

# "Can vei la lauzeta"

("When I see the lark")

Bernart de Ventadorn

(c. 1145-1180)

Language Area: France, Language: Old Occitan

*Text:*

*Translation:*

1.

Can vei la lauzeta mover  
De joi sas alas contral 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 dezirer no.m fon.

When I see the lark beating  
Its wings in joy against the rays of the sun  
That it forgets itself and lets itself fall  
Because of the sweetness that comes to its heart,  
Alas! Such great envy then overwhelms me  
Of all those whom I see rejoicing,  
I wonder that my heart, at that moment,  
Does not melt from desire.

2.

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 tolc, no.m laisset re  
Mas dezirer e cor volon.

Alas! How much I thought I knew  
About love, and how little I know,  
Because I cannot keep myself from loving  
The one from whom I will gain nothing.  
She has all my heart, and my soul,  
And herself and the whole world;  
And when she left, nothing remained  
But desire and a longing heart.

3.

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.  
Miralh, 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.

I have never had power over myself  
Nor been by own man from the very hour  
When she let me see into her eyes,  
Into a mirror that pleases me so much.  
Mirror, since I saw myself in you,  
I have been slain by deep sighs,  
That I have lost myself just as the handsome  
Narcissus did in the fountain.

4.

De las domnas me dezesper;  
Ja mais en lor no.m fiarai;  
C'aissi com las solh chaptener,  
Enaissi las deschaptenerai.  
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.

I despair of ladies;  
I will never trust them again;  
As I used to defend them  
Now I shall abandon them,  
Because I see no one who does any good for me  
Against her who destroys and confounds me,  
I fear and distrust them all,  
Because I know very well that they are all alike.

5.

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

She really shows herself to be a woman in this,  
My lady, for which I condemn her;  
Because she does not want what she should want,  
And what she shouldn't do, she does.  
I have fallen on an evil grace,  
And I have indeed acted like the fool on the bridge  
And I do not know how this happened to me,  
Unless I tried to climb too high on the mountain.

6.

Merces es perduda, per ver,  
Et eu non o saubi anc mai,  
Car cilh qui plus en degr'aver,  
No.n a ges, et on la querrai?  
A! Can mal sembla, qui la ve,  
Qued aquest chaitiu deziron  
Que ja ses leis non aura be,  
Laisse morir, que no l.aon.

Mercy is indeed lost,  
And I never knew it,  
Because she, who ought to have most of it,  
Has none, and where will I look for it?  
Ah! It would never seem, when looking at her,  
That she would let this love-sick wretch,  
Who will never be well without her,  
To die, without helping him.

7.

Pus ab midons no.m pot valer  
Precs ni merces ni.l dreihz  
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.

Since these things will never bring me good from my  
lady,  
Neither prayers, pity, nor the rights I have,  
Nor is it a pleasure to her  
That I love her, I will never tell her again.  
Thus I part from her and give her up.  
She has slain me, and through death I will respond,  
And I go away, since she does not ask me to  
stay,  
Wretched, into exile, I know not where.

8.

Tristans, ges no.n aures de me,  
Qu'eu m'en vau, chaitius, no sai  
on.  
De chantar me gic e.m recre,  
E de joi e d'amor m'escon.

Tristan, you will have nothing more from me,  
For I go away, wretched, I know not where.  
I will withdraw from singing and renounce it,  
And I hide myself from joy and love.

Edited by Frederick Goldin  
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