



“When I see the lark moving” Due:

by the troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn,
written in the 1170s

Meter and Rhyme scheme: 8 syllables per line,
ABABCDCD rhyming. In length, the poem is seven
stanzas and an envoy (a short “CDCD” stanza at end).

You will be writing a 2 stanza + 1 envoy poem (20 lines in total) in the style of this medieval poem. Like the troubadours of the period, your poem must be about either a chivalric romance or an epic battle. But unlike the troubadours, you won’t have to sing yours.

This first stanza was a translation written by Ezra Pound, and keeps the poem’s original meter and rhyming scheme. Use this to give you an idea of literary style:

Whene’er I see the lark take flight
And soar up towards the sun on high
Until at last for sheer delight
It sinks, forgetting how to fly,
Such envy fills me when I see
All those whom love thus glad can make
I marvel that the heart of me
With love and longing does not break.

Here is the whole poem more directly translated. Use this version to get an idea what he was writing about, but it doesn’t keep the original meter and rhyming

When I see the lark moving
In joy its wings against the sunlight,
Forget itself and let itself fall
For the sweetness that comes to its heart,
Oh! such great envy comes over me
For all I see rejoice,
I wonder my heart does not
Just break with desire

Alas! I thought I knew so much
About love but I know so little,
For I can’t stop myself loving
Someone from whom I’ll get nothing.
She has all my heart and all of me
And herself and the whole world;
And when she went she left me nothing
But desire and a wanting heart.

I have had no power over myself
Nor am I my own since that time

When she let me look into her eyes,
In a mirror which so delights me.
Oh mirror, since I saw myself in you,
The sighs from my depths have killed me,
And I have lost myself, as was lost
Far Narcissus in the fountain

I despair of the ladies;
I shall never trust them again;
As much as I used to proclaim them
So I shall now disclaim them
For I see not one of help to me
With her who destroys and brings me
down;
I doubt and distrust them all,
For well I know they’re all the same.

This shows she is just a woman,
My lady, and I blame her for it,
For she does not want what one should,

And what one shouldn't do, she does.
I have fallen in bad favour
And I've done like the fool on the bridge,
And how has this happened to me I don't
know
Except I went too high up the mountain

All favour has gone, that's certain,
And I never knew it before,
For she who should have most of it
Has none, so where shall I find it?
Ah, you'd never think when you see her
She'd let the poor man, sick with desire,
Who'll never be well without her,
Die, just, and not to help him.

Since nothing can help with my lady,
Prayers nor favours nor what rights I
have
Nor does it come as a pleasure to her
That I love her, I shall never speak again.
So I leave her and give it up;
She's my death and with death I answer
her;
And I'm off, since she won't keep me,
Poor man, in exile, I don't know where.

Tristan, you'll have no more from me,
For I go, poor man, I don't know where.
I renounce and give up all singing,
And from joy and love I hide myself away.

*And here's the poem in its original
language, Langue d'oc (medieval
French in the south)*

*Can vei la lauzeta mover
de joi sas alas contra.l rai,
que s'oblid' e.s laissa chazer
per la doussor c'al cor li vai,
ai! tan grans enveya m'en ve
de cui qu'eu vey a jauzion,
meravilhas ai, car desse
lo cor de desirer no.m fon.*

*Ai las! tan cuidava saber
d'amor, e tan petit en sai,
car eu d'amar no.m posc tener
celeis don ja pro non aurai.*

*Tout m'a mo cor, e tout m'a me,
e se mezeis e tot lo mon;
e can se.m tolç, no.m laisset re
mas dezirer e cor volon.*

*Anc non agui de me poder
ni no fui meus de l'or' en sai
que.m laisset en sos olhs vezer
en un miralh que mout me plai.
Miralhs, pus me mirei en te,
m'an mort li sospir de preon,
c'aissi.m perdei com perdet se
lo bels Narcisus en la fon.*

*De las domnas me desesper
ja mais en lor no.m fiarai;
c'aissi com las solh chaptener,
enaissi las deschaptendrai.
Pois vei c'una pro no m'en te
vas leis que.m destrui e.m cofon
totas las dopt'e las mescre,
car be sai c'atretals se son.*

*D'aisso's fa be femna parer
ma domna, per qu'e.lh o retrai,
car no vol so c'om deu voler,
e so c'om li deveda, fai.
Chazutz sui en mala merce,
et ai be fai co.l fols en pon;
e no sai per que m'esdeve,
mas car trop puyei contra mon.*

*Pus ab midons no.m pot valer
precis ni merces ni.l dreiz qu'eu ai,
ni a leis no ven a plazer
qu'eu l'am, ja mais no.lh o dirai,
Aissi.m part de leis e.m recre;
mort m'a, e per mort li respon,
e vau m'en, pus ilh no.m rete,
chaitius, en issilh, no sai on.*

*Tristans, ges no.n auretz de me,
Qu'em m'en vau, chaitius, no sai on.
De chantar me gie e.m recre,
E de joi e d'amor m'escon*