

Milun

Marie de France



*Translated by
Katharine Margot Toohey*



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Preface

This lai explores the possibility of communicating directly with someone beloved kept distant by secrecy or social convention.

In this work, a Lady and the knight Milun fell in love and had a son in secret. Under the threat of retribution and dishonour, she sent this child to live guarded and nurtured by her sister in Northumbria, sending with him a ring and a letter for him when he was an adult.

I will hang your ring under its throat.

To her, I will send this note:

I will write the name of its father,
outline there its mother's adventure.

When it is grown and older
and reaches the age there
that it is able to know reason,
to it will belong the note, the ring.
This knowledge kept safe with care,
then, it may find its father.'

Unaware, the Lady's father gives her away in marriage to a Baron. While the Baron keeps her under his close watch, the Lady and Milun live in love - speaking only by messages hidden in a pet swan's plumes - for twenty years, in the hope of meeting together again.

now at her pleasure is all:
whether he die or heal,
if she could find some plan,
a way he could speak to her again,
may she reply to this by letter
and the swan return to him her answer.



Throughout, the characters' written word seems to engender resolution at a later point in the narrative. Discourse can be aligned or at one with movement and trajectory. The letters exchanged at the speed of a swan between the Lady and Milun lead to their decision to search for their adult son, and ultimately their reunion, just as the letter the Lady writes to her son leads to the moment in which he and Milun recognise each other. In a similar way, the Lady's first love letter to Milun leads to their meeting, and her message after her lord dies, asking Milun to come to her, reaches him unexpectedly, and leads to their life together with their son.

Marie de France's twelfth-century Anglo-Norman French text was based on traditional Breton *lais*. Quemar's creative full Modern English translation endeavours to maintain the verve, cadence, four stress pattern and rhyme effect of the original, juxtaposed here.

In contrast to some other *lais* by Marie, communication is never otherworldly in *Milun*, as it is when Lanval speaks to a dreamlike Lady or an ethereal white deer laments to Gugemer. In *Milun*, however, any problem-solving in discourse seems possible in real-world terms. For example, the messenger swan is a pet, not under an enchantment, carrying the messages as it travels forward and back for nourishment and shelter. Similarly, Milun and his son speak finally together, through the night, in a lodging after travelling, seeking each other and meeting accidentally, not by supernatural intervention.

In spite of convention, in spite of secrecy, the potential of written words gives the Lady, Milun and their son agency and effectiveness, creating a sense of time in the narrative by suggesting a future when truth can be read and known. Marie says it also gives this to herself:

Because of their love and rich happiness,
Ancients made a lai from this
and I, who its words write,
recount this story to my delight.

Katharine Margot Toohey

Quemar Press



Milun

by Marie de France

When different stories are spoken
differently each one should begin,
and be told with such reason
to bring pleasure to those listening.

Here, I will begin Milun's story.

I will show you quickly
why it was told, and how,
the lai I mentioned to you.

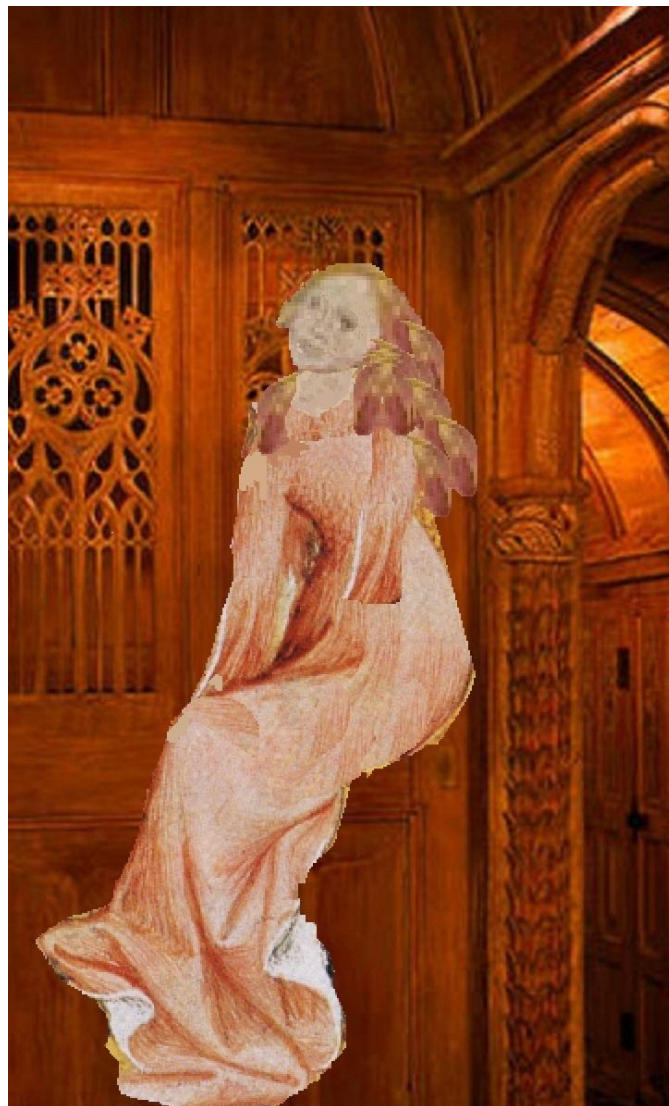
In South Wales Milun was born.

From his knighthood on
not a knight was ever found
who could throw him from his steed.
A knight with such goodness,
daring, courtesy, pride and valiance,
loved and known in Ireland's counties,
in Gotland over, and over Norway,
over Logres, over Albany.

So many with so much envy;



he was much loved for his chivalry,
the knight honoured by Princes many.
There was a baron within his country,
whose name comes not to me,
his daughter possessed such beauty,
that Lady with such courtesy.
The Lady heard talk of Milun
and began her strong love for him,
told him by message she'd
love him, if he agreed.



Ki divers Cuntès veit traitier,/Diversement deit comencier ;/E parler si
rainablement,/K'il seït pleisibles à la gent./Ici comenceraï Milun/E muſtraï par brief
ſermun,/Pur quoi è coment fu trovez/Li Lais ke ci vus ai numez./Milun fu de
Suhtwales nez,/Puis le jur k'il fu adubez,/Ne trova un ſul Chevalier/K'il abatist de ſun
deſtrier./Mut par eſteit bons Chevaliers,/Francs, è hardiz, curteis, è fiers ;/Amez fu
conuz en Irlande,/En Norweje è en Guhtlande,/En Loengre è en Albanie./Eurent
plusurs de li envie ;/Pur ſa prueſce iert mut amez,/E de muz Princes honurez ;/En ſa
cuntrée ot un Barun/Mès jeo ne ſai numer ſun nun :/Il aveit une fille bele,/Mu curteise
Dameisele/Ele ot oï Milun nomer,Mut le comencat à amer./Par ſun message li
manda/Que ſi li pluſt, el l'amera.



Feeling glad at this, Milun
was thankful to the Lady then
for love agreed willingly,
said he'd not leave her a day.
In courtesy he gave his answer,
gave great gifts for the messenger
and for great friendship said:
'My friend, now understand.
Speak for me to her my companion
and keep the council between us hidden.
Take to her my ring of gold,
speak for me these words:
"come to me", if that please her
or go I to her, together.'
The messenger left, bid goodbye
and he went back to his Lady,
gave to her the ring and told
exactly what Milun had said.
The Lady was greatly glad
that their love now be granted.



In an orchard, with a closeby chamber,
where she would divert herself at leisure
there they could speak together often
- so often, she and Milun.

Milun returned much, and so loved
her that the Lady was with child.

When clear to her she was pregnant,
she sent for Milun, to lament,
tell this came to pass.

Her father and wealth would be lost,
dealing with a situation like this,
will make of her terrible justice,
she to be tormented by sword,
be sold in another land,
since it was the custom then,
something abandoned in this time.

Milun answered: he'll make happen
all she advises him.

'At its birth', she said,
'to my sister, you carry this child.





Milun fu liez de la novele,/Si en merciât la Dameisele ;/Volenters otriât l'amur,/Ne partirat jamès nul jur,/Asez li fait curteis respuns,/Al messagé dona granz duns,/E grant amistié préinet ;/Amis, fet-il, ore entremet,/Que à m'Amie puisse parler,/E de notre conseil celer :/Mun anel d'or li porterez,/E de meïe part li direz,/Quant li plerra si vien pur mei,/E jeo irai ensemble od lei :/Cil prent cungé, è si le lait ;/A sa Dameisele revait,/L'anel li dune, si li dist,/Que bien ad fet céo k'il quist./Mut fu la Dameisele lie/De l'amur issi li otrie :/Delez la chambre en un vergier,/U ele alout esbanier,/Là instorent lur parlement,/Milun è ele bien suvent./Tant i vint Milun, tant l'ama,/Que la Dameisele enceinta./Quant aparceit qu'ele est enceinte,/Milun manda,



si fist sa plainte ;/Dist li cum cil est avenu,/Sun père è sun bien ad perdu,/Quant de tel
fet s'est entremise,/De li iert fait grant justise./A glaive serat turmentée/Vendue en
autre cuntrée,/Ceo fu custume as anciens,/Issi teneient en cel tens./Milun respunt que
il fera/Ceo que ele cunseillera :/Quant l'Enfant, fait-ele, ert nez,/A ma Serur le
porterez



In Northumbria my sister's wed,
a lady rich, brave, educated.
Ask her this through writing,
speech and all words spoken:
this is her sister's child;
from this, she greatly suffered;



guard it now to nurture,
be it son or daughter.
I will hang your ring under its throat.
To her, I will send this note:
I will write the name of its father,
outline there its mother's adventure.
When it is grown and older
and reaches the age there
that it is able to know reason,
to it will belong the note, the ring.
This knowledge kept safe with care,
then, it may find its father.'
They kept to her counsel together
until the time came later
when she had their child,
by an elderly lady tended,
one who knew her situation,
keeping covered, keeping hidden,
she never let it be known,
never in word, never in expression.



The Lady had a beautiful son.

At his neck she hung the ring,

in a silken purse placed the note

far away from any sight.

In a cradle they placed him

enveloped in white linen.



Qui en Norhumbre est mariée,/Riche Dame, pruz, enseignée./Si li manderez par
 escrit,/E par paroles, è par dit,/Que c'est l'enfant de sa seur,/S'en ad suffert meinte
 dolur./Ore gart k'il seit bien nuriz,/Qu'il ke co seit u fille, u fiz ;/Votre anel al col li
 pendrai,/E un brief li enveierai,/Escrit iert le nun sun Père,/E l'aventure de sa
 Mère./Quant il serat grant è créuz/E en tel éage venuz,/Que il sache reisun
 entendre/Le bref è lanel li deit rendre ;/Si li cumant tant à garder/Que sun père puisse
 trover./A sun conseil se sunt tenu,/Tant que li termes est venu,/Que la Dameisele
 enfanta :/Une Vielle ki la garda,/A ki tut sun estre géi,/Tant l'a cela, tant l'a
 covri,/Uncques ne fu aparcevançe/En parole, ne en semblance./La Meschine ot un Fiz
 mut bel,/Al col li pendirent l'anel,/E une aumonière de seie/Puis le brief que nul nel'
 veie./Puis le cuchent en un bercel,/Envolupé d'un blanc lincel ;



Underneath the head of the baby
 they placed a pillow valued highly
 and set a cover around him
 edged at all sides with marten.
 The elderly lady handed the child
 to Milun, who had waited in the orchard.



He called up his men
in loyalty, the child to carry then,
moving through city and city
and resting seven times a day,
keeping the baby breastfed,
well slept again and washed.
A wet nurse went with them.
They felt such loyalty to Milun,
the road they continued diligently
until reaching the sought lady.
With grace she received them well.
She took the note and its seal,
and knowing who the child was,
cherished him, in wonder at this.
Those who had brought him
now went back to their realm.
Milun left his own country
needing to earn a soldier's bounty.
Into the house returned his companion.
Her parents found for her a baron,



one of the richest from the men there,
his wealth great, and great his power.
When she knew this design,
her sorrow became the most extreme
and often she would miss Milun.
She doubted the misapprehension
as in this she had a child
and soon that would be understood.
‘Alas’, she said, ‘what will I do!
I have that lord to lose now,
since I have no chastity
since I have no virginity,
and know not how this is right.
Would that I’d my companion back.
With us is understood this affair.
I will dare now go nowhere,
my death worth more than my life.
It will be no longer free, my self
before my watchmen
elderly and young, my chamberlains



who hate good love forever
and delight themselves in dolour.
Now I am left to grieve,
alas, and not to die but live.'
When they gave her to the baron,
her new lord brought her with him.
Milun returned to his country again,
now pensive, now grieving,
now in great sorrow lamenting,
with nothing more to comfort him
than being there in this country near
to the one he loved, to her.
Milun set to planning now
a way to ask her somehow
if she knew he had returned,
had come back here to this land.
He wrote a letter, with his seal.
He'd a swan, loved so well,
over its neck tied the note,
among its plumes concealed it.





Desuz la teste al enfant,/Mistrent un oreiller vaillant ;/E de suz lui un covertur,Urlé de
 martre tut entur./La Vielle l'ad Milun baillié/Cil at atandu al vergié,/Il le cumaunda à
 teu gent,/Ki l'aportèrent léaument ;/Par les viles ù il errouent/Set /fêiz le jur
 resposouent./L'enfant feseient alietier/Cucher de nuvel, è baignier ;/Nurice menoent
 od aus,/E itant furent-il léaus,/Tant unt le dreit chemin erré,/Qu'à la Dame l'unt
 comandé,/El le receut s'il en fu bel./Le brief li baille è le scel ;/Quant ele sot ki il
 esteit,/A merveille le chériseit,/Cil ki l'enfant eurent porté/En lur païs sunt
 returné./Milun eissi fors de sa tere/En soudées pur sun pris quere,/S'Amie remist à
 meisun ;/Sis Pères li duna Barun ;/Un mut riche Hume del' païs,/Mut efforcible, è de
 grant pris./Quant elle sot cele aventure,/Mut est dolente à démesure,/E suvent regrete
 Milun/E mut dute la mesprisun/De céo que ele ot enfant,/Il le sauera de
 maintenant./Lasse, fet-ele, quoi ferai !/Aurai Seigneur cum le perdrai./Jà ne sui-jeo mie
 Pucele,/A tuz-jurs mès serai ancele :/Jeo ne sai pas qu'il fust issi,/Ainz quidoué avoir
 mun ami./Entre nus, ce lisum l'afaire/Jà nel' oïsse aillurs retraire,/Meus me vaudreit
 murir que vivre/Mès jeo ne sui mie délivre ;/Ainz ai asez sur mes gardeins/Veuze è
 jeofnes, mes Chamberleins/Que tuz-jurz héent bone amur,/E se délitent en tristur./Or
 m'estuvrat issi suffrir./Lasse ! quant jeo ne puis murir,/Al terme ke ele fu donée/Sis
 Sires l'ad puis amenée./Milun revient en sun païs,/Mut fu dolent è mut pensis,/Grant
 doel fist è démena,/Mès de ceo se recunforta,/Que près esteit de la cuntrée/Cele k'il
 tant aveit amée ;/Milun se prist à purpenser/Coment il li purrat mander,/Si qu'il ne seit
 aparcéuz/Que il est al païs venuz./Ses lettres fist, sis sééla ;/Un Cisne aveit k'il mut
 ama/Le brief li ad al col lié/E dedenz la plume muscié





Next he summoned his squire,
bid he be his messenger:
‘Early go, change your clothing,
go to the castle where is my companion,
carry there with you my swan.
Guard it with great caution.



Not by servant, nor lady, of hers
may this swan be presented there.’
The squire did as Milun wished,
took the swan, left at this,
straight the road following down
then to come to the castle soon.
He traversed the city over
went to the castle guard's door.
He summoned the porter to him:
‘Friend’, he said, ‘listen.
I’m a man of such a trade
I am a catcher of birds,
a workman from far Caerleon.
With my net I caught a swan -
with much strength, with help greatly -
I would like to present to the Lady,
given just by me with no distraction,
quietly, without causing accusation.’
The young man gave this answer:
‘Friend, none may speak with her,



but I will ascertain about it

and see her if I might,

then lead you there

so you can speak together.'

Into the hall came the porter

and found but two knights here.

At a great table both were seated,

in a chess game they delighted.

He turned back hastily

and led the man through this way,

never to be noticed by anyone,

hindered never nor glimpsed by none.

He called and came to the chamber,

where a girl opened the door.

They were before the Lady then

and they gave to her the swan.

Of her attendants, she called to one.

She said: 'Now be this known:

guard well this swan of mine

giving it enough to dine.'



‘Lady,’ said its carrier,
‘there will be no such other.
None now as this present so regal.
See how it is fine and beautiful,’
in her hands, set it down.
With grace, she took the swan,
its neck, its head touched, stroking,
and felt its plumes, the note within,
setting her blood shivering and moving,
thinking surely this was from her companion.
She rewarded the man from her fortune
then bid to be left alone.
Soon when the room was free,
she summoned a young lady.
They'd the letter's tie undone
then they'd the seal broken.
She read at first: *Milun*,
recognised her companion's name, crying,
a hundred times there kissing,
before she could say then



she saw what was written,
what he was imploring and saying,
the pains great, great the dolour
Milun nights and days to suffer,
now at her pleasure is all:
whether he die or heal,
if she could find some plan,
a way he could speak to her again,
may she reply to this by letter
and the swan return to him her answer.



Un suen Esquier apela,/Sun message li enchargea./Va tost, fet-il, change tes dras./Al chastel m'Amie en irras :/Mun Cisne porteras od tei,/Garde que en prengez cunrei/U par servant, u par meschine,/Que présenté li seit le Cisne./Cil ad fet sun comandement/A-tant s'en vet, le Cigne prent,/Tut le dreit chemin que il sot ;/Al chastel vient si cum il pot./Parmi la vile est trespassez,/A la mestre porte est alez,/Le portier apelat à sei ;/Amis, fet-il, entent à mei :/Jeo sui un hum de tel mester/D'oiseus prendre me sai aider,/Une huchie de suz Karliun/Pris un Cisne od mun lacun ;/Pur force è pur meintenement,/La Dame en voil fère présent/Que jeo ne seie desturbez,/E cest pais achaisunez./Li Bachelers li respundi :/Amis, nul ne parole od li ;/Mès pour ce jeo irai saveir/Si jéo poëie lui véeir,/Que jeo te puisse amener/Jeo te fereie à li parler./A la sale vient li Porters/Ni trova fors deus Chevalers,/Sur une grant table séeient,/Od uns granz eschés déduieent./Hastivement retourne arère/Celui ameine en teu manère,/Que de nul ne ne fu scéuz,/Desturbez, ne aparcéuz./A la chambre vient, si apele/L'us lur ovri une Pucele :/Cil sunt devant la Dame alé/Si unt le Cigne présenté./Ele apelat un suen Varlet/Puis si li dit ore t'entremet/Que mis Cisnes seit bien gardez,/E ke il eit viande asez./Dame, fet-il, k'il' aporta,/Jà nul fors nus nel' recevra,/E jà est-ceo présent réaus/Véez cum est bons è béaus./Entre ses mains li baille è rent/El le receipt mut bonement./Le col li manie è le chief,/Desuz la plume sent le brief ;/Le sanc li remut è frémi,/Bien sot qu'il vient de sun Ami ;/Celui ad fet del' suen doner,/Si l'en cumande à aler./Quant la chambre fu délivrée/Une Meschine ad apelée,/Le brief aveient deslié/Ele en ad le scel debrusé./Al primer chief trova Milun,/De sun Ami cunut le nun ;/Cent feiz le baise en plurant,/Ainz que ele puist dire avant :/Al chief de pièce véit l'escrit,/Ceo k'il ot cumandé è dit :/Les granz peines, è la dolur,/Que Milun séofre nuit ê jur./Ore est del' tut en sun plaisir,/De lui ocire u de garir,/Si ele seust engin trover,/Cum il pèust à li parler :/Par ses lettres si remandast,/E le Cisne li renvéast ;



Guard she this swan close,
see that it fasts,
when three days are over,
upon its neck hang her letter,
released, it will fly to return
to the house it came from.

When she saw all written
and what she learned of him,
the Lady bid the swan remain
to graze and drink in abundance then,
a month held it in her room.

How this happened, now listen:
through her skill, through her arrangement,
she sought ink and parchment,
wrote what she wished in a note
and by a ring sealed it.

She allowed the swan to fast,
and with her note on its neck, released.

Flying with such hunger, the bird,
since it coveted food,



came back home quickly.
It returned to its first city,
flew to the house, within the town,
to come down at the feet of Milun.
At its sight, he was rejoicing,
at once held the bird by the wings.
He called close a steward
and saw the swan was well fed,
then from its neck the note untied
and every side he studied
the meaning he found there.
Its greeting gave him cheer:
that nothing can be well for her
but now remains that wish here
to write like this, by the swan.
To her again, may it be soon.
For twenty years lived this life then
Milun and his love, between them
the swan continued to be their messenger,
these their only words together,



allowing it to fast before
one released it to the other.
To whichever the bird would travel,
they would nourish it well.
They'd speak this way often.
So bothered was no one,
however close her fate constrain,
that it not fly to them again.
The lady who nurtured their son
was together so much with him,



Parmi le face bien garder,/Puis se le laist tant jéuner/Treis jurs que il ne seit péuz,/Le
 brief li seit al col penduz,/Laist l'en aller, il volera,/Là ù il primes conversa./Quant ele
 ot tut l'escrit véu,/E ceo quele i ot entendu,250/Le Cigne fet bien surjurer,/E forment
 pestre è abevrer ;/Dedenz sa chambre un meis le tint/Mès ore oez cum l'en avint,/Tant
 quist par art è par engin,/Ke ele ot enkre è parchemin,/Un brief escrit tel cum li
 plot,/Od un anel l'en séelot./Le Cigne ad laissié juner,/Al col li pent, sil' laist aler :/Li
 Oiseus esteit fameillus,/E de viande covéitus,/Hastivement est revenuz,/Là dunt il
 primes fu venuz./A la vile è en la meisun/Descent devant les piez Milun./Quant il le
 vit mut en fu liez/Par les èles le prent haitiez :/Il apela un despensier,/Si li fet doner à
 mangier./Del' col ad le brief osté,/De chief en chief l'ad esgardé,/Les enseignes qu'il i
 trova,/E des saluz se reheita ;/Ne pot ganz li nul bien avoir,/Or li remeint tut sun
 voleir./Par le Cigne si faitement/Si ferat-il hastivement ;/Vint anz menèrent cele
 vie,/Milun entre lui è s'Amie :/Del Cigne firent messenger/Ni aveïent autre enparler,/E
 si le feseient jeuner./Ainz qu'il le lessassent aler,/E cil à ki l'Oiseus veneit,/Ceo
 sachez que il le peisseit ;/Ensemble viendrent plusurs feiz,/Nul ne pot estre si
 destreiz,/Ne si tenuz estreitement,/Que il ne truisse lui sovent./La Dame qui sun Fiz
 nurri/Tant ot esté ensemble od li,



when the child became an adult
she had him dubbed a knight,
the young courteous gentleman,
and gave to him the letter, the ring,
explained all about his mother
told all his father's adventure
and how his father is a good knight
so courageous, remarkable and so steadfast
there is none upon earth
who has his esteem, who has his worth.
When his aunt recounted to him,
and he was careful well to listen,
at his father's goodness he was elated
glad at what he'd heard,
to himself, came to think, to tell
should someone's price be small
when this was what created him
and his father has such great esteem.
Pricing himself high,
to be far from this land, far from this country
for him there was enough obligation,
waiting then for evening to come.
He took his leave the next day.
He was much admonished by the lady.



She warned him carefully,
 gave to him from her wealth truly.
 He journeyed to South Hampton
 to set himself to the ocean.



Quant il esteit venit en ée,/A Chevalier l'ad adubé./Mut i aveit gent Dameisel/Le brief li rendi è l'anel,/Puis li ad dit ki est sa Mère,/E l'aventure de sun Père,/E cum il est bon chevaliers,/Tant pruz, si hardi, è si fiers./N'ot en la tère nul meillur/De sun pris ne de sa valor:/Quant la Dame li ot mustré/E il l'aveit bien escuté,/Del' bien sun père s'esjoï/Liez fu de çeo k'il ot oï./A sei méismes pense è dit,/Mut se deit-hum priser petit,/Quant il issi fu engendrez,/E sun Père est si alosez,/S'il ne se met en greinur pris ;/Fors de la tère è del país./Asez aveit sun estuveir,/Il ne demure fors le soir/Al demain ad pris cungié/La Dame l'ad mut chastié,/E de bien fère amonesté,/Asez li ad avoir doné./A Suhthamptune vait passer,/Cum il ainz pot se mist en mer,





He continued to Barbefluet,
to Brittany travelled straight away,
spent money and tourneyed in tournaments,
came to know rich acquaintances
and never then in any contest
was he not held to be the best.
The poor knights loved this man,
who from all his riches won
would give so much to them in abundance,
and he would bestow in sums immense.
If he wished to stay anywhere,
any of all the lands there,



he would take the prize and valour,
his courtesy great, great his honour.
Because of his virtues, his high esteem
to his country came word of him:
from this land a young gentleman
to seek acclaim travelled the ocean.
He did so much by his chivalry
by his good, by his generosity
this man, his real name unknown,
is called 'Sans-Peer' by everyone.
Praise of this knight reached Milun.
The knight's worth told to him,
he lamented much, was much in pain
at this new knight with such renown:
should one of my kind not journey,
he not carry sword, not tourney,
should none born before in this country
prized or praised now be?
One thing became his plan:
he would cross in haste the ocean.





A Barbefluet est arrivez,/Dreit en Brutaine est alez :/Là despendi è turnéia,/As riches hummes s'acuinta./Unkes ne vint en nul estur,/Que l'en nel' tenist à meillur./Les povres chevaliers amot,/Ceo que des riches il gainot,/Lut donout è sis reteneit,/E mut largement despendeit./Unkes sun voil ne sujurna/De tutes les tères de là,/Porta le pris è la valor,/Mut fu curteis, mut sot honor./De sa bunté è de sun pris,/Vint la novele en sun païs,/Qu'un Damisels de la tere/Ki passa mer pur pris quere,/Puis ad tant fet par sa pruesce,/Par sa bunté, par sa largesce,/Que cil ki nel' seivent numer/L'apelent hum par tut Sanz-Per./Milun oï celui loer/E les biens de lui recunter,/Mut ert dolent, mut se pleigneit/Del' Chevalier qui tant valeit./Pur tant cum il péüst errer,/Ne tourneier, ne armes porter,/Ne déüst nul del' païs nez,/Estre preisiez ne alosez./De une chose se purpensa,/Hastivement mer passera,



He will joust with the knight then,
planned to diminish him, lessen.
He wished for combat, enraged,
he could cast that knight from his steed,
reduce him at last to shame,
and search to find his son again,
who from his country had voyaged far,
come to some unknown shore.
Milun let his love know,
bidding farewell to her now,
he called upon his bravery,
sending letter and seal to the Lady.
To my knowledge, it was all by swan.
He set out his intention.
Upon hearing about his plan,
she was pleased and thankful to him
for seeking to find their child lost.
Milun wished to cross from this coast.
She gave him her consent
without any hindering constraint.
This word reached him from the Lady
and he dressed himself richly,
traversed across now to Normandy,



travelled from there until Brittany.
He sought to meet many.
He sought tourney and tourney,
often held lodgings wealthily
and he gave away with courtesy.
Through winter, it seems to me,
he would stay in that country,
with many good knights by him.
As Easter and spring time came,
They began the tourneys again
continued combat and redress then.
They assembled at Saint Michel mountain,
knights Norman, knights Breton,
knights French, knights Flemish,
but few of all the knights were English.
Milun went there first
and he, who was a good knight,
for the other good knight asked.
Enough would tell Milun this:
the land from where he arrived,
told of his weapons, described his shield.
All showed him to Milun,
who studied him with concentration.





Si justera al Chevalier/Pur li leidier è l’empeirer ;/Par ire se vodra cumbatre,/Sil’ le
 pout del’ cheval abatre/Dunc serat-il enfin honiz,/Après irra quere sun Fiz,/Qui fors
 del’ païs est eissuz/Mès ne saveit ù est venuz./A s’Amie le fet saveir,/Cungé voleit de
 li avoir ;/Tut sun curage li manda,/Brief è sçel li envéa,/Par le Cigne mun escient/Or li
 remandast sun talent./Quant ele oï sa volenté/Mercie l’en, si li sot gré,/Quant pur lur
 Fiz trover è quere,/Voleit eissir fors de la tere,/Pur le bien de li mustrer,/Nel’ voleit
 mie desturber./Milun oï le mandement,/Il s’aparaille richement,/En Normendie est
 passez,/Puis est desque Bretaine alez./Mut s’aquointa, à plusurs genz,/Mut cercha les
 tournéiemenz,/Riches osteus teneit sovent,/E si dunot curteisement ;/Tut un yver, ceo
 m’est avis,/Conversa Milun al païs ;/Plusurs bons Chevaliers retient./Desque près la
 Paske revient,/Kil recummencent les tourneiz,/E les guères, è les dereiz,/Al munt
 Seint-Michel s’asemblèrent,/Normein, è Bretun i alèrent ;/E li Flamenc, è li
 Franceis,/Mès ni ot guère de Engleis./Milun i est alé primers/Qui mut esteit bons
 Chevalers ;/Le bon Chevaler demanda,/Asez i ot ki li cunta,/De quel part il esteit
 venuz,/A ses armes, à ses escuz ;/Tut l’eurent à Milun mustré/E il l’aveit bien esgardé.



They assembled then for the tourney.

Who would joust found that quickly,



who would seek to rank the highest,
where soon is gained or lost,
to engage there in contest a companion.
To tell you this of Milun:
he excelled in all such combat
this day he was lauded for that,
but the younger, to you I tell,
the cry was for him over all.
None here could match him,
neither in joust nor tourney, no one.
Composed, the knight by Milun was seen,
Milan struck within and shaken,
envied him above all -
one at once engaging and beautiful -
settled to meet him in the ring:
the knights both together jousting.
With such force Milun struck,
his lance came truly apart,
but he hardly toppled the knight,
who so intensely struck back
that from his horse Milun was cast.
Glimpsed now from under his mask,
came the white of his hair and beard,
weighing on the younger if Milun be conquered.





Dunc li tourneimenz s'asembla ;/Ki juste quist tost l'a trova,/Ki aukes volt les rens
cerchier,/Tost pout i perdre u gaignier,/E encuntrere un Cumpainun,/Tant vus voil dire
de Milun ;/Mut le fist bien en cel estur/E mut i fu prisez le jur./Mès li Vallez dunt jeo
vus di,/Sur tuz les autres ot le cri,/Ne se pot nul acumpainier,/De turnéer ne de
juster./Milun le vit si cuntenir,/Si bien puindre, è si férir,/Parmi tut ceo k'il
l'enviot :/Mut li fu bel, è mut li plot./Al renc se met encuntre lui,/Ensemble justèrent
amdui :/Milun le fiert si durement,/Lansce dépièce vereiement./Mès nel' avait mie
abatu/Jà l'aveit lui tant si feru,/Que jus del' cheval l'abati ;/De suz la ventaille
choisi,/La barbe e les chevoz chanuz,/Mut li pesa k'il fu chéuz.



The younger took the horse's reigns
and held them out to Milun,
and said: 'Sir, rise.

With pain I regret this,
that any man of your age
should suffer such outrage.'

Milun climbed up for this fair one
and, on the knight's finger, recognised the ring
as he returned his horse to him.

Milun spoke with the young gentleman:

'Friend' he said, 'let me understand -
by holy love, God omnipotent! -
tell me the name of your father,
tell your name, who is your mother.

I wish to know this truth,
for seeing much, for wandering much
have I searched in lands distant,
throughout wars and throughout tournaments,
by no knight ever, never in a blow
from my steed, was I thrown as now



in joust by you cast over
and yet could love you here.'
I will tell you his answer:
'I know this of my father,
believe him Welsh-born,
believe his name to be Milun,
by a rich man's daughter beloved.
She bore me in secret.



Par la reisne le cheval prent,/Devant lui le tient en présent,/Puis lui ad dit : Sire,
 muntez,/Mut sui dolent è trespensez,/Que nul hume de vostre eage,/Devreit faire tel
 outrage:/Milun saut sus, mut li fu bel,/Al dei celui cunuit l'anel,/Quant il li rendi sun
 cheval,/Il areisune le Vassal./Amis, fet-il, à mei entent,/Pur amur Deu omnipotent !/Di
 mei cument ad nun tun père,/Cum as-tu nun, ki est ta mère?/Saveir en voil la
 vérité./Mut ai véu, mut ai erré,/Mut ai cerché en autres tères,/Par turneiemenz, è par
 guères,/Unc par coup de nul Chevalier,/Ne chaï mès de mun destrier./Tu m'as abatu al
 juster,/A merveille te puis amer./Cil li respunt, jol' vus dirai/De mun père tant cum
 j'en sai./Jeo quid k'il est de Gales nez/E si est Milun apelez ;/Fille à un riche hume
 ama/Céléement me engendra ;



I was sent away to Northumbria.

I was nurtured and taught there.

An old aunt was my nurturer,

guarded me close to her,

and giving me horse and arms,



let me go to this realm.
I have stayed a long time.
It is my wish and my thought often:
I cross in haste the ocean
and then to my country I return,
want to know how is my father,
the situation between him and my mother.
Showing him this golden ring,
I will say “Look, your sign”.
He could not but know me,
love and hold me fondly’.
When he heard his words, Milun
now could no longer listen to him.
Milun climbing quickly from the saddle,
grasped the knight by his chain mail,
and said, ‘I am healed, God,
by Faith, friend, you are my child.
To search for you, you to find
I came thus from my land.’
Once he was on foot again



his father warmly kissed him,
 so fine the impression between them
 and such words now spoken
 that those watching by
 all wept from joy and pity.



En Northumbre fu envéez/Là fu nurri è enseignez./Une vieil Aunte me nurri/Tant me
 garda ensemble od li,/Chevals è armes me dona,/En ceste tère m'envéa./Ci ai
 lungement conversé/En talent ai è en pensé,/Hastivement mer passerai/En ma cuntréie
 m'en irrai ;/Savéir voil l'estre mun père/Cum il se cuntient vers ma mère/Tel anel d'or
 li musterei,/Jà ne me vodra renéer/Ainz m'amerat è tendrat chier./Quant Milun l'ot
 issi parler,/Il ne poeit plus escuter ;/Ayant sailli hastivement,/Par le pan del' hauberc
 le prent,/E Deu, fait-il, cum sui gariz,/Par fei, amis, tu es mi Fiz,/Pur tei trover è pur
 tei quere,/Eissi vins-jeo fors de ma tere./Quant cil l'oï à pié descent,/Sun Peire baisa
 ducement,/Bel semblant entre eus feseient,/E iteus paroles diseient/Que li autres kes'
 esgardouent,/De joie è de pité plurouent.





Then, as soon as the tournament had left
Milun went far - it was late -
to say all he wanted to his son,
and between them all words spoken
there, in lodgings through the night,
passed for them in joy, delight.
The two knights enjoyed plenty.
To his son, Milun told the story
of his mother, so much did Milun love her,
and how she was given by her father
away to a baron in their home country,
and how he still loved the Lady,
as she did him, fine her courage,
with a swan to carry each message,



bring their letters to each other,

never daring to trust another.

The son: 'By faith, beautiful father,

you and my mother will be together.

I go to kill her lord

and I will cause you to be wed.'

They left the word at this,

and next day armed themselves,

to their friends there bid goodbye,

and returned then to their own country.

They cross in haste the ocean,

in soft wind, with good time.

As they travelled the road,

they met a servant lad

who came from Milun's Lady.

He wished to cross to Brittany.

She had sent him there,

but now his task ends here.

He presented a sealed letter.

Word by word told this teller:



Do not wait, come to her quickly.

Her lord is dead now. Hurry.

When Milun heard this,

it seemed to him miraculous.

Showing this letter, to his son spoke:

‘No delay and no rest take.’

Their way was long to travel

but they arrived at his love’s castle.

She with her beautiful son was joyous,

her son who was so courageous and courteous.

Calling no other relatives at all,

now by no one else’s counsel,

their son gathered them together,

he gave his mother to his father.

They in great richness and tenderness,

by night and day lived thus.

Because of their love and rich happiness,

Ancients made a lai from this

and I, who its words write,

recount this story to my delight.





Quant li turnéiemenz départ,/Milun s'en vet mut li est tart,/Qu'à sun Fiz parlot à
 leisir,/E qu'il li die sun pleisir :/En un ostel furent la nuit,/Asez eurent joie è
 déduit,/Les Chevalers eurent plenté./Milun ad à sun Fiz cunté/De sa Mère, cum il
 l'ama,/E cum sis Pères l'a duna/A un Barun de sa cuntrée,/E cument il l'ad puis
 amée/E ele lui de bun curage/E cum del' Cigne fist message./Ses lettres lui feiseit
 porter,/Ne s'osot en nullui fier./Le Fiz respunt : par fei, bel Père,/Assemblerai vus è
 ma Mère,/Sun Seigneur qu'ele ad ocirai/E espuser l'a vus ferai :/Cele parole dunc
 lessèrent/E al demain s'apareillèrent ;/Cungé prenent de lur amis,/Si s'en revunt en lur
 païs./Mer passèrent hastivement,/Bon ore eurent è suef vent ;/Si cum il eirent le
 chemin,/Si encuntrèrent un Meschin,/Del' Amie Milun veneit/En Bretagne passer
 voleit :/Ele li aveit envié,/Ore ad sun travail acurcié ;/Un brief li baille ensçelé/Par
 parole li ad cunté/Que s'en venist, ne demurast,/Morz est sis Sires or s'en
 hastast./Quant Milun oï la novele/A merveille li sembla bele ;/A sun Fiz ad musturé è



dit,/Ni ot essuigne, ne respit./Tant eirent que il sunt venu/Al chastel ù la Dame
fu ;/Mut par fu liez de sun beau Fiz/Qui tant esteit pruz è gentiz,/Unc ne demandèrent
parent,/Sanz cunseil de tut autre gent,/Lur Fiz amdeus les asembla,/La Mère à sun
Père dona/En grant bien è en grant duçur,/Vesquirent puis è nuit è jur. /De lur amur è
de lur bien/Firent un Lai li Auncien ;/E Jeo qui l'ai mis en escrit/Al recunter mut me
délit.



The End

Fin

