

38 **De la pulce e del chameil**

- Une pulce, ceo dit, jadis munta  
 Sur un chamail, sil chevacha  
 De si que en un autre cuntree.
- 4 Dunc s'est la pulce purpensee,  
 Si ad mercié le chameil,  
 Que si süef dedenz sun peil  
 L'aveit ensemble od li portee;
- 8 Jamés par sei ne fust alee.  
 Pur sun travail la servireit  
 Mut volenters, si ele poeit.  
 Li chamel li ad respundu,
- 12 Que unc de li chargiez ne fu.  
 Ne ne sot que ele fust sur lui;  
 Ne que ele li fesist nul ennui.  
 Issi vet de la povre gent:
- 16 Si as riches unt aprisement,  
 Forment les quident curucier,  
 Damage feire e ennuier.

39 **Del hulchet e de la furnie**

- D'un hulchet cunte la maniere,  
 Que desque a une furniere  
 El tens d'yvern esteit alez.
- 4 Par aventure est einz entrez;  
 Viande demanda e quist,  
 Kar n'en aveit nent, ceo dist,  
 En sa meisun n'en sun recet.
- 8 Dist la furnie, 'Quei as tu dunc fet,  
 Quant viande deüsses guainer  
 En aüst e tei purchacer?'  
 'Jeo chant,' fet il, 'e si deduis
- 12 A autres bestes, mes ore ne truis  
 Ki le me veule reguerduner:  
 Pur ceo m'estut ici arester.'  
 Dist la furnie, 'Chant ore a mei.
- 16 Par cele fei que jeo te dei

38 **The Flea and the Camel**

- Once long ago there was a flea  
 Who climbed a camel; thus rode she  
 Until they reached another land.
- 4 The flea thought for a moment, and  
 She thanked the camel because he  
 Within his fur, so graciously  
 Had carried her; for she alone
- 8 Could never on that trip have gone.  
 Because he'd laboured hard, she would  
 Now serve him and do what she could.  
 The camel answered her to say
- 12 She'd been no burden anyway.  
 He had not known that she was there;  
 She had not been an irksome care.  
 The same is true with poor folk when
- 16 They seek access to wealthy men:  
 They are convinced that they provoke,  
 Cause trouble, and annoy rich folk.

39 **The Cricket and the Ant**

- A cricket, in a former time,  
 Onto an anthill once did climb,  
 And this took place at winter tide.
- 4 The cricket chanced to go inside,  
 And there he sought and asked for bread,  
 For he had none at all, he said,  
 Not in his household or his haunt.
- 8 'What were you doing,' asked the ant,  
 'In August, when you should procure  
 Your food and make yourself secure?'  
 'I sing,' he said, 'bring pleasure to
- 12 All creatures, but I find none who  
 Will now return the same to me;  
 I've stopped by of necessity.'  
 The ant replied, 'Sing to me now.
- 16 In all good faith, I say to you

Meuz fust que tu te purchassasses  
 El meis d'aüst e si guainasses,  
 Que fussez si de freit murant

20 E a nului us viande querant!

Pur quei te durreie a manger,  
 Quant tu a mei ne puz aider?'

Pur ceo defent que nul ne vive,

24 En nunchaler n'en udive;

Sulum ceo que chescun deit feire  
 Se deit pener de bien atreire.

Plus est cheri s'il ad quei prendre,

28 Que si a autrui se deit entendre.

#### 40 De la corneille e de la berbiz

Plest vus oïr de une corneile  
 Que s'asist sur le dos de une oeile.  
 Od le bek la ferì durement,

4 Sa leine li toli asprement.

La berbiz li ad dit, 'Pur quei  
 Chevaches tu issi sur mei?

Remue tei! Si feras bien!

8 Seez une piece sur le chien,

Si fai a lui cum fez a mei!'

Dist la corneile, 'Par ma fei,

Ne t'estut mie travailler

12 Que tu me deies enseigner.

Jeo sui pieç'a tut enseignee –

Tant sui sage e veizïee –

Bien sai sur ki jeo puis sëer

16 E a seür tut remaner.'

Pur ceo nus mustre par respit

Que ceo est veirs ke l'em dit

Par essample e par repreche:

20 Bien seit chaz ki barbe il lecche!

Bien s'aparceit li veziez

Les queils il peot aver suz piez.

It would in August have been best  
 To seek and store the year's harvest  
 And not be dying from the cold

20 Seeking your food at each household.

Now why should I give food to thee  
 When you cannot give aid to me?'

Do not live lives indifferent,

24 Nor let yourselves be indolent.

For everyone should do his share;

To bring in goods must be your care.

What you provide is worth far more

28 Than what you turn to others for.

#### 40 The Crow and the Ewe

So hear about this crow: to wit,

Upon a ewe's back she did sit.

Quite sharply with her beak she struck,

4 And cruelly the wool she plucked.

The ewe addressed her, thus spoke she

'Why do you ride like this on me?

Get off at once! That would be well!

8 And go stay on the dog a spell,

And treat the dog as you have me!'

The crow replied, 'Well, glory be!

You need not be quite so perturbed

12 That you must spell out every word.

I understand what you advise –

I am that cunning and that wise –

I know upon whom I can be

16 And stay in great security.'

This story serves to demonstrate

That it is true what folks relate

In lessons and fine rhetoric:

20 A cat well knows which beard to lick!

The sly are never at a loss

To know whom they can walk across.

