y-maad, then greynes be of sondes;
And eke mo holding in hondes;
And also mo renovelaunces
Of olde forleten aquesytaunces;
Mo love-dayes and acordes
Then on instruments ben cordes;
And eek of loves mo eschaunges
Than evere cornes were in graunges:—
Unethe maistow trowen this?”
Quod he, “No, helpe me God so wis!”—
Quod I. “No? Why?” quod he. “For hit
Were impossible to my wit,
Though that Fame had al the pyes
In al a realme, and al the spyes,
How that yet she shulde here al this
Or they espye hit.” “O yis, yis!”
Quod he to me, “that can I preve
By resoun worthy for to leve,
So that thou yeve thyne advertence
To understonde my sentence.

“First shalt thou heren wher she dwelleth:
And so thyne owne book hit telleth,
Hir paleys stant, as I shal seye,
Right even in middes of the weye
Betwixen hevene, erthe, and see,
That what-so-evere in al these three
Is spoken in privee or apert,
The way therto is so overt
And stant eek in so Iust a place
That every soun mot to hit pace,
Or what so comth fro any tonge,
Be hit rouned, red, or songe,
Or spoke in seurtee or drede,
Certein, hit moste thider nede.

"Now herkne wel, for-why I wil
Tellen thee a propre skil
And worthy demonstracioun
In myn imaginacioun.

"Geffrey, thou wost right wel this,
That every kindly thing that is
Hath a kindly stede ther he
May best in hit conserved be,
Unto which place every thing,
Through his kindly enclyning,
Moveth for to come to
Whan that hit is awey therfro.
As thus: lo, thou mayst al day see
That any thing that hevy be,
As stoon or leed or thing of wighte,
And ber hit nevere so hye on highte,
Lat go thyn hand, hit falleth doun.
Right so seye I by fyre or soun
Or smoke or other thinges lighte,
Alwey they seke upward on highte;
Wyl ech of hem is at his large,
Light thing up, and dounward charge.

"And for this cause mayst thou see
That every river to the see
Enclyned is to go by kinde,
And by these skilles, as I finde,
Hath fish dwelling in flood and see,
And treës eek in erthe be.
Thus every thing by this resoun
Hath his propre mansioun,
To which hit seketh to repaire
As ther hit shulde not apaire.
Lo, this sentence is knowen couth
Of every philosophres mouth,
As Aristotle and Dan Platon
And other clerkes many oon.
And to confirme my resoun,
Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,
Or elles no man mighte hit here.
Now herke what I wol thee lere.
 "Soun is nught but air y-broken;
And every speche that is spoken,
Loud or privee, foul or fair,
In his substaunce is but air.
For as flaumbe is but lighted smoke,
Right so soun is air y-broke.
But this may be in many wyse,
Of which I wil thee two devyse,
As soun that comth of pype or harpe.
For whan a pype is blowen sharpe,
The air is twist with violence
And rent: lo, this is my sentence;
Eek, whan men harpe-stringes smyte,
Whether hit be moche or lyte,
Lo, with the strook the air to-brekest.
Right so hit breketh whan men speketh:
Thus wost thou wel what thing is speche.
 "Now hennesforth I wol thee teche
How every speche or noise or soun
Through his multiplicacioun,
Thogh hit were pyped of a mous,
Moot nede come to Fames Hous.
I preve hit thus—tak hede now—
By experience: for if that thou
Throwe on water now a stoon,
Wel wost thou hit wol make anoon
A litel roundel as a cercle,
Paraventure brood as a covercle;
And right anoon thou shalt see weel,
That wheel wol cause another wheel,
And that the thridde and so forth, brother,
And every cercle causing other,
Wyder than himselfe was.
And thus, fro roundel to compass,
Ech aboute other goinge,
Caused of othres steringe,
And multiplying evere-mo
Til that hit be so fer y-go
That hit at bothe brinkes be.
Al-thogh thou mowe hit not y-see
Above, hit goth yet alway under,
Although thou thenke hit a gret wonder.
And who-so seith of truoth the I varie,
Bid him proven the contrarie.
And right thus every word, y-wis,
That loude or privée spoken is,
Moveth first an air aboute,
And of this moving, out of doute,
Another air anoon is moved.
As I have of the water preved
That every cercle causeth other,
Right so of air, my leve brother:
Everich air in other stereth
More and more, and speche up bereth,
Or vois or noise or word or soun,
Ay through multiplicacioun,
Til hit be atte Hous of Fame:—
Tak hit in ernest or in game.

"Now have I told, if thou have minde,
How speche or soun, of pure kinde,
Enclyned is upward to meve.
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.
And that same place, y-wis,
That every thing enclyned to is,
Hath his kindeliche stede:
That sheweth hit, withouten drede,
That kindely the mansioun
Of every speche, of every soun,
Be hit either foul or fair,
Hath his kinde place in air.
And sin that every thing that is
Out of his kinde place, y-wis,
Moveth thider for to go
If hit a-weise be therfro,
As I before have preved thee,
Hit seweth, every soun, pardee,
Moveth kindely to pace
Al up into his kindely place.
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as Fame list to dwelle,
Is set amiddles of these three,
Hevene, erthe, and eek the see,
As most conservatif the soun.
Than is this the conclusioun,
That every speche of every man,
As I thee telle first began,
Moveth up on high to pace
Kindely to Fames place.
"Telle me this feithfully:—
Have I not preved thus simply,
Withouten any subtiltee
Of speche, or gret prolixitee
Of termes of philosophye,
Of figures of poetye,
Or colours of rethoryke?
Pardee, hit oghthe thee to lyke;
For hard langage and hard mater
Is encombrous for to here
At ones. Wost thou not wel this?"
And I answerde, and seyde, "Yis."
"A ha!" quod he, "lo, so I can,
Lewedly to a lewed man
Speke, and shewe him swiche skiles
That he may shake hem by the biles,
So palpable they shulden be.
But telle me this, now pray I thee,
How thinkth thee my conclusion?"
Quod he. "A good persuasioun,"
Quod I, "hit is, and lyk to be
Right so as thou hast preved me."
"By God," quod he, "and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yit, or hit be eve,
Of every word of this sentence
A preve, by experience,
And with thyn eres heren wel
Top and tail and everydel,
That every word that spoken is
Comth into Fames Hous, y-wis,
As I have seyd: what wilt thou more?"
And with this word upper to sore
He gan, and seyde, "By Seynt Iame!
Now wil we spoken al of game."—
"How farest thou?" quod he to me.
"Wel," quod I. "Now see," quod he,
"By thy trouthe, yond adoun,
Whor that thou knowest any toun
Or hous or any other thing.
And whan thou hast of ought knowing
Loke that thou warne me,
And I anon shall telle thee
How fer that thou art now therfro."
And I adoun gan loken tho
And beheld feldes and plaines,
And now hilles and now mountaines,
Now valeys, and now forestes,
And now, unethes, grete bestes,
Now riveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grete trees,
Now shippes sailing in the see.
But thus sone in a whyle he
Was flowen fro the grounde so hyë
That al the world, as to myn ye,
No more semed than a prikke,
Or elles was the air so thkke
That I ne mighte not discerne.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And sayde, "Seestow any toun
Or ought thou knowest yonder doun?"
I sayde, "Nay." "No wonder nis,"
Quod he, "for half so high as this
Nas Alexander Macedo;
Ne the king, Dan Scipio,
That saw in dreem, at point devys,
Helle erthe and paradys;
Ne eek the wrecche Dedalus,
Ne his child, nyce Icarus,
That fleigh so highe that the hete
His winges malt, and he fel wete
In-mid the see, and ther he dreynyte,
For whom was maked moche compleynete.
"Now turn upward," quod he, "thy face,
And behold this large place,
This air. But loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see;
For in this regioun, certein,
Dwelleth many a citezein,
Of which that speketh Dan Plato.
These ben the eyrishe bestes, lo!"
And so saw I al that meynee
Bothe good and also flee.
"Now," quod he tho, "cast up thyn ye!"
See yonder, lo, the galaxye,
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
For hit is whyt; and some, parfey,
Callen hit Watlinge Strete,
That ones was y-brent with hete
Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Pheton, wolde lede
Algate his fader carte, and gye.
The cartè-hors gonne wel espye
That he ne coude no governaunce,
And gonne for to lepe and launce,
And beren him now up, now doun,
Til that he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in hevene a signe is yit.
And he for ferde loste his wit
Of that, and leet the reynes goon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounte and doun descende
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende,
Til Iupiter, lo, atte laste,
Him slow and fro the carte caste.
Lo, is it not a greet mischaunce
To lete a fool han governaunce
Of thing that he can not demeine?’”
And with this word, soth for to seyne,
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feithfully to me spak he.
Tho gan I loken under me,
And beheld the eyrishe bestes,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hailes, reines, windes,
And thengendring in hir kindes,
And al the wey through which I cam.
“O God,” quod I, “that made Adam,
Moche is thy might and thy noblesse!”
And tho thoughte I upon Boëce,
That writ, “A thought may flee so hyë,
With fetheres of Philosophye,
To passen everich element;
And whan he hath so fer y-went,
Than may be seen, behind his bak,
Cloude and al that I of spak.”
Tho gan I wexen in a wer,
And seyde, “I woot wel I am heer;
But wher in body or in gost
I noot, y-wis: but God, thou wost!"
For more cleer entendement
Nad he me nevere yit y-sent.
And than thoughte I on Marcian,
And eek on Anteclaudian,
That sooth was hir descripcioun
Of al the hevenes regioun
As fer as that I saw the preve.
Therfore I can hem now beleve.

With that this egle gan to crye:
"Lat be," quod he, "thy fantasye!
Wilt thou lere of sterres aught?"
"Nay, certeinly," quod I, "right naught."
"And why?" "For I am now to old."
"Elles I wolde thee have told,"
Quod he, "the sterres names, lo,
And alle the hevenes signes to,
And which they been." "No fors," quod I.
"Yis, pardee," quod he; "wostow why?
For whan thou redest poetrye,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Brid, fish, beest, or him or here,
As the Raven, or either Bere,
Or Ariones harpe fyn,
Castor, Pollux, or Delphyn,
Or Atlantes doughtres sevne,
How alle these arn set in hevene:
For though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde."
"No fors," quod I, "hit is no nede.
I leve as wel, so God me spede,
Hem that wryte of this materere
As though I knew hir places here.
And eek they shynen here so brighte,
Hit shulde shenden al my sighte
To loke on hem." "That may wel be,"
Quod he. And so forth bar he me
A whyle, and than he gan to crye
That nevère herde I thing so hye,
"Now up the heed, for al is wel;
Seynt Iulian, lo, bon hostel!
See herè the Hous of Fame, lo!
Maístow not heren that I do?"
"What?" quod I. "The grete soun,"
Quod he, "that rumbleth up and doun
In Fames Hous, ful of tydinges,
Bothe of faire speche and chydinges,
And of false and sothè compoundè.
Herkne wel. Hit is not rouned.
Herestow not the grete swogh?"
"Yis, pardee," quod I, "wel y-nogh."
"And what soun is it lyk?" quod he.
"Peter! lyk beting of the see,"
Quod I, "again the roches holowe
Whan tempest doth the shippes swalowe,
And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
A myle thens and here hit route;
Or elles lyk the last humblinge
After the clappe of a thundringle,
Whan Ioves hath the air y-bete.
But hit doth me for fere swete!"
"Nay, dreed thee not therof," quod he,
"Hit is nothing wil byten thee.
Thou shalt non harm have, trewely."
And with this word bothe he and I
As nigh the place arryved were
As men may casten with a spere.
I niste how, but in a strete
He sette me faire on my fete,
And seyde, "Walke forth a pas,
And tak thyn aventure or cas
That thou shalt finde in Fames place."
"Now," quod I, "whyl we han space
To speke, or that I go fro thee,
For the love of God, tellè me,
In sooth, that wil I of thee lere,
THE HOUS OF FAME

If this noise that I here
Be, as I have herd thee tellen,
Of folk that doun in erthe dwellen,
And comth heer in the same wyse
As I thee herde or this devyse;
And that ther lyves body nis
In al that hous that yonder is,
That maketh al this loude fare?"

"Now," quod he, "by Seynte Clare,
And also wis God rede me!
But o thing I wil warne thee
Of the which thou wolt have wonder.
Lo, to the Hous of Fame yonder
Thou wost how cometh every speche;
Hit nedeth noght thee eft to teche.
But understond now right wel this:
Whan any speche y-comen is

Up to the paleys, anon-right
Hit wexeth lyk the same wight
Which that the word in erthe spak,
Be hit clothed reed or blak,
And hath so verray his lyknesse
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
That hit the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
And is not this a wonder thing?"

"Yis," quod I tho, "by Hevene-king!"
And with this word, "Farwel," quod he,
"And heer I wol abyden thee.
And God of hevene sende thee grace
Som good to lernen in this place."
And I of him took leve anoon,
And gan forth to the paleys goon.

Explicit liber secundus.

Sk. 1058-1090
Book III

Incipit liber tercius.

Invocation

O god of science and of light,
Apollo, through thy grete might,
This litel laste book thou gye!
Nat that I wilne for maistrye
Heer art poetical be shewed,
But, for the rym is light and lewed,
Yit make hit sumwhat agreable
Though som vers faile in a sillable;
And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And if, divyne vertu, thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn heed y-marked is
(Lo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame to descryve)
Thou shalt see me go as blyve
Unto the nexte laure I see
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree.
Now entreth in my brest anoon!—

The Dream

Whan I was fro this egle goon,
I gan beholde upon this place.
And certein, or I ferther pace,
I wol yow al the shap devyse
Of hous and site, and al the wyse
How I gan to this place aproche
That stood upon so high a roche,
Hyer stant ther noon in Spaine.
But up I clomb with alle paine;
And though to climbe hit greved me,
Yet I ententif was to see
And for to pouren wonder lowe
If I coude any weyes knowe
What maner stoon this roche was.
For hit was lyk a thing of glas
But that hit shoon ful more clere.
But of what congeled matere
Hit was, I niste redely.

But at the laste espyed I,
And found that hit was every deel
A roche of yse and not of steel.
Thoughte I, "By Seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a feble foundement
To bilden on a place hye.
He oughte him litel glorifye
That her-on bilte, God so me save!"

Tho saw I al the half y-grave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had y-been in mochel wele,
And hir fames wyde y-blowe.
But wel unethes coude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by; for out of drede
They were almost of-thowed so
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name:
So unfamous was wexe hir fame.
But men seyn, "What may evele laste?"

Tho gan I in myn herte caste
That they were molte awey with hete
And not awey with stormes bete.
For on that other syde I sey
Of this hil that northward lay,
How hit was writen ful of names
Of folk that hadden grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yit they were
As fresche as men had writen hem there
That selve day right, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure.
But wel I wiste what hit made.
Hit was conserved with the shade—
Al this wryting that I sy—
Of a castel, that stood on hy,
And stood eek on so cold a place
That hete mighte hit not deface.

Tho gan I up the hil to goon,
And fond upon the cop a woon,
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the cunning to descryve
The beautee of that ilke place,
Ne coude casten to compace
Swich another for to make
That mighte of beautee be his make
Ne so wonderliche y-wrought:
That hit astonieth yit my thought
And maketh al my wit to swinke
On this castel to bethinke.
So that the grete beautee,
The cast, the curiositee,
Ne can I not to yow devyse,
My wit ne may me not suffyse.

But natheles al the substance
I have yit in my remembrance.
For-why me thoughte, by Seynt Gyle!
Al was of stone of beryle,
Bothe the castel and the tour,
And eek the halle and every bour,
Withouten peces or Ioininges.
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewinnes and pinacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and ful eek of windowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.
And eek in ech of the pinacles
Weren sondry habitacles,
In which stoden, al withoute,
Ful the castel al aboute
Of alle maner of minstrales,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Bothe of weping and of game,
Of al that longeth unto famé.
    Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe,
That souned bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on his syde, faste by,
Sat the harper Orion,
And Eacides Chiron,
And other harpers many oon,
And the Bret Glascurion.
And smale harpers with her gleës
Seten under hem in seeës,
And gonne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kinde.
    Tho saugh I stonden hem behinde,
A-fer fro hem, al by hemselfe,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden loude menstralcyes
In cornemusë, and shalmyes,
And many other maner pype,
That craftely begunne pype
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many floute and lilting-horn,
And pypes made of grene corn,
As han thise litel herde-gromes
That kepén bestes in the bromes.
    Ther saugh I than Atiteris,
And of Athenes Dan Pseustis,
And Marcia that lost her skin
Bothe in face, body, and chin,
For that she wolde envyen, ló!
To pypen bet then Apollo.
    Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pypers of the Duche tonge
To lerne love-daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.

Tho saugh I in another place
Stonden in a large space
Of hem that maken blody soun
In trumpe, beme, and clarioun.
For in fight and blood-shedinge
Is used gladly clarioninge.

Ther herde I trumpen Messenus,
Of whom that speketh Virgilius.
Ther herde I Ioab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo,
And alle that used clarion
In Cataloine and Aragon,
That in hir tyme famous were
To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.

Ther saugh I sitte in other seês,
Pleying upon sondry gleês,
Whiche that I cannot nevene,
Mo then sterres been in hevene,
Of which I nil as now not ryme,
For ese of yow and los of tyme.
For tyme y-lost, this knownen ye,
By no way may recovered be.

Ther saugh I pleyen Iogelours,
Magiciens and tregetours,
And phitonesse, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses,
That use exorsiscious
And eek thise fumigacios
And clerkes eke, which conn wel
Al this magyk naturel,
That craftely don hir ententes
To make in certeyn ascendentes
Images, lo! through which magyk
To make a man ben hool or syk!
Ther saugh I thee, Queen Medea,
And Circes eek, and Calipsa.
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,
Lymote, and eek Simon Magus.
Ther saugh I and knew hem by name
That by such art don men han fame.
Ther saugh I Colle tregetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Pleye an uncouth thing to telle:
I saugh him carien a wind-melle
Under a walsh-note shale.

What shuld I make lenger tale
Of al the peple that I say,
Fro hennes in-to domesday?

When I had al this folk beholde,
And fond me lous and noght y-holde,
And eft y-mused longe whyle
Upon these walles of beryle,
That shoon ful lighter than a glas,
And madʒ wel more than hit was
To semen every thing, y-wis,
As kinde thing of fames is,
I gan forth romen til I fond
The castel-yate on my right hond,
Which that so wel corven was
That nevere swich another nas,
And yit hit was by aventure
Y-wrought as often as by cure.

Hit nedeth noght yow for to tellen,
To make yow to longe dwellen,
Of this yates florishinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervinges,
Ne how they hatte in masoneries,
As corbets fulle of imageries.
But Lord! so fair hit was to shewe,
For hit was al with gold behewe.
But in I wente and that anoon;
Ther mette I crying many oon:
“A largesse, largesse, hold up well

Sk. 1272–1309
God save the lady of this pel,
Our owne gentil lady Fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name
Of us!” Thus herde I cryen alle,
And faste comen out of halle
And shoken nobles and sterlinges.
And somme crowed were as kings
With crowes wrought ful of losenges;
And many riban and many frenges
Were on hir clothes trewely.
Tho atte laste aspyed I
That pursevaantes and heraudes,
That cryen riche folkes laudes,
Hit weren alle. And every man
Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
Had on him thrown a vesture,
Which that men clepe a cote-armure,
Enbrowded wonderliche riche
Al-though they nere nought y-liche.
But noght nil I, so mote I thryve,
Been aboute to discryve
Al these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on hir cotes beren,
For hit to me were impossible.
Men mighte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thikke, as I trowe.
For certeyn, who-so coude y-knowe
Mighte ther alle the armes seen
Of famous folk that han y-been
In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
Sith first began the chevalrye.
Lo! how shulde I now telle al this?
Ne of the halle eek what nede is
To tellen yow, that every wal
Of hit, and floor, and roof and al
Was plated half a fote thikke
Of gold, and that nas no-thing wikke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyn as ducat in Venyse,
Of which to lyte al in my pouche is?
And they were set as thikke of nouchis
Fulle of the fynest stones faire,
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As grees growen in a mede.
But hit were al to longe to rede
The names, and therfore I pace.

But in this riche lusty place,
That Fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne croudng for to mochil prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sitte in a see imperial,
That maad was of a rubee al
Which that a carbuncle is y-called,
I saugh, perpetually y-stalled,
A feminyne creature,
That nevere formed by nature
Nas swich another thing y-seye.
For altherfirst, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte
That the lengthe of a cubyte
Was lenger than she seemed be;
But thus sone in a whyle she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir feet she therthe reighte,
And with hir heed she touched hevene,
Ther as shynen sterres sevne.
And ther-to eek, as to my wit,
I saugh a gretter wonder yit,
Upon hir eyen to behold.
But certeyn I hem nevere tolde;
For as fele eyen hadde she
As fetheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure
That Goddes trone gunne honoure
As Iohn writ in thapocalips.
Hir heer, that oundy was and crips,
As burned gold hit shoon to see.
And sooth to tellen, also she
Had also fele up-stonding eres
And tonges as on bestes heres.
And on hir feet wesen saugh I
Parriches winges redely.

But Lord! the perrie and the ritchesse
I saugh sitting on this goddesse!
And Lord! the hevenish melodye
Of songes, ful of armonye,
I herde aboute her trone y-songe,
That al the paleys-walles ronge!
So song the mighty Muse, she
That cleped is Caliopee,
And hir eighte sustren eke,
That in hir face semen meke.
And everemo, eternally,
They songe of Fame, as tho herde I:
"Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun and of fame!"

Tho was I war, lo! atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That this ilke noble quene
On hir shuldres gan sustene
Bothe tharmes and the name
Of tho that hadde large fame:
Alexander, and Hercules
That with a sherte his lyf lees!
And thus fond I sitting this goddesse
In nobleye, honour, and richesse,
Of which I stinte a whyle now,
Other thing to tellen yow.

Tho saugh I stonde on either syde,
Straight doun to the dores wyde
Fro the dees, many a pileer
Of metal, that shoon not ful cleer.
But though they nere of no richesse,
Yet they were maad for greet noblesse,
And in hem greet and by sentence.
And folk of digne reverence,
Of which I wol yow telle fonde,
Upon the piler saugh I stonde.
Alderfirst, lo! ther I sigh,
Upon a piler stonde on high,
That was of leed and yren fyn,
Him of secte Saturnyn,
The Ebrayk Iosephus, the olde,
That of Iewes gestes tolde;
And bar upon his shuldres hye
The fame up of the Iewerye.
And by him stoden other sevene,
Wyse and worthy for to nevene,
To helpen him bere up the charge,
Hit was so hevy and so large.
And for they writen of batailes
As wel as other olde mervailes,
Therefore was, lo, this pilere,
Of which that I yow telle heer
Of leed and yren bothe, y-wis.
For yren Martes metal is,
Which that god is of bataile;
And the leed, withouten faile,
Is, lo, the metal of Saturne,
That hath ful large wheel to turne.
Tho stoden forth, on every rowe,
Of hem which that I coude knowe,
Thogh I hem noght by ordre telle
To make yow to longe to dwelle.
These, of which I ginne rede,
Ther saugh I stonden, out of drede,
Upon an yren piler strong,
That peynted was al endelong
With tygres blood in every place,
The Tholosan that highte Stace,
That bar of Thebes up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruel Achilles.
And by him stood, withouten lees,
Ful wonder hye on a pileer
Of yren, he, the grete Omeer,
And with him Dares and Tytus
Before, and eek he Lollius,
And Guido eek de Columpnis,
And English Gaufride eek, y-wis.
And ech of these, as have I Ioye,
Was besy for to bere up Troye.
So hevy ther-of was the fame
That for to bere hit was no game.
But yit I gan ful wel espye,
Betwix hem was a litel envye.
Oon seyde, Omer made lyes,
Feyning in his poetryes,
And was to Grekes favorable:
Therfore held he hit but fable.

Tho saugh I stonde on a pileer,
That was of tinned yren cleer,
That Latin poete, Virgyle,
That borë hath up a longe whyle
The fame of Pius Eneas,
And next him on a piler was
Of coper, Venus clerk, Ovyde,
That hath y-sowen wonder wyde
The grete god of Loves name.
And ther he bar up wel his fame,
Upon this piler, also hyë
As I might see hit with myn yë:
For-why this halle, of which I rede
Was woxe on highte, lengthe and brede,
Wel more by a thousand del
Than hit was erst, that saugh I wel.

Tho saugh I on a piler by,
Of yren wroght ful sternely,
The grete poete, Daun Lucan,
And on his shuldres bar up than
As highe as that I mighte see
The fame of Iulius and Pompee.
And by him stoden alle these clerkes
That writen of Romes mighty werkes,
That, if I wolde hir names telle,
Al to longe moste I dwelle.

And next him on a piler stood
Of soulfre, lyk as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, the soth to telle,
That bar up al the fame of helle,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
That quene is of the derke pyne.

What shulde I more telle of this?
The halle was al ful, y-wis,
Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on treës rokes nestes.
But hit a ful confus materen
Were al the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they highte.
But whyl that I beheld this sighte,
I herde a noise aprochen blyve
That ferde as been don in an hyve
Agen her tyme of out-fleyinge.
Right swich a maner murmuringe
For al the world hit semed me.

Tho gan I loke aboute and see
That ther com entring into the halle
A right gret company with-alle,
And that of sondry regiouns,
Ofalleskinne condiciouns
That dwelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and rych. And also sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gone doun on kneës falle
Before this ilke noble quene
And seyde, "Graunte us, lady shene,
Ech of us, of thy grace, a bone!"
And somme of hem she graunted sone;
And sommè she werned wel and faire;
And sommè she graunted the contraire
Of hir axing utterly.
But thus I seye yow trewely,
What hir cause was, I niste.
For this folk, ful wel I wiste,
They hadde good fame ech deserved,
Althogh they were diversly served:
Right as hir suster, Dame Fortune,
Is wont to serven in comune.

Now herkne how she gan to paye
That gonne hir of hir grace praye;
And yit, lo, al this companye
Seyden sooth and noght a lye.

"Madame," sayden they, "we be
Folk that heer besechen thee
That thou graunte us now good fame,
And lete our werkes han that name.
In ful recompensacioun
Of good werk, yef us good renoun."

"I werne yow hit," quod she anoon.
"Ye gete of me good fame noon,
By God! and therfore go your wey."

"Alas," quod they, "and welaway!
Telle us what may your cause be?"

"For me list hit noght," quod she.

"No wight shal speke of yow, y-wis,
Good ne harm, ne that ne this."

And with that word she gan to calle
Hir messager, that was in halle,
And bad that he shuldxe faste goon,
Up peyne to be blind anoon,
For Eolus, the god of winde:—

"In Trace ther ye shul him finde,
And bid him bringe his clarioun,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hit is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
Hem that me list y-preised be.
And also bid him how that he
Bringe his other clarioun,
That highte Sclauandre in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
Hem that me list, and do hem shame."

This messager gan faste goon,
And found wher in a cave of stoon,
In a contree that highte Trace,
This Eolus (with harde grace!)
Held the windes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rere,
He bond and pressed hem so sore.

This messager gan faste crye;
"Rys up," quod he, "and faste hye
Til that thou at my lady be.
And tak thy clarions eek with thee
And speed thee forth." And he anon
Took to a man that hight Triton
His clarions to bere tho,
And leet a certeyn wind to go
That blew so hidously and hye
That hit ne lefte not a skye
In al the welken longe and brood.

This Eolus no-ther abood
Til he was come at Fames feet,
And eek the man that Triton heet;
And ther he stood as still as stoon.

And her-withal ther com anoon
Another huge companye
Of gode folk, and gunne crye,
"Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat our werkes han that name
Now, in honour of gentilesse,
And also God your soule blesse!
For we han wel deserved hit,
Therfore is right that we ben quit."
"As thryve I," quod she, "ye shal faile,
Good werkes shal yow noght availe
To have of me good fame as now.
But wot ye what? I graunte yow
That ye shal have a shrewed fame
And wikked loos and worse name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now go your wey, for ye be served.
And thou, Dan Eolus, let see!
Tak forth thy trumpe anon," quod she,
"That is y-cleped Sclaundre light,
And blow hir loos that every wight
Speke of hem harm and shrewednesse
In stede of good and worthinesse.
For thou shalt trumpe al the contraire
Of that they han don wel or faire."
"Alas," thoughte I, "what aventures
Han these sory creatures!
For they amonges al the pres
Shul thus be shamed gilteles!
But what! hit moste nedes be."

What did this Eolus, but he
Tok oute his blakke trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the devil was,
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the world shulde overthrowe,
That through-oute every regioun
Wente this foule trumpes soun
As swift as pelet out of gonne
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.
And swich a smoke gan out-wende
Out of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, blo, grenish, swartish reed,
As doth wher that men melte leed,
Lo, al on high fro the tuel!
And therto oo thing saugh I wel,
That the ferther that hit ran
The gretter weexen hit began,
As doth the river from a welle,
And hit stank as the pit of helle.
Alas, thus was hir shame y-ronge,
And giltelees, on every tonge.
Tho com the thridde companye
And gunne up to the dees to hye,
And doun on knees they fille anon,
And seyde, “We ben everychon
Folk that han ful trewely
Deserved fame rightfully,
And praye yow hit mot be knowe
Right as hit is, and forth y-blowe.”
“I graunte,” quod she, “for me list
That now your gode werkes be wist.
And yit ye shul han better loos,
Right in dispyt of alle your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anoon.
Lat now,” quod she, “thy trumpe goon,
Thou Eolus, that is so blak,
And oute thyn other trumpe tak
That higte Laude, and blow hit so
That through the world hir fame go
Al esely and not to faste,
That hit be knowen atte laste.”
“Ful gladly, lady myn,” he seyde.
And oute his trumpe of gold he brayde
Anon, and sette hit to his mouth,
And blew hit est, and west, and south,
And north, as loude as any thunder,
That every wight had of hit wonder,
So brode hit ran or than hit stente.
And certes al the breeth that wente
Out of his trumpes mouth hit smelde
As men a pot-ful of bawme helde
Among a basket ful of roses.
This favour did he til hir loses.
And right with this I gan aspye
Ther com the ferthe companye.
But certeyn they were wonder fewe,
And gonne stonden in a rewe,
And seyden, "Certes, lady bright,
We han don wel with al our might,
But we ne kepē have no fame.
Hyd our werkes and our name,
For Goddes love! For certes we
Han certyn doon hit for bountee
And for no maner other thing."
"I graunte yow al your asking,"
Quod she; "let your werkes be deed."
With that aboute I clew myn heed,
And saugh anoon the fīfte route
That to this lady gonne loute
And doun on knees anoon to falle.
And to hir tho besoughten alle
To hyde hir gode werkes eek,
And seydē they yeven noght a leek
For fame ne for swich renoun.
For they, for contemplacioun
And Goddes lovē, had y-wrought;
Ne of fame woldē they noght.
"What?" quod she, "and be ye wode?
And wene ye for to do gode
And for to have of that no fame?
Have ye dispyt to have my name?
Nay, ye shul liven everichoon!
Blow thy trompe and that anoon,"
Quod she, "thou Eolus, I hote,
And ring this folkes werk by note
That al the world may of hit here."
And he gan blowe hir loos so clere
In his golden clarioun
That through the world wente the soun
So keneley and eek so softe,
But atte laste hit was on-lofte.
Thoo com the sexte companye,
And gonne faste on Fame crye.
Right verrailly in this manere
They syden, "Mercy, lady dere!
To telle certein, as hit is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al our lyf y-be.
But natheles yit preye we
That we mowe han so good a fame
And greet renoun and knowen name
As they that han don noble gestes
And achieved alle hir lestes,
As wel of love as other thing.
Al was us nevere brooch ne ring,
Ne elles nought, from wimmen sent,
Ne ones in hir herte y-ment
To make us only frendly chere
But mighte temen us on bere,
Yet lat us to the peple seme
Swich as the world moy of us deme,
That wimmen loven us for wode.
Hit shal don us as moche gode,
And to our herte as moche availe
To countrepeise ese and travaile,
As we had wonne hit with labour;
For that is dere boght honour
At regard of our grete ese.
And yit thou most us more plese:
Let us be holdeyn eek, therto,
Worthy, wyse, and gode also,
And riche, and happy unto love.
For Goddes love, that sit above,
Though we may not the body have
Of wimmen, yet, so God yow save,
Let men glewe on us the name.
Suffyceth that we han the fame."
"I graunte," quod she, "by my trouthe!
Now, Eolus, with-uten slouthe,
Tak out thy trumpe of gold," quod she,
“And blow as they han axed me,  
That every man wene hem at ese  
Though they gon in ful badde lêse.”
This Eolus gan hit so blowe  
That through the world hit was y-knowe.

Tho com the seventh route anoon,  
And fel on kneês everichoon,  
And seyde, “Lady, graunte us sone  
The same thing, the same bone,  
That this nexte folk han doon.”
“Fy on yow,” quod she, “everichoon!  
Ye masty swyn, ye ydel wrecches,  
Ful of roten slowe tecches!
What? false theves! wher ye wolde  
Be famous good, and no-thing nolde  
Deserve why, ne nevere roughte?
Men rather yow to-hangen oughte!
For ye be lyk the sweynte cat  
That wolde have fish, but wostow what?
He wolde no-thing wete his clowes.  
Yvel thrift come on your Iowes  
And eek on myn if I hit graunte
Or do yow favour yow to avaunte!
Thou Eolus, thou king of Trace!  
Go, blow this folk a sory grace;”
Quod she, “anoon. And wostow how?
As I shal telle thee right now.
Sey: ‘These ben they that wolde honour  
Have, and do noskinnes labour,  
Ne do no good, and yit han laude,  
And that men wendê that bele Isaude  
Ne coude hem nought of love werne,  
And yit she that grint at a querne  
Is al to good to ese hir herte.’”

This Eolus anon up sterte,  
And with his blakke clarioun  
He gan to blasen out a soun  
As loude as belweth wind in helle.
And eke therwith, sooth to telle,  
This soun was so ful of Iapes  
As evere mowes were in apes.  
And that wente al the world aboute,  
That every wight gan on hem shoute  
And for to laughe as they were wode:  
Such game fondè they in hir hode.

Tho com another companye,  
That had y-doon the traiteye,  
The harm, the gretest wikkednesse  
That any herte couthe gesse,  
And preyed hir to han good fame,  
And that she nolde hem doon no shame,  
But yeve hem loos and good renoun,  
And do hit blowe in clarioun.  
"Nay, wis," quod she, "hit were a vyce!  
Al be ther in me no Iustyce,  
Me list not to do hit now,  
Ne this nil I not graunte yow."

Tho com ther leping in a route,  
And gan choppben al aboute  
Every man upon the crowne  
That al the halle gan to soune,  
And seyden: "Lady, lefe and dere,  
We ben swich folk as ye mowe here.  
To tellen al the tale aright,  
We ben shrewes, every wight,  
And han deleyt in wikkednesse  
As gode folk han in goodnesse,  
And Ioye to be knownen shrewes  
And ful of vyce and wikked thewes.  
Wherforè we preyen yow, a-rowe,  
That our fame swich be knowe  
In alle thing right as hit is."

"I graunte hit yow," quod she, "y-wis.  
But what art thou that seyst this tale,  
That werest on thy hose a pale,  
And on thy tipet swich a belle!"
“Madame,” quod he, “sooth to telle,
I am that ilke shrewe, y-wis,
That brende the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lo, that citee.”
“And wherfore didest thou so?” quod she.
“By my thrift,” quod he, “madame,
I wolde fayn han had a fame
As other folk had in the toun,
Al-thogh they were of greet renoun
For hir vertu and for hir thewes.
Thoughte I, as greet a fame han shrewes,
Thogh hit be for shrewednesse,
As gode folk han for goodnesse.
And sith I may not have that oon,
That other nil I noght for-goon.
And for to gette of Fames hyre,
The temple sette I al a-fyre.
Now do our loos be blowen swythe
As wisly be thou evere blythe.”
“Gladly,” quod she; “thou Eolus,
Herestow not what they preyen us?”
“Madame, yis, ful wel,” quod he,
“And I wil trumpen hit, parde!”
And tok his blakke trumpe faste,
And gan to puffen and to blaste,
Til hit was at the worldes ende.
With that I gan aboute wende.
For oon that stood right at my bak,
Me thoughte, goodly to me spak
And seyde: “Frend, what is thy name?
Artow come hider to han fame?”
“Nay, for-sothe, frend!” quod I;
“I cam noght hider, graunt mercy!
For no swich cause, by my heed!
Suffyceth me, as I were deed.
That no wight have my name in honde.
I woot my-self best how I stonde.
For what I drye or what I thinke,
I wol my-selven al hit drinke,
Certeyn, for the more part,
As ferforth as I can myn art."
"But what dost thou here than?" quod he.
Quod I, "That wol I tellen thee—
The cause why I stondë here:
Som newe tydinges for to lere;
Som newe things, I not what,
Tydinges, other this or that,
Of love or swiche things glade.
For certeynly, he that me made
To comen hider, seyde me
I shulde bothe here and see,
In this place, wonder things.
But these be no swiche tydinges
As I mene of." "No?" quod he.
And I answerde, "No, pardee!
For wel I wiste evere yit,
Sith that first I hadde wit,
That som folk han desyred fame
Dyversly, and loos, and name;
But certeunly, I niste how
Ne wher that Fame dwelled er now,
Ne eek of hir descripcioun,
Ne also hir condicioun,
Ne the ordrë of hir doom,
Unto the tyme I hider com."
"Which than be, lo! these tydinges,
That thou now thus hider bringes,
That thou hast herd?" quod he to me;
"But now, no fors. For wel I see
What thou desyrest for to here.
Com forth, and stond no longer here,
And I wol thee, withouten drede,
In swich another place lede,
Ther thou shalt here many oon."
Tho gan I forth with him to goon
Out of the castel, sooth to seye.
Tho saugh I stonde in a valeye,  
Under the castel, faste by,  
An hous that domus Dedali,  
That Laborintus cleped is,  
Nas maad so wonderliche, y-wis,  
Ne half so queynteliche y-wrought.  
And everemo, so swift as thought,  
This queynte hous aboute wente,  
That nevere-mo hit stille stente.  
And ther-oute com so greet a noise  
That, had hit stonden upon Oise,  
Men mighte hit han herd esely  
To Rome, I trowe sikerly.  
And the noysë which that I herde  
For al the world right so hit ferde  
As doth the routing of the stoon  
That from thengyn is leten goon.  
And al this hous, of which I rede,  
Was maad of twigges, falwe, rede,  
And grene eek, and som weren whyte,  
Swich as men to these cages thwyte,  
Or maken of these paniers,  
Or elles hottes or dossers,  
That for the swough and for the twigges  
This hous was also ful of gigges,  
And also ful eek of chirkinges,  
And of many other werkinges.  
And eek this hous hath of entrees  
As fele as leves been on trees  
In somer, when they grene been.  
And on the roof men may yit seen  
A thousand holes and wel mo  
To leten wel the soun oute go.  
And by day, in every tyde,  
Ben al the dores open wyde,  
And by night, echoon unshette.  
Ne porter ther is noon to lette  
No maner tydinges in to pace;

Sk. 1918-1955
Ne nevere reste is in that place
That hit nis fild ful of tydinges,
Other loude, or of whispringes.
And over alle the houses angles
Is ful of rouninges and of Tangles
Of werrês, of pees, of mariages,
Of restes, of labour, of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyf,
Of love, of hate, acord, of stryf,
Of loos, of lore, and of winninges,
Of hele, of sekenesse, of bildinges,
Of faire windes, of tempestes,
Of qualm of folk, and eek of bestes,
Of dyvers transmutaciouns
Of estats, and eek of regiouns,
Of trust, of drede, of Ielousye,
Of wit, of winning, of folye,
Of plenteæ, and of greet famyne,
Of chepe, of derth, and of ruyne,
Of good or mis governement,
Of fyr, and dyvers accident.

And lo, this hous, of which I wryte
Siker be ye hit nas not lyte;
For hit was sixty myle of lengthe.
Al was the timber of no strengthe,
Yet hit is founded to endure
Whyl that hit list to Aventure,
That is the moder of tydinges,
As the see of welles and springes.
And hit was shapen lyk a cage.

"Certes," quod I, "in al myn age
Ne saugh I swich a hous as this!"
And as I wondred me, y-wis,
Upon this hous, tho war was I
How that myn egle faste by
Was perched hye upon a stoon.
And I gan streight to him goon
And seyde thus: "I preye thee
That thou a whyle abyde me
For Goddes love, and let me seen
What wondres in this place been.
For yit, paraunter, I may lere
Som good ther-on, or sumwhat here
That leef me were, or that I wente."

"Peter! that is myn entente,"
Quod he to me. "Therfore I dwelle.
But certein, oon thing I thee telle,
That, but I bringe thee ther-in,
Ne shalt thou nevere cunne gin
To come in-to hit, out of doute.
So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.
But sith that Ioves of his grace,
As I have seyd, wol thee solace
Fynally with these thinges:
Uncouthe sightes and tydinges,
To passe with thyn hevinesse,
(Such routhe hath he of thy distresse,—
That thou suffrest debonairly,
And wost thy-selven utterly
Disesperat of alle blis,
Sith that Fortune hath maad a-mis
The fruit of al thyn hertes reste
Languisshe and eek in point to breste,—
That he, through his mighty meryte,
Wol do thee ese, al be hit lyte,
And yaf in expres commaundement,
To which I am obedient,
To furthre thee with al my might,
And wisse and teche thee aright
Wher thou maist most tydinges here)
Shalow heer anoön many oon lere."

With this word he right anoon
Hente me up bitwene his toon,
And at a windowe in me broghte,
That in this hous was, as me thoghte
(And ther-withal me thoghte hit stente,
And no-thing hit aboute wente)
And me sette in the floor adoun.
But which a congrecacioun
Of folk, as I saugh rome aboute
Some within and some withoute,
Nas neuer seen, ne shal ben eft,
That, certes, in this world nis left
So many formed by Nature,
Ne deed so many a creature:
That wel unethe in that place
Had I oon foot-brede of space.
And every wight that I saugh there
Rouned everich in otheres ere
A newe tydinge prevely;
Or elles tolde al openly
Right thus, and seyde: "Nost not thou
That is betid, lo, late or now?"
"No," quod the other, "tellé me what!"
And than he tolde him this or that,
And swoor ther-to that hit was sooth—
"Thus hath he seyd"—and "Thus he dooth"—
And "Thus shal hit be"—and "Thus herde I seye"—
"That shal be found"— "That dar I leye"—
That al the folk that is a-lyve
Ne han the cunning to discryve
The thinges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere.
But al the wonder-most was this:—
Whan oon had herd a thing, y-wis,
He com forth to another wight
And gan him tellen anoon-right
The same that to him was told
Or hit a furlong-way was old,
But gan somwhat for to eche
To this tydinge in this speche
More than hit evere was.
And nat so sone departed nas
That he fro him, that he ne mette
With the thridde; and, or he lette
Any stounde, he tolde him als.
Were the tydinge sooth or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hit nathelees,
And everemo with more encrees
Than hit was erst. Thus north and south
Wente every tydinge fro mouth to mouth,
And that encresing evere-mo,
As fyr is wont to quikke and go
From a sparke spronge amis
Til al a citee Brent up is.

And whan that was ful y-spronge
And woxen more on every tonge
Than evere hit was, hit wente anoon
Up to a windowe oute to goon,
Or, but hit mighte oute ther pace,
Hit gan oute crepe at som crevace
And fleigh forth faste for the nones.

And somtyme saugh I tho, at ones,
A lesing and a sad soth-sawe,
That gonne of aventure drawe
Oute at a windowe for to pace;
And when they metten in that place,
They were a-cheeked bothe two
And neither of hem moste oute go.
For other so they gonne croude
Til ech of hem gan cryen loude,
"Lat me go first!" "Nay, but lat me!
And heer I wol ensure thee
With the nones that thou wolt do so
That I shal nevere fro thee go
But be thyn owne sworn brother!
We wil medle us ech with other
That no man, be he nevere so wrooth,
Shal han that oon of two but both
At ones, al beside his leve,
Come we a-morwe or on eve,
THE HOUS OF FAME

Be we cryed or stille y-rounded."
Thus saugh I fals and sooth compouned
Togeder flee for oo tydinge.
    Thus out at holes gone wringe
Every tydinge streight to Fame.
And she gan yeven ech his name
After hir disposicioun,
And yaf hem eek duracioun,
Some to wexe and wane sone
As dooth the faire whyte mone,
And leet hem gon. Ther mighte I seen
Wenged wondres faste flee,.
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blew aboute.
    And Lord! this hous in alle tymes
Was full of shipmen and pilgrymes,
With scrippes bret-ful of lesinges,
Entremedled with tydinges,
And eek alone by hem-selve.
O, many thousand tymes twelve
Saugh I eek of these pardoneres,
Currous, and eke messageres,
With boistes crammed ful of lyes
As evere vessel was with lyes.
And as I alther-fastest wente
Aboute and did al myn entente
Me for to playe and for to lere
And eek a tydinge for to here
That I had herd of som contree
That shal not now be told for me—
For hit no nede is, redey:
Folk can singe hit bet than I;
For al mot outhe other late or rathe,
Alle the sheves in the lathe—
I herde a gret noise withalle
In a corner of the halle
Ther men of love tydinges tolde,
And I gan thiderward beholde.
For I saugh renning every wight
As faste as that they hadden might;
And everich cryed, "What thing is that?"
And som seyde, "I not nevere what!"
And whan they were alle on an hepe,
Tho behinde gonne up lepe,
And clamben up on other faste,
And up the nose on hye caste,
And troden faste on otheres heles
And stampe, as men don after eles.
   Atte laste I saugh a man
Which that I nevēne naught ne can,
But he semed for to be
A man of greet auctoritee . . . . .

(Unfinished.)