

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

*Anonymous, late 14th century
Adapted from the Middle English by Rob Bocchino*

To understand the meaning of the adaptation, substitute the phrases listed at the right (separated by vertical bars) one-for-one for the bold-face words in the text. For example, read the second line as “The city shattered and burnt to firebrands and ashes.” See the end of the text for some notes on the adaptation.

Part I

1

Sithen the siege and the assault was ceased at Troy,
The **burg** **brittene**d and **brent** to **brands** and ashes,
The **tulk** that the **tramms** of treason there wrought
Was tried for his treachery, the **truest** on Earth.¹
Hit was Aeneas the **athel** and his **high kind**
That **sithen** **depressed** **provinces** and **patrons** became
Wellnigh of all the wealth in the West Isles.
Fro rich Romulus to Rome **reaches** him **swythe**:
With great **bobbaunce** that **burg** he **biggs** **upon** first
And **nevens** it his own name, as it now has.
Tirius **to** Tuscany and **telds** begins;
Langobard in Lombardy lifts up homes;
And far over the French **flood** Felix Brutus:
On many **banks** full broad Britain he **sets**
 with **wynne**,
 Where war and **wrake** and wonder
 By sythes have **wont** therein,
 And oft both **bliss** and **blunder**
 Full **skete** have **skyfted** **sin**.

after
city | shattered | burnt | firebrands
warrior | contrivances
most faithful
it | prince | noble | kindred
afterwards | conquered | states | lords

now | mighty | marches | in force
splendor | city | establishes | at the
gives
goes to | dwellings

channel
hillsides | founds
toil
vengeance
at | times | occurred
prosperity | strife
quickly | followed each other | since

2

And when this Britain was **bigged** by this **burn rich**,
Bolde bredden therein, **baret** that loved,
In many a **turned** time **tene** that wrought.
More **ferlies** on this **fold** have **fallen** here oft
Than in any other that I **wot**, since that **ilk** time.
But of all that here **bult**, of Britain's kings,

established | man | mighty
noble warriors | arose | strife
ruinous | injury
marvels | people | occurred
know | same
dwelt

¹ Aeneas is the traitor. The concept of true or loyal treachery seems to be deliberately ironic or paradoxical. Perhaps the treachery was “truest on Earth” because it accomplished some higher purpose, e.g., preserving Aeneas and his descendants for the fictional history related in the rest of the stanza.

Ay was Arthur the **hendest**, as I have heard tell.
Forthi an **aunter** in **erde** I **attle** to show,
 That a **selly** in sight some men it **hold**,
 And an **outrage** adventure of Arthur's wonders.
 If ye will **listen** this lay but on a little while,
 I shall tell it **as-tit**, as I in town heard,
 with **tong**,
 As it is **stad** and **stoken**
 In story **stiff** and strong,
 With **lel** letters **loken**:
 In **londe** so has been **long**.

always | noblest
 therefore | episode | character | aim
 wonder | consider
 marvelous
 listen to
 as quickly as possible
 tongue
 told | gone
 bold
 faithful | preserved
 our land | such | a long tradition

3

This king lay at Camelot upon Christmas
 With many **lovely** lords, **ledes** of the best,
Rekenly of the Round Table all those rich brethren,
 With rich royal **orygt** and reckless mirths.
 There tourneyed **tulks** by times full many:
 Jousted full jollily these gentle knights,
Sithen came to the court carols to make.
 For there the **fest** was **ilike** full fifteen days,
 With all the meat and the mirth that men **couth** **advise**,
 Such **glaum** and **glee** glorious to hear,
Dear din upon day, dancing on nights.
 All was **hap upon high** in halls and chambers
 With lords and ladies, as **liefest them thought**.
 With all the **weal of** the world they **woned** there **samen**,
 The most **kyd** knights **under** Christ himself,
 And the loveliest ladies that ever life had,
 And he the comeliest king that the court holds.
 For all was this fair folk in her first age,
 on sill,
 The **hapnest** under Heaven,
 King highest man of **will**.
 It were now great **nye** to **neven**
 So hardy a **here** on hill.

excellent | men
 courteously
 celebration
 warriors

 and then
 festival | like that for
 knew | to be appropriate
 noise | merriment
 noble
 good fortune | in | the highest
 most pleasant | to them | it seemed
 joy | in | lived | together
 famous | next to

 at | the foundation
 most fortunate
 character
 challenge | name
 host

4

While New Year was so **yep** that it was new coming,
 That day double on the dais was the **douth** served.
Fro the king was coming with knights into the hall.
 The **chauntre** of the chapel came to an end.
 Loud cry was there **cast** of clerics and others.
 "Noel!" **nayted** one, **nevened** full oft;
 And singers **reached** forth running to rich **hansels**,
 Gay **geres**-gifts on high, **yielded** them by hand.

young
 company
 now
 chanting
 sounded
 shouted | repeated
 went | good-luck tokens
 clothing | given

Debated busily **about** those gifts,
 Ladies laughed full loud, though they had lost;
 And he that won was not **wroth**, that may ye well **trow**.
 All this mirth they made to the meat time.
 When they had washed worthily they went to sit,
 The best **burne ay** above, as it best seemed,
 When Guenevere, full gay, **graythed** in the middle,
Dressed on the **dear** dais, **dubbed** all about,
Small sendal besides, a **silver** her over
 Of **tried Tolouse**, and **Tars tapets** enough,
 That were embroidered and beaten with the best gems
 That might be proved of **price** with **pennies** to buy
 in day.
 The comeliest to descry
 There **glent** with **eyen** gray.
 A **semloker** that ever he **sye**
 Such might no man say.

5

But Arthur would not eat till all were served.
 He was so **jolly of** his **joyfnes**, and somewhat **child-gearred**:
 His life liked him **light**; he loved the less
 Either to long lie or to long sit,
 So **busied** him his young blood and his brain wild.
 And also another **manner** moved him **eke**,
 That he through **nobelay** had **nomen**: he would never eat
 Upon such a **dear** day ere **him** devised were
 Of some adventurous thing an **uncouth** tale,
 Of some **main** marvel, that he might **trow**,
 Of elders, of arms, or other adventures;
Other some **segg** him **besought of** some **siker** knight
 To join with him in jousting, in jeopardy to lay
Lede, life for life, **leaving** each **on** other,
 As fortune would **fulsun** him, the **fairer** to have.
 This was the king's **countenance** where he in court was,
 At each **farand fest** among his **free many**
 in hall.
 Therefore of face so **fere**
 He **stigtles stiff** in **stall**.
 Full **yep** in that New Year
 Much mirth he makes with all.

6

Thus there stood in the **stall** the **stiff** king himself,
 Talking before the high table of **trifles** full **hende**.
 There good Gawain was **graythed** Guenevere beside,

crowded | around

angry | trust

person | always

sat

set | noble | decorated

thin | fabric | alongside | silver cloth

refined | fabric | Tharsian tapestries

value | coins

of | the day

shone | eyes

more pleasing sight | saw

merry | in | youth | childlike
 active

occupied

custom | besides

nobility | decreed

distinguished | for him

original

outstanding | trust

or | fellow | asked | for | hardy

his person | trusting | one the

favor | advantage

custom

splendid | festival | noble | company

his hall

healthy

stands | fearless | court

lively

court | strong

stories | noble

seated

And Agravain *a la dure main* on that other side sits,
 Both the king's sister-sons and full **siker** knights.
 Bishop Bawdewyn above **begins** the table,
 And Yvain, Uryn's son, eats with himself.
 These were **dight** on the dais and **dearworthly** served,
 And **sithen** many **siker segge** at the sideboards.
 Then the first course comes with **cracking** of trumpets,
 With many banners full bright that thereby hung.
 New **nakryn noise**, with the noble pipes,
 Wild **warbles** and **wight wakened lote**,
 That many hearts full high **hef** at **her touches**.
Dainties drive therewith, of full **dear** meats,
Fusion of the fresh; and on so **fele** dishes
 That **pine** to find the place the people before
 For to set the silver that **sere** sauces **halden**
 on cloth.

Each **lede** as he **loved** himself
 There **laughed** without **lothe**.
Ay two had dishes twelve,
 Good beer and bright wine both.

7

Now will I of their service say you no more,
 For each **wyge** may well **wit** no want that there were.
 Another noise full new **neged bilive**,
 That the **lede** might have leave **liflode** to **catch**.
For unethe was the noise not a while ceased,
 And the first course in the court **kindly** served,
There haies in at the hall door an **aghlich master**,
 One the **most** on the **molde on** measure high.
 From the **swyre** to the **swange** so **sware** and so thick,
 And his **lyndes** and his limbs so long and so great,
 Half **ettin** in **erde** I **hope** that he **were**,
 But **man** must I **algate mynn** him to **been**,
 And that the **myriest** in his **muckel** that might ride:
 For of back and of breast all were his body **sturne**,
 Both his **wombe** and his waist were worthily small,
 And all his features **folgande**, in form that he had,
 full **clean**.

For wonder of his hue men **hade**,
 Set in his **semblaunt** seen.
 He **ferde** as **freke** were **fade**,
 And overall **enker** green.

8

of | the | hard | hand
 hardy
 sits at the head of

arranged | excellently
 afterwards | hardy | fellows
 blaring

drums | sound
 tunes | suddenly | occurring | sounds
 lift up | their | hearing
 delicacies | appear | excellent
 abundance | many
 they struggle
 various | contain

person | wished for
 rejoiced | reservation
 each

person | know
 rang out | vigorously
 company | food and drink | take
 yet | hardly
 duly
 when there | awe-inspiring | person
 greatest | Earth | of
 neck | torso | heavy
 loins
 giant | character | believe | was
 human | in every way | think | have been
 fairest | company
 mighty
 abdomen
 similar
 splendid
 had
 appearance
 appeared | one that | fey
 vivid

And all **graythed** in green this **gome** and his **wedes**:
 A **strait** coat full straight, that **stek on** his sides,
 A **meré mantle** above, **mensked** within
 With **pelure pured** apart, the **pane** full **clean**
 With **blythe blaunner** full bright, and his hood both,
 That was **lagt** from his locks and laid on his shoulders;
Heme well-haled hose of that same,
 That **spenet on** his **sparlyr**, and **clean** spurs under
 Of bright gold, upon silk **bordes barred** full rich,
 And **scholes under shanks** where the **schalk** rides;
 And all his vesture overall was **clean verdure**,
 Both the **bars** of his belt and other **blythe** stones
 That were richly **railed** in his **array clean**
 About himself and his saddle, upon silk **works**.
That were too **tor** for to tell of **trifles** the half
 That were embroidered above, with **bryddes** and **flyges**,
 With gay **gaudi** of green, the gold **ay inmyddes**.
 The pendants of his **payttrure**, the proud **crupper**,
 His **molaynes**, and all the metal enmailed was then,
 The stirrups that he stood on **stained** of the same
 And his **arsounz** all after and his **athel** skirts,
 That ever glimmered and **glent** all of green stones.
 The **fole** that he **ferkes on fine** of that **ilk**,
 certain,
 A green horse great and thick,
 A steed full **stiff** to **strain**,
 In **brawden** bridle quick:
 To the **gome** he was **full gain**.

9

Well **gay** was this **gome geared** in green,
 And the hair of his head of his horse **sweet**.
 Fair **fannand fax umbefolds** his shoulders.
 As much beard as a bush over his breast hangs,
 That, with his hay-like hair that **of** his head **reaches**,
 Was **evesed** all **umbetorne** above his elbows,
 That half his arms thereunder were **halched** in the **wise**
 Of a king's **capados** that **closes** his **swyre**.
 The mane of that **main** horse much to it like,
 Well **craped** and combed, with knots full many
 Folded in with **fildore** about the fair green,
Ay a **herle** of the hair, another of gold.
 The tail and his **topping** twins of a suit,
 And **bounden** both with a band of a bright green,
Dubbed with full **dear** stones, as the **dok** lasted,
Sithen thrawen with a thong a **thwarle** knot **aloft**.

arrayed | man | garments
 tight | clung | to
 splendid | cloak | adorned
 fur | trimmed | fur lining | bright
 shining | ermine
 pulled back
 well-fitting | tightly pulled-up | stockings
 clung | to | calves | shining
 borders | ornamented
 scales? | below | the legs | man
 bright | green
 ornamental bars | shining
 arranged in lines | gear | bright
 embroidery
 it | difficult | decorations
 birds | flying creatures
 adornments | ever | in the middle
 horse's breastplate | hind armor
 bridle ornaments
 colored
 saddle bow | excellent
 shone
 horse | rides | superb | same kind

difficult | restrain
 mailed
 man | of highest | value

richly | man | clad
 beautiful
 flowing | hair | envelops

from | emanates
 trimmed | about
 covered | manner
 cape | covers | neck
 worthy
 curled
 gold threads
 always | strand
 top hair
 bound
 decorated | precious | hair
 then | extended | intricate | above

There many bells full bright of **brende** gold **runge**.
 Such a **fole** upon **folde**, nor **freke** that him rides,
 Was never seen in that **sale** with sight ere that time,
 with eye.

He looked as **layt** so light,
 So said all that him **syge**.
 It seemed as no man might
 Under his **dinttez dryge**.

refined | rang
 horse | Earth | warrior
 hall

lightning
 saw

blows | survive

10

Whether had he no helm nor **hauberk** neither
 Nor no **pisan** nor no plate that **pented** to arms,
 Nor no **shaft** nor no shield to **shove** nor to smite,
But in his one hand he had a holly bough,
 That is **greatest** in green when groves are bare,
 And an axe in his other, a huge and **unmete**,
 A **spetos sparthe** to **expound** in **spelle**, whoso might.
 The length of an **elngerde** the large head had,
 The **grain** all of green steel and of gold hewn,
 The **bit** burnished bright, with a broad edge
 As well shaped to shear as sharp razors.
 The **stele** of a **stiff** staff the **sturn** it **by** gripped,
 That was wound with **yarn** to the wand's end,
 And all **begraven** with green in gracious works.
 A **lace lapped** about, that **locked** at the head,
 And so after the **halme halched** full oft,
 With **tried** tassels thereto **tached** enough
 On **buttons** of the bright green braids full rich.
 This **hathel helds** him in and the hall enters.
Driving to the **hedge** dais, **dut** he **no woth**,
 Hailed he never one, but **hedge** he over looked.
 The first word that he **warp**, "Where is," he said,
 "The governor of this **ging**? Gladly I would
 See that **segg** in sight, and with himself speak
reason."

To knights he cast his **eye**,
 And rolled them up and down.
 He **stemmed**, and **con studie**
 Who **walt** there most renown.

although | mail shirt
 neck covering | extended
 spear | charge
 yet
 most resplendent
 extravagant
 hard | weapon | describe | words
 ell-length girdle
 metal?
 blade

stem | rigid | harsh blade | closely
 thread
 engraved
 cord | wrapped | was attached
 haft | looped
 separated | fastened
 knobs
 warrior | betakes
 proceeding | hall's | joy | never | wished
 the hall
 uttered
 company
 fellow
 words
 eyes

stopped | did | study
 had

11

There was looking **on length** the **lede** to behold,
 For each man had marvel what it mean might
 That a **hathel** and a horse might such a hue **latch**,
 As **growe** green as the grass, and greener it seemed
 Than green **aumail**, on gold glowing brighter.²

at a | distance | visitor
 warrior | take on
 to grow
 enamel

All studied that there stood, and **stalked** him near
 With all the wonder of the world what he **worth** should.
 For **fele sellies** had they seen, but **such** never **are**.
Forthi for phantom and faerie the folk there it deemed.
 Therefore to answer were **arge** many **athel freke**,
 And all **stouned** at his **steven** and stone-still sat
 In a **swoghe** silence through the **sale rich**.
 As all were **slipped upon** sleep, so **slacked** their **lots**
in high.

I deem it not all for **doubt**,
 But some for **courtasye**.
 But let him that **all shield loute**
Cast unto that **wigh**.

12

Then Arthur before the high dais that adventure beholds,
 And **rekenly** him **reverenced**, for rash was he never,
 And said, "**Wigh**, welcome **iwys** to this place.
 The head of this **ostel**, Arthur, I **hat**.
 Light **lovelike adown** and long, I thee pray,
 And whatso thy will is we shall **wit** after."
 "Nay, as help me," quoth the **hathel**, "He that on high sits,
 To **wone** any while in this **won**, it was not my **ernde**.
 But **for** the **los** of thee, **lede**, is **lift** up so high
 And thy **burg** and thy **burns** best are **holden**,
Stifest under **steel-gear** on steeds to ride,
 The **wightest** and the worthiest of the world's kind,
Proof for to play with in other pure **leiks**;
 And here is **kidde** courtesy, as I have heard **carp**,
 And that has **wayned** me hither, **iwys**, at this time.
 Ye may be **seker** by this branch that I bear here
 That I pass as in peace, and no **plight** seek.
 For had I **founded** in **fere** in fighting **wise**,
 I have a **hauberk** at home and a helm both,
 A shield and a sharp spear, shining bright
 And other weapons to wield, I ween well also.
 But **for** I would no war, my **weds** are softer.
 But if thou be so bold as all **burns** tell,
 Thou wilt grant me Godly the game I ask
 by right."

Arthur **con answare**,
 And said, "Sir courteous knight,
 If thou crave battle bare,
 Here fail'st thou not to fight."

walked cautiously by
 do
 many | wonders | one like this | had
 therefore
 hesitant | brave | warriors
 gaped | voice
 total | hall | splendid
 fallen | into | slackened | faces
 that | much
 fear
 courtesy
 fully | his shield | honors
 speak | man

courteously | addressed
 sir | indeed
 court | am
 excellently | down
 know
 warrior
 dwell | house | purpose
 because | reputation | sir | raised
 castle | people | considered
 boldest | armor
 bravest
 worthy | games
 famous | tell
 brought | indeed
 certain
 hostility
 set out | a host | manner
 mail shirt

because | clothes
 men

did | answer

² That is, green enamel that glows brighter because it is set on gold.

13

“Nay, **frayst** I no fight. In faith, I thee tell,
 It **arn about on** this **bench** but beardless children.
 If I were **hasped** in arms on a **high** steed,
 Here is no man me to match, for might so weak.
Forthy I crave in this court a Christmas game,
 For **hit** is Yule and New Year, and here are **yep** many:
 If any so hardy in this house holds himself,
 Be so bold in his blood, **brain** in his head,
 That dare **stiffly** strike a stroke for another,
 I shall give him **of** my **gift** this **gisarme** rich,
 This axe, that is heavy enough, to handle as he likes,
 And I shall **bide** the first **bur** as **bare** as I sit.
 If any **freke** be so **fell** to **fonde that** I tell,
 Leap lightly me to, and **latch** this weapon.
 I quit-claim it for ever. Keep it as his own.
 And I shall **stand him** a stroke, **stiff** on this **flet**,
Elles thou wilt **dight** me the **doom** to deal him another
 barlay,
 And yet give him respite,
 A twelvemonth and a day.
 Now **hie**, and let see **tite**
 Dare any herein aught say!”

14

If he them **stowned upon** first, **stiller** were then
 All the **heredmen** in **hall**, the high and the low.
 The **renk** on his **rounce** he **ruched** in his saddle,
 And **runischly** his red eyes he rolled about,
 Bent his **bresed** brows, **blycande** green,
Waved his beard for to wait whoso would rise.
 When none would **keep** him with **carp** he **coughed** full **high**,
 And **rimed** him full richly and right, him to speak:
 “What, is this Arthur’s house,” quoth the **hathel** then,
 “That all the **rous renns** of through realms so many?
 Where is now your **sourquydrye** and your conquests,
 Your **gryndellayk** and your **greme**, and your great words?
 Now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table
Overwalt with a word of one **wigh’s** speech.
 For all **dare** for dread without **dint showed!**”
 With this he laughed so loud that the lord grieved:
 The blood shot for shame into his **schyre** face
 and **lere**.
 He **wex** as **wroth** as **wynde**,
 So did all that there were.
 The king as **keen** by **kind**

seek
 seems there are | all | around | seat
 girt | tall

therefore
 it | clever

crazy
 powerfully
 for | Christmas gift | long-shafted axe

abide | stroke | unarmed
 warrior | fearsome | withstand | what | describe
 take up

withstand | from him | strong | floor
 provided that | grant | right
 according to pledge

hurry | quickly

astonished | at | more silent
 men of court | the hall
 row | charger | traversed
 mysteriously
 shaggy | shining
 shook
 engage | talk | shouted | loudly
 drew himself up
 warrior
 fame | is heard
 arrogance
 fierceness | wrath

overturned | man’s
 remain silent | a single blow | struck

bright
 beautiful
 became | angry | a tempest

brave | nature

Then stood that **stiff** man near,

15

And said, “**Hathel**, by Heaven, thine **asking** is **nice**,
 And as thou folly hast **frayst**, **find** thee **behoves**.
 I know no **gome** that is **gast** of thy great words.
 Give me now thy **geserne**, **upon** God’s **halve**,
 And I shall **baythen** thy boon that thou bidden hast.”
 Lightly leaps he him to, and **lagt** at his hand.
 Then fiercely that other **freke** upon foot lights.
 Now has Arthur his axe, and the **halme** grips,
 And **sturnely** **stirs** it about, **that** strike with, it **thought**.
 The **stiff** man him before stood **upon** hight,
Higher than any in the house by the head and more.
 With stern **schere** there he stood. He stroked his beard,
 And with a countenance **dry** he drew down his coat,
 No more **mate** nor dismayed for **his main dints**
Than any **burne** upon bench had brought him to drink
 of wine.

Gawain, that sat by the queen,
 To the king he **can** incline:
 “I beseech now with **sages seen**
 This **melly** might be mine.”

16

“Would ye, worthy lord,” quoth Gawain to the king,
 “Bid me **boge** from this bench, and stand by you there,
That I without villainy might **void** this table,
 And that my liege lady liked it not ill,
 I would **come to** your counsel before your court **rich**.
 For me think it not seemly, as it is **sooth** known,
 Where such an **asking** is **hevened** so **high** in your **sale**
 (Though ye yourself be **talenttyf**) to take it yourself,
 While many so bold you about upon bench sit,
 Than under Heaven, I hope, none **hagerer** of will,
 Nor better bodies on **bent** where **baret** is **rered**.
 I am the weakest, I **wot**, and of wit feeblest,
 And least loss **of** my life, who **laytes** the **sooth**.
 But for as much as ye are mine **em**, I am only to **praise**.
 No **bounty** but your blood I in my body know.
 And **sithen** this **note** is so **nice** that **naught** it you **falls**,
 And I have **frayned** it **at** you first, **folds** it to me.
 And if I **carp** not **comelily**, let all this court **rich**
bout blame.”

Riche together **con roun**,

mighty

warrior | request | foolish
 sought | to find it | befits
 man | frightened
 axe | for | sake
 grant
 grabs
 warrior
 haft
 vigorously | swings | as to | seemed
 mighty | at his full
 taller
 aspect
 steady
 daunted | Arthur’s | powerful | strokes
 than if | person

did
 words | plain
 adventure

rise up
 so that | leave

abide | by | noble
 truly
 request | raised | haughtily | court
 willing

more warlike
 field | fighting | waged
 know
 would be | seeks | truth
 uncle | be praised
 virtue
 since | matter | foolish | hardly | befits
 asked | of | grant
 speak | appropriately | noble
 escape
 nobles | did | whisper

And **sithen** they **redden** all **same**,
 To **rid** the king with crown
 And give Gawain the game.

then | advised | together
 excuse

17

Then commanded the king the knight for to rise.
 And **he** full **radly** uprose, and **ruched** him **fair**,
 Knelt down before the king, and **catches** that weapon.
 And **he** **lovelily** it him **laft**, and lifted up his hand,
 And gave him God's blessing, and gladly him bids
 That his heart and his hand should hardy be both.
 "**Kethe thee**, cousin," quoth the king, "that thou on **kirf** set.
 And if thou **redest** him **right**, **redly** I **trow**
 That thou shalt **biden** the **bur** that he shall **bede** after."
 Gawain goes to the **gome** with **giserne** in hand,
 And he boldy him **bides**, he **bayst never** the **helder**.
 Then **carps** to Sir Gawain the knight in the green,
 "**Reform** we our **forwards**, ere we further **pass**.
 First I **ethe** thee, **hathel**, how that thou **hattest**,
 That thou me tell truly, as I trust may."
 "In God's faith," quoth the good knight, "Gawain I **hatte**,
 That **bede** thee this **buffet**, whatso befalls after,
 And at this time twelvemonth take **at** thee another,
 With what weapon **so** thou **wilt**, and **with** no **wigh** else
 alive."
 That other answers again,
 "Sir Gawain, so may I **thrive**
 (As I am **fairly fain**)
 This **dint** that thou shalt **drive**."

Gawain | promptly | prepared | well
 seizes

Arthur | graciously | gave

command | yourself | cutting | focus
 deal with | properly | truly | believe
 abide | blow | strike

man | axe

awaits | is dismayed | none | more
 says

restate | agreement | go
 entreat | knight | are called

am called

strike | blow

from

as | wish | from | one

endure

of this | very | eager

blow | strike

18

"By God," quoth the Green Knight, "Sir Gawain, me **likes**,
 That I shall **fange** at thy fist what I have **frayst** here.
 And thou hast **redily** rehearsed, by **reason** full true,
Cleanly all the covenant that I the king asked,
 Save that thou shalt **siker** me, **segge**, by thy **troth**,
 That thou shalt seek me thyself, whereso thou **hopest**
 I may be found upon **folde**, and **foch thee** such wages
 As thou dealest me today, before this **douthe riche**."
 "Where should I **wale** thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place?
 I **wot** never where thou **wonest**, by Him that me wrought.
 Nor I know not thee, knight, thy court nor thy name.
 But teach me truly thereto, and tell me how thou **hattest**,
 And I shall **ware** all my wit to **win me** thither,
 And I shall swear thee for **sooth**, and by my **seker troth**."

it pleases

receive | asked

wisely | speech

fully

pledge to | knight | on | covenant

believe

the Earth | take for | yourself

company | noble

seek

know | live

are called

use | take | myself

truth | pledged | covenant

“That is enough in New Year, it needs no more,”
 Quoth the **gome** in the green to Gawain the **hende**,
 “If I thee tell truly, when I the **tap have**,
 And thou me **smoothly** have smitten, **smartly** I thee teach
 Of my house, and my home, and mine own name.
 Then may thou **frayst** my **fare**, and **forwards hold**.
 And if I **spend** no speech, then **speedest** thou the better,
 For thou may’st **leng** in thy land, and **layt** no further.

But **slokes**!

Take now thy grim **tole** to **thee**,
 And let see how thou **cnokes**.”
 “Gladly, sir, **forsooth**,”
 Quoth Gawain; his ax he strokes.

19

The Green Knight upon **ground graythely** him **dresses**.
 A little **lut** with the head, the **lere** he **discovers**.
 His long lovely locks he laid over his crown,
 Let the naked neck **to** the **note** show.
 Gawain gripped to his axe and gathers it on high.
 The **kay** foot on the **folde** he **before sets**,
 Lets **it** down **lightly ligt** on the **naked**,
That the **sharp** of the **schalk schyndered** the bones,
 And **shrank** through the **schyire grease**, and **scade** it in twain,
 That the **bit** of the **brown** steel **bot on** the ground.
 The fair head from the **halce hit** to the earth,
That fele it **foyned** with their feet, where it forth rolled.
 The blood **brayd** from the body, that **blykke** on the green.
 And neither faltered nor fell the **freke** never the **helder**,
 But **stythly** he starts forth upon **stiff shanks**,
 And **runischly** he reached out, there **as renkkes** stood,
Lagt to his **lovely** head, and lifts it up **sone**,
 And **sithen bogs** to his **blonk**. The bridle he catches,
 And his head by the hair in his hand holds.
 And as **sadly** the **segge** him in his saddle sets
 As no **unhap** had him ailed, though headless he were,
 in **stead**.

He **brayde** his **bulk** about,
 That ugly body that bled.
 Many a one of him had **doubt**,
 By **that** his **reasons** were **read**.

20

For the head in his hand he holds up **even**.
 Toward the **dearest** on the dais he **dresses** the face.
 And it lifted up the eyelids, and looked full broad
 And **meled** thus much with his mouth, as ye may now hear:

man | noble
 light blow | have received
 softly | right away

ask | path | covenant | keep
 utter | farest
 remain | go
 enough
 weapon | yourself
 strike
 indeed

the ground | straightaway | prepares
 bowed | flesh | uncovers

ready for | occasion

left | ground | in front | plants
 the axe | swiftly | descended | naked flesh
 so that | blade | man | cleaved
 cut | bare | flesh | cleft
 blade | shining | bit | into
 neck | flew
 so that | many | kicked
 spurted | shone
 man | more
 sturdily | strong | legs
 fiercely | where | knights
 grabs | at | fair | promptly
 then | goes | horse

firmly | man
 as if | mishap
 fact
 moved | body

fear
 the time | words | spoken

straight
 noblest | turns

said

“**Loke**, Gawain, **thou** be **graythe** to go as thou **hettest**,
 And **layte** as **lelly** till thou me, **lede**, find,
 As thou hast **hette** in this hall, **herande** these knights.
 To the Green Chapel thou **chose**. I charge ye to **fotte**
 Such a **dint** as thou hast dealt. Deserved thou hast
 To be **gederly golden** on New Year’s morn.
 The Knight of the Green Chapel men know me many.
Forthi me for to find if thou **frayst**, failest thou never.
 Therefore come, **other recreant** be called thee behoves.”
 With a **runisch rout** the reins he turns,
Haled out at the hall door, his head in his hand,
That the fire of the flint flew from **fole** hooves.
 To what **kith** he **became**, knew none there.
 Nevermore then they **wist** from **whethen** he **was wonnen**.

What then?

The king and Gawain there,
 At that **green** they laugh and **gren**.
 Yet **breved** was it full **bare**,
 A marvel among those men.

21

Though Arthur the **hende** king at heart had wonder,
 He let no semblance be seen, but said full **high**
 To the comely queen, with courteous speech,
 “Dear dame, today dismay you never.
 Well becomes such craft upon Christmas,
Laying of interludes, to laugh and to sing,
 Among **this**, **kind** carols of knights and ladies.
 Nevertheless to my meat I may me well **dress**,
 For I have seen a **selly**, I may not **forsake**.”
 He **glent** upon Sir Gawain, and **gainly** he said,
 “Now sir, hang up thine axe, that has enough hewed.”
 And it was **done** above the dais, on **doser** to hang,
 Where all men for marvel might on it look,
 And by true title thereof to tell the wonder.
 Then they **boged** to a **board** these **burnes** together,
 The king and the good knight, and **keen** men them served
 Of all dainties double, as **dearest** might **fall**,
 With all manner of meat and minstrelsy both.
 With **weal walt** they that day, till **worthed** an end,
 in **londe**.

Now think well, Sir Gawain,
 For **wothe** that thou not **wonde**
 This adventure for to **frayn**,
 That thou hast tak’n in **honde**.

see to it | that you | ready | promised
 seek | faithfully | knight
 promised | in the hearing of
 go | receive
 blow
 promptly | repaid

therefore | ask
 or | coward
 violent | jerk
 rushed
 so that | horse
 country | returned
 knew | where | had | come

green man | grin
 discussed | openly

noble
 loudly

playing
 this company? | courtly
 attend
 marvel | deny it
 gazed | graciously

put | tapestry

went | table | men
 bold
 noblest | deserve

joy | spent | it drew to
 the land

peril | avoid
 fulfill
 hand

Part II

1

This **hansel** has Arthur **of aventurus on first**,
 In **young** year, for he yearned **yelping** to hear,
 Though **them words** were **wane**, when they to seat went.
 Now are they **stoken of sturne** work, **staffful** their hands.
 Gawain was glad to begin those games in hall.
 But though the end be heavy, have ye no wonder:
 For though men be merry in mind, when they have **main** drink,
 A year **yernes** full **yerne**, and **yields** never **like**.
 The **form** to the **finishment folds** full seldom.
Forthi this Yule **over-yede**, and the year after,
 And each season **serlepes** **sued** after **other**.
 After Christmas came the crabbed Lent,
 That **fraystes** flesh with the fish and food more simple;
 But then the weather of the world with winter it **threps**.
 Cold **clengs adown**, clouds uplift.
Schyre **sheds** the rain in showers full warm,
 Falls upon fair **flat**. Flowers there show.
Both grounds and the groves, green are their **weds**.
 Birds **busken** to build, and **bremlish** sing,
 For **solace** of the soft summer that **sues** thereafter
 By bonk;
 And blossoms **bolne** to **blow**,
 By **rowez** rich and **ronk**.
 Then **notez** noble **enow**,
 Are heard in wood so **wlonk**.

good fortune | by | chance | at | the start
 the new | battle boasting
 among them | such words | lacking
 charged | with | serious | completely full

strong
 passes | swiftly | turns out | as expected
 beginning | end | corresponds
 therefore | passed
 in turn | followed | the other

replaces
 contends
 fades | away
 brightly | falls
 meadows
 of both | fields | raiment
 hasten | gloriously
 joy | follows
 on | the hill sides
 swell | bloom
 hedgerows | luxuriant
 notes | many
 lovely

2

After the season of summer with the soft winds,
 When Zephyrus **syfles** himself on seeds and herbs.
Wela-wynne is the **wort** that **woxes** thereout,
 When the **donkande** dew drops off the leaves,
 To **bide** a blissful **blush** of the bright sun.
 But then **hies harvest**, and hardens him **soon**,
 Warns him **for** the winter to wax full ripe.
 He dries with drought the dust for to rise,
 From the face of the **folde** to fly full high.
Wroth wind of the **welkyn** wrestles with the sun,
 And all **grays** the grass, that green was ere.
 Then all ripens and rots that rose **upon** first,
 And thus turns the year in yesterdays many,
 And winter winds again, as the world asks
 No fage,
 Till Michaelmas moon

afterward is
 gently blows
 very lovely | plant | grows
 moistening
 await | gleam
 hastens | autumn | quickly
 in preparation for

earth
 angry | heavens
 turns gray
 at

in | truth

Was come with winter's **wage**;
Then thinks Gawain **full soon**
Of his **anious voyage**.

3

Yet until **All-Hal-Day** with Arthur he **lenges**,
And **he** made a **fair** on that **fest**, for the **freke's** sake,
With much revel and **rich** of the Round Table,
Knights full courteous and comely ladies.
All for love of that **lede** in **longing** they were,
But nevertheless not the **later** they **nevened but** mirth:
Many **joyless** for that **gentle** japes there made.
For after meat, with mourning he **meles** to his **eme**,
And speaks of his passage, and pertly he said,
"Now, liege lord of my life, leave I you ask:
Ye know the **cost** of this **case**, **keep** I no more
To tell you how **tens thereof-never but** trifle;
But I am bound to the **bur** **barely** to morn,
To seek the **gome** of the green, as God will me **wise**."
Then the best of the **burg boged** together,
Yvain, and Erik, and others full many,
Sir Dodial de Savage, the Duke of Clarence,
Launcelot, and Lionel, and Lucan the Good,
Sir Bors, and Sir Bedevere, big men both,
And many other **menskful**, with Mador de la Port.
All this company of court came the king near,
For to counsel the knight, with care at their heart.
There was much **derve dole driven** in the **sale**,
That so **worthy** as **Wawan** should wend on that **ernde**,
To **dryge** a doleful **dint**, and deal no more
with **bronde**.
The knight made **ay** good cheer,
And said, "What should I **wonde**
Of destinies **derf** and **dear**?
What may man do but **fonde**?"

4

He **dwells** there all that day, and dresses on the morn,
Asks early his arms, and all were they brought:
First a **Tule tapit**, **tied** over the **flet**,
And much was the gold gear that **glent** there aloft.
The **stiff** man steps thereon, and the steel handles,
Dubbed in a doublet of a **dear Tars**,
And **sithen** a **crafty capados**, closed **aloft**,
That with a bright **blaunner** was bound within.
Then set they the **sabatouns** upon the **segg's** feet,

promise
very | shortly thereafter
difficult | journey

All Saints' Day | remains
Arthur | feast | holiday | warrior's
splendor

knight | grief
less fervently | made | only
though joyless | noble knight
then | talks | uncle

terms | agreement | wish
it exists | only | because of a
blow | without fail
man | guide
castle | came

noble knights

painful | grief | endured | hall
worthy a knight | Gawain | journey
suffer | blow
sword
ever
fear
harsh | pleasant
face them

remains

Tolouse | carpet | spread | floor
gleamed
strong
clad | precious | Tharsia silk
then | well-crafted | cape | at the neck
ermine
steel shoes | knight's

His legs **lapped** in steel with **lovely** greaves,
 With **polaynes piched** thereto, polished full **clean**,
 About his knees **knaged** with knots of gold;
Queme cuisses then, that **coyntly closed**
 His thick **thrawen** thighs, with thongs **to-tached**.
 And **sithen** the **brawdenn bryne** of bright steel rings
Umbeweved that **wygh**, upon **wlonk stuffe**;
 And well burnished **braces** upon his both arms,
 With good **cowters** and **gay**, and gloves of plate,
 And all the goodly gear that him **gain** should
that tide.

With **rich coat** armor,
 His gold spurs **spend** with pride,
 Girt with a **bront** full sure,
 With silk **sayn umbe** his side.

5

When he was **hasped** in arms, his **harness** was **rich**,
 The least **latchet other** loop **lemed** of gold.
 So **harnessed** as he was he **hearkens** his mass,
 Offered and honored at the high altar.
Sithen he comes to the king and to his court **fers**,
Laches lovely his leave **at** lords and ladies,
 And they him kissed and **conveyed**, **bikende** him to Christ.
 By **that** was Gringalet³ **grath**, and girt with a saddle,
 That gleamed full gaily with many gold fringes,
Aywhere nailed full new, for that **note riched**,
 The bridle **barred** about, with bright gold **bounden**.
 The apparel of the **payttrure**, and of the proud skirts,
 The **crupper**, and the **couertor**, **accorded** with the **arsouns**;
 And all was **rayled** on red rich gold nails,
 That all giltered and **glent** as gleam of the sun.
 Then **hentes** he the helm, and hastily **hit** kisses,
 That was stapled **stiffly**, and **stuffed** within.
 His was high on his head, **hasped** behind,
 With a light **urysoun** over the **aventayle**,
 Embroidered and bound with the best gems
 On broad silken border, and birds on seams,
 As **papiays** painted **peruing** between,
Tortors and **trueloves entailed** so thick,
 As many **burde thereabout** had been seven winters
 in town.
 The circlet was more of price,
 That **umbeclipped** his **crown**:
 Of diamonds a device

enclosed | handsome
 knee armor | attached | brightly
 fastened
 fine | elegantly | enclosed
 muscular | attached
 then | linked | coat
 covered | man | splended | cloth
 arm pieces
 elbow pieces | fair
 benefit
 on that | occasion
 a splendid | coat of
 fastened
 sword
 sash | around

girt | armor | splendid
 fastening | or | fashioned
 arrayed | hears

then | companions
 takes | graciously | of
 escorted | commending
 that time | made ready

everywhere | studded | occasion | prepared
 decorated with bars | trim
 horse's breast armor
 hind armor | cloth | matched | saddlebows
 set
 shone
 takes | it
 strongly | padded
 fastened
 silk band | mail neck guard

parrots | periwinkles
 turtledoves | herb Paris | arranged
 as if | ladies | about it

surrounded | head

³ Sir Gawain's horse.

That both were bright and **brown**.

6

Then they showed him the shield, that was of **shire** **gules**,
 With the pentangle **depaint** of pure gold hues.
 He **braids** it by the **bauderyk**, about the **hals** **kestes**,
 That beseeemed the **segge** seemly fair.
 And why the pentangle **appends** to that prince noble,
 I am intent you to tell, though tarry it me should.
 It is a sign that Solomon set somewhere,
 In betokening of **truth**, by **title** that it has.
 For it is a figure that holds five points,
 And each line overlaps and locks in other,
 And **aywhere** it is endless, and **English** it call
Overall, as I here, the endless knot.
Forthi it **accords** to this knight, and to his **clear** arms,
 For **ay** faithful in **five** and **sere** five **sythes**,
 Gawain was for good known, and as gold **pured**,
Voided of each villainy, with virtues adorned
 in **moat**.

Forthi the pentangle **new**
 He bore on shield and coat,
 As **tulk** of **tale** most true,
 And **gentlest** knight of **lote**.

7

First he was found faultless in his five **wits**,
 And **efte** failed never the **freke** in his five fingers.
 And all his **affiance** upon **folde** was in the five wounds
 That Christ **kagt** on the cross, as the creed tells;
 And wheresoever this man in **melly** was **stad**,
 His **thro** thought was in that, through all other things,
 That all his **forsnes** he **feng at** the five joys
 That the **hende** Heaven's queen had of her child.
At this **cause** the knight **comliche** had
 In the inner half of his shield her image **depainted**,
 That when he **blushed** thereto, his **belde** never **thayred**.
 The fifth five that I find that the **frek** used
 Was **franchise** and fellowship **for-be** all things;
 His **clannes** and his courtesy crooked were never,
 And pity, that passes all points. These pure five
 Were **harder** **happed** on that **hathel** than on any other.
 Now all these five **sythes**, **forsooth**, were **fetled on** this knight,
 And each one **halched** in other, that no end had,
 And fixed upon five points, that failed never,
 Nor **samned** never in no side, nor sundered neither,

dark

bright | red
 painted
 takes | girdle | neck | hangs
 knight
 pertains

fidelity | valid claim

everywhere | the English
 in general
 therefore | is appropriate | bright
 always | five ways | each way | times
 refined
 free
 the castle
 therefore | newly painted

man | word
 noblest | speech

senses
 second | knight
 trust | earth
 received
 battle | present
 steadfast
 courage | received | from
 gracious
 for | reason | fittingly
 painted
 looked | courage | failed
 knight
 generosity | above
 purity

more firmly | fastened | knight
 groups | in truth | bestowed | upon
 joined

came together

Without end at any **noke** I **owhere** find,
 Wherever the **gomen** began, or **glod** to an end.
 Therefore on this **schene** shield shaped was the knot,
 Royally with red gold upon red **gules**,
 That is the pure pentangle **with** the people called,
 with lore.
 Now **graythed** is Gawain **gay**,
 And **lagt** his lance right **thore**,
 And gave them all good day,
 He **wende**, for ever more.

8

He **sperred** his steed with the spurs, and sprang on his way,
 So **stiff** that the stone fire **stoke** out thereafter.
 All that saw that **seemly** sighed in heart,
 And said **soothly**, all **same segges** to other,
Carrande for that **comely**, “By Christ, it is **scathe**,
 That thou, **lede**, shall be lost, that art of life noble!
 To find his **fere** upon **folde**, in faith is not easy.
Warloker to have **wrought** had more **wit** been,
 And have **dight** yonder **dear** a duke to have **worthed**.
 A **lowande** leader of **ledes** in **londe** him well **seems**.
 And so had better have been than **britned** to naught,
Haded with an elvish man, for **angardez** pride.
 Who knew ever any king such counsel to take,
 As **knights** in **cavillations** on Christmas games!”
 Well much was the warm water that **waltered of** eyes,
 When that seemly sire **sought** from those **wones**
 That day.
 He made no **abode**,
 But **wightly** went his way.
 Many a **wylsum** way he rode,
 The book as I heard say.

9

Now rides this **renk** through the realm of Logres,
 Sir Gawain on God’s **half**, though **him** no game it **thought**.
 Oft, **ledeless** alone, he **lengs on nights**,
 Where he found not him before the fare that he liked;
 Had he no **fere** but his **fole**, by **friths** and downs,
 Nor no **gome** but God, **by gate** with to **carp**,
 Till that he **neged** full nigh in to the North Wales.
 All the isles of Angelsey⁴ on **left half** he **holds**,
 And fares over the fords by the **forelonds**,
 Over at the Holyhead,⁵ till he had **eft bonk**

corner | anywhere
 device | came
 bright
 a shade of red
 by

prepared | fair
 took | there

thought

struck
 vigorously | flared
 noble knight
 truly | assembled | knights
 grieving | fair man | a pity
 sir
 equal | earth
 more prudently | acted | sense
 prepared | noble man | become
 brilliant | people | the land | suits
 destroyed
 beheaded | by | arrogant

knights provide | petty disputes
 flowed | from
 went | dwellings

resting place
 resolutely
 bewildering

knight
 behalf | to him | seemed
 companionless | stays | by | night

companion | horse | woods
 one | on | the road | converse
 approached
 the left | side | keeps
 headlands
 again | reached the shore

⁴ The Isle of Angelsey and other islands off the northwest coast of Wales.

In the wilderness of Wirral;⁶ **wonde** there but **lyte**
 That either God **other gome** with good heart loved.
 And **ay** he **frayned**, as he **ferde**, at **frekes** that he met,
 If they had heard any **carp** of a knight green,
 In any ground thereabout, of the Green Chapel.
 And all **nykked** him with nay, that never in their life
 They saw never so **segge** that was of such hues
 of green.

The knight took **gates** strange,
 In many a **bonk unbene**.
 His **cheer** full oft **con** change,
 That chapel ere he might **seen**.

10

Many cliffs he **over-clambe** in countries strange;
 Far **floten** from his friends **fremedly** he rides.
 At each **warthe other** water where the **wighe** passed,
 He found a foe him before, **but ferly** it were,
 And that so foul and so fell, that fight **him behode**.
 So many marvels by mount there the man finds,
 It were **tore** for to tell of the tenth **dole**.
Somewhile with **worms** he wars, and with wolves also,
Somewhile with **wodwos**, that **woned** in the **knarres**,
 Both with bulls and bears, and boars **otherwhile**,
 And **ettins**, that him **a-nelede**, of the high **fell**.
Nade he been doughty and **dryghe**, and **Drihten** had served,
 Doubtless he had been dead, and **dreped** full oft.
For war **wrathed** him not so much, that winter **nas** worse,
 When the cold clear water from the clouds **schadden**,
 And froze ere it fall might to the **fale** earth.
 Near slain with the sleet he slept in his **yrnes**,
 More nights than enough on naked rocks,
Whereas clattering from the crest the cold **borne** runs,
 And hung high over his head in hard icicles.
 Thus in peril and pain, and plights full hard,
By country **carries** this knight, till Christmas Eve,
 alone.
 The knight well that **tide**
 To Mary made his moan,
 That **ho** him **red** to ride,
 And **wise** him to some **wone**.

lived | few
 or | man
 always | asked | travelled | of | persons
 mention

answered
 man

ways
 hillside | drear
 mood | did
 see

surmounted
 removed | as a stranger
 ford | or | man
 unless | unusual
 he | had to

too difficult | part
 sometimes | dragons
 sometimes | forest trolls | lived | crags
 at other times
 giants | pursued | rock
 had he not | enduring | the Lord
 slain
 yet | bothered | was not
 fell
 pale
 armor

where | rushing noisily | stream

across the | rides

time

she | show where
 guide | dwelling

⁵ A town near the Isle of Anglesey.

⁶ A peninsula between the River Dee and River Mersey in England.

11

By a mount on the morn merrily he rides,
 Into a forest full deep, that **ferly** was wild,
 High hills on each **half**, and **holtwoods** under,
 Of hoar oaks full huge a hundred together.
 The hazel and the hawthorn were **harled** all **samen**,
 With rough ragged moss **rayled anywhere**,
 With many birds **unblythe** upon bare twigs,
 That piteously there piped for pain of the cold.
 The **gome** upon Gringalet **glides** them under,
 Through many a **mis**y and mire, man **all** him **one**,
Carande for his **costes**, lest he not **keuer** should
 To see the service of that **Sire**, that on that **self** night
 Of a **burde** was born, our **baret** to **quell**;
 And therefore sighing he said, "I beseech thee, Lord,
 And Mary, that is mildest mother so dear,
Of some **harbor**, where **hegly** I might hear mass,
 And thy matins to morn. Meekly I ask,
 And thereto priestly I pray my **Pater** and **Ave**
 and Creed."

He rode in his **prayere**,
 And cried for his **misdeed**,
 He **signed** him **in sythes sere**,
 And said, "Cross **Christ** me **speed**!"

marvelously
 side | woods

tangled | together
 hanging | everywhere
 unhappy

man | passes
 swamp | all by | self
 concerned | religious duties | be able
 Lord | selfsame
 maiden | sorrow | end

for | haven | devoutly

Pater Noster | Ave Maria

prayer
 sin
 crossed | at | times | several
 of Christ | help

12

Nade he **signed** himself, **segge**, but thrice,
 Ere he was aware in the wood of a **won** in a moat:
 Above a **launde**, on a **lawe**, **loken** under boughs
 Of many **borelich bole**, about the ditches,
 A castle the **comeliest** that ever knight **agte**,
 Pitched on a **prayere**, a park all about,
 With a **piked palays**, **pyned** full thick,
 That **umbe-tege** many trees more than two mile.
 That **hold** on that one side the **hathel avised**,
 As it shimmered and shone through the **schyre** oaks;
 Then **has** he **hendly** off his helm, and **hegly** he thanks
 Jesus and Saint Julian, that gentle are both,
 That courtesy had him **kydde**, and his cry hearkened.
 "Now **bone hostel**," **cothe** the **burne**, "I beseech you **get**!"
 Then **gerds** he to Gringalet with the gilt heels,
 And he full **chancely** has **chosen to** the chief gate,
 That brought **bremly** the **burne** to the bridge's end,
 in haste.

The bridge was **breme upbrayed**,
 The gates were **stoken** fast;

no sooner had | crossed | the knight
 dwelling
 open space | mound | shut
 massive | trees
 handsomest | owned
 meadow
 spiked | palisade | enclosed
 surrounded
 stronghold | knight | observed
 bright
 takes | reverently | devoutly

shown
 good | lodging | said | man | grant
 digs in
 luckily | arrived | at
 quickly | man

quickly | raised
 shut

The walls were well arrayed,
It **dut** no **windez** blast.

13

The **burne bode** on **blonk**, that on bank **hoved**,
Of the deep double ditch that **drove** to the place.
The wall **wod** in the water **wonderly** deep,
And **eft** a full huge hight **hit** **haled** upon **lofte**,
Of hard hewn stone up to the **tables**,
Enbaned under the **abattlement**, in the best **law**,
And **sythen** **garrets** full **gay gered** between,
With many a **lovely** loop, that **locked** full **clean**;
A better **barbican** that **burne blushed** upon never.
And **innermore** he beheld that hall full high,
Towers **telded** between, **trochet** full thick,
Fair **filiotes** that fitted, and **ferlily long**,
With carven **coprounes**, craftily **slege**.
Chalk-white chimneys there **ches** he enough,
Upon **bastel** roofs, that **blenched** full white.
So many pinnacles painted **was powdered anywhere**,
Among the castle **carnels**, **clambered** so thick,
That **pared** out of paper **purely** it seemed.
The **fre freke** on the **fole** it fair enough thought,
If he might **cover** to come the cloister within,
To **harbor** in that **hostel**, while holiday lasted
avenaunt.

He called, and soon there **come**
A porter **pure plesaunt**.
On the wall his **ernd** he **nome**,
And hailed the knight **erraunt**.

14

“Good sir,” quoth Gawain, “would you **go** mine **ernde**
To the **heg** lord of this house, **harbor** to crave?”
“Yea, **Peter**,” quoth the porter, “and **purely** I **trowee**
That ye **be**, **wyghe**, welcome to **won** while you like.”
Then **yede** that **wyghe** **gerne** and came **again swythe**,
And folk freely him with, to **fonge** the knight.
They let down the great **draught**, and **dearly** out **yeden**,
And knelt down on their knees upon the cold earth,
To welcome this **ilk wyghe** as worthy, **him** thought.
They **yielded him** the broad gate, **yarked** up wide,
And he them **raised rekenly**, and rode over the bridge.
Sere segges him **seized** by saddle, while he **light**,
And **sithen** stabled his steed **stiff** men enough.
Knights and squires came down then,

feared | wind’s

man | stayed | his horse | stood
led up
stood | marvelously
then | it | rose | the sky
parapets
projecting | battlements | style
then | towers | splendid | arrayed
handsome | were fastened | neatly
castle wall | man | looked upon
further in
arranged | decorated
pinnacles | exceedingly | tall
tops | made
spied
inner | gleamed
were | scattered | everywhere
embrasures | clustered
cut | truly
good | knight | horse
manage
shelter | dwelling
agreeably
came
truly | pleasant
greeting | heard
wandering

take | message
noble | lodging
by Peter | truly | think
shall be | sir | stay
went | gladly | back | quickly
receive
drawbridge | courteously | went

same | man | they
let | him through | opened
bade rise | graciously
several | men | held | dismounted
then | good

For to bring this **burne** with **bliss** into hall.
 When he **hef** up his helm, there **hied** enough
 For to **hent hit at** his hand, the **hende** to serve.
 His **bronde** and his **blasoun** both they took.
 Then hailed he full **hendly** those **hathels** each one,
 And many proud men there **pressed**, that prince to honor.
 All **hasped** in his **heg-wede** to hall they him **wonnen**,
 Where fair fire upon **flet** fiercely **brenned**.
 Then the lord of the **lede loutes** from his chamber,
 For to meet with **menske** the man on the floor.
 He said, "Ye are welcome to **wield** as you like,
 What here is. All is your own, to have at your will
 and **wield**."

"**Grant mercy**," quoth Gawain.
 "**There Christ it** you **foryield**!"
 As **frekes** that seemed **fain**,
 Either other in arms **con field**.

15

Gawain **glygt on** the **gome** that goodly him greets,
 And thought it a bold **burne** that the **burg agte**,
 A **huge hathel** for the **nones**, and of high **eldee**.
 Broad, bright was his beard, and all beaver-hued;
 Stern, **stiff on** the stride on stalwart **shanks**;
 Fell face as the fire, and **fre** of his speech.
 And well him **seemed forsooth**, as the **segge** thought,
 To **lead** a lordship in **lee** of **ledes** full good.
 The lord him **charred** to a chamber, and **chiefly** commands
 To **deliver** him a **lede**, him loyally to serve;
 And there were bound at his **bode burnes** enough,
 That brought him to a bright bower, where bedding was noble,
 Of curtains of clean silk, with clear gold hems,
 And coverlets full **curious**, with **comely panes**,
 Of bright **blaunnier** above, embroidered **besides**;
Rudels running on ropes, red gold rings,
Tapits tied to the **woge**, of **Tuly** and **Tars**;
 And under feet, on the **flet**, of **folgande suit**.
 There he was **despoiled**, with **speeches** of **mirth**,
 The **burn** of his **bruny**, and of his bright **weds**.
 Rich robes full **rad renks** him brought,
 For to **charge**, and to change, and choose of the best.
Soon as he one **hent**, and **happed** therein,
 That sat on him seemly, with **sailing** skirts,
 The **ver** by his visage verily it seemed
 Well nigh to each **hathel**, all **on** hues
Loande and lovely, all his limbs **under**,

man | joy
 lifted | hastened
 take | it | from | noble man
 sword | shield
 courteously | knights
 pressed forward
 encased | armor | brought
 hearth | blazed
 company | comes
 honor
 use

disposal
 thank | you
 may | for it | reward
 men | joyful
 did | embrace

looked | upon | man
 man | castle | owned
 great | knight | occasion | maturity

strong | of | legs
 noble
 it befit | indeed | knight
 command | protection | company
 took | excellently
 assign | man
 command | men

well made | beautiful | panels
 ermine | at the side
 curtains
 hangings | walls | Toulouse | Tharsia
 floor | similar | sort
 relieved | expressions | joy
 man | mail coat | clothes
 promptly | knights
 put on
 as soon | took | was clothed
 flowing
 springtime
 knight | in
 glowing | underneath

That a **comelier** knight never Christ made,
 they thought.
Whethen in world he were,
 It seemed as if he might
 Be prince **withouten** peer
 In field where fell men fight.

16

A chair before the **chimney**, where charcoal burned,
 Was **braithed** for Sir Gawain, **graythely** with **clothes**,
Whyssynes upon **quiletpoints**, that **koynt** were both.
 And then a **mere** mantle was on that man cast,
 Of a brown **bleeaunt**, embroidered full richly,
 And fair furred within with **fells** of the best,
 All of ermine in **erde**, his hood of the same;
 And he sat in that **settle** seemly rich,
 And **achaufed** him **chiefly**, and then his cheer **mended**.
 Soon was **telded** up a table on trestles full fair,
 Clad with a clean cloth, that clear white showed,
Sanap, and **salure**, and silver spoons.
 The **wyghe** washed at his will, and went to his meat.
Segges him served seemly enough,
 With **sere sewes** and **sete**, seasoned of the best,
 Double **felde**, as it **falls**, and **fele kind** fishes:
 Some baked in bread, some **brad** on the **gledes**,
 Some **sothen**, some in stew, **sauered** with spices,
 And **ay** sauces so **slege**, that the **segge** liked.
 The **freke** called it a feast full freely and oft,
 Full **hendely**, when all the **hathels re-hayted** him at once
 as **hende**,
 “This penance now ye take,
 And **eft** it shall **amend**.”
 That man much mirth **con** make,
 For wine **in** his head that **wend**.

17

Then was **spied** and **spured upon spare wise**,
 By **prove points** of that prince, put to himself,
 That he **beknew** courteously of the court that he were,
 That **athe** Arthur the **hend holds** him **one**,
 That is the **rich** royal king of the Round Table,
 And it was **Wawen** himself that in that **won** sits,
 Come to that Christmas, as **case** him then **lymped**.
 When the lord had learned that he the **lede** had,
 Loud laughed he thereat, so **lef** it him thought.
 And all the men in that **moat** made much joy

more handsome

wherever

without

fireplace

prepared | promptly | coverings

cushions | quilts | beautiful

splendid

expensive fabric

skins

composition

seat

warmed himself | quickly | improved

set

overcloth | salt cellar

man

men

various | soups | excellent

portion | was fitting | many | kinds of

grilled | coals

boiled | flavored

ever | delicate | knight

knight

courteously | knights | regaled

courteously

then | be your salvation

did

to | went

inquired | asked | in a | tactful | way

subtle | questions

until | acknowledged

noble | gracious | rules | alone

great

Gawain | house

chance | befell

knight

delightful

castle

To appear in his presence **prestly** that time,
That all **price**, and prowess, and **pure**d **thewes**
Appends to his person, and praised is ever.
 Before all men upon **molde**, his **mensk** is the most.
 Each **segge** full softly said to his **ferre**:
 “Now shall we **semlich** see **sleights** of **thewes**,
 And the **teccheles** terms of talking noble,
Which **speed** is in speech, **unspured** may we learn,
 Since we have **fonged** that fine father of **nurture**.
 God has given us his grace goodly **forsooth**,
 That such a guest as Gawain **grants** us to have,
 When **burnes blythe** of **His** birth shall sit
 and sing.

In **meaning** of manners **mere**
 This **burne** now shall us **bring**.
 I hope **that** may him hear
 Shall learn of **love-talking**.”

18

By **that** the dinner was done, and the **dear** up,
 It was nigh at the night **neged** the time.
 Chaplains to the chapels **chosen the gate**,
Rungen full richly, right as they should,
 To the **hersum** evensong of the high **tide**.
 The lorde **loutes** thereto, and the lady also.
 Into a **comely closet coyntly** she enters.
 Gawain **glides** full **gay**, and goes there **soon**;
 The lord **latches** him by the **lappe**, and leads him to sit,
 And **couthly** him **knows**, and calls him **his** name,
 And said he was the welcomest **wighe** of the world.
 And he him thanked **throlly**, and either **halched** other,
 And sat soberly **samen the service-while**.
 Then **list** the lady to look on the knight.
 Then came she **of** her **closet**, with many **cler burdez**.
 She was the fairest in **felle**, of **flesh** and of **lyre**,
 And of **compass** and color, and **costs** of all **other**,
 And **wener** than **Wenore**, as the **wighe** thought.
 She **ches** through the chancel, to **cherish** that **hende**.
 Another lady her led by the left hand,
 That was **alder** than she, an **ancient** it seemed,
 And highly honored with **hathels** about.
 But unlike on to look those ladies were:
 For if the **young** was **yep**, **yolge** was that other.
 Rich red on that one **rayled anywhere**;
 Rough wrinkled cheeks that other one **rolled**.
 Kerchiefs of that one with many **clear** pearls

promptly
 as | excellence | refined | manners
 belongs
 earth | fame
 knight | neighbor
 pleasantly | displays | courtliness
 faultless
 what | excellence | unasked
 received | good breeding
 indeed
 He grants
 men | happily | Christ's

understanding | noble
 knight | teach
 he that
 lovers' conversation

the time that | noble company
 approached
 made | their | way
 rang
 devout | occasion
 goes
 handsome | private pew | gracefully
 hastens | cheerful | immediately
 takes | fold of his gown
 familiarly | greets | by his
 person | in
 heartily | embraced
 together | during the | service
 desired
 out of | pew | fair | maidens
 appearance | body | face
 form | qualities | over | others
 fairer | Guinevere | man
 came | salute | gracious man

older | ancient woman
 knights

young one | fresh | withered
 appeared | everywhere
 had
 shining

Her breast and her **bright** throat bare **displayed**,
 Shone **shyrere** than snow, that **sheds** on hills;
 That other with a gorget⁷ was **gered** over the **swyre**,
Chymbled over her black chin with chalk-white veils,
 Her **frount folden** in silk, **enfoubled anywhere**,
Toreted and **treleted** with **trifles** about,
That naught was bare of that **burde** but the black brows,
 The twin eyes, and the nose, the naked lips;
 And **those** were **sour** to see, and **sellily** bleared.
 A **mensk** lady on **molde** men may her call

For God!

Her body was short and thick;
 Her buttocks **blag** and **brode**.
 More **licorice** on to **lick**
 Was **that** she had on **lode**.

19

When Gawain **glygt** on that **gay**, that graciously looked,
 With leave **lagt of** the lord he **lent** them **against**.
 The elder he hails, **haldande** full low;
 The lovelier he **lappes** a little in arms.
 He kisses her **comelily**, and knightly he **meles**.
 They **call** him **of** acquaintance, and he it quick asks
 To be her servant **soothly**, if **themselves liked**.
 They take him between them, with talking him lead
 To chamber, to **chimney**, and **chiefly** they **ask**
 Spices, that unsparingly men **speeded** them to bring,
 And the **wynnelich** wine therewith each time.
 The lord **lovelike** aloft leaps full oft,
Mynned mirth to be made **upon** many **sythez**,
Hent **hegly** off his hood, and on a spear hung
 And **wayned** him to win the **worship** thereof,
 That most mirth might **meue** that **Christmas-while**.
 “And I shall **fonde**, by my faith, to **filter** with the best,
 Ere **me wont** the **wede** with help of my friends.”
 Thus with laughing **lotez** the lord it **tayt** makes,
 For to gladden sir Gawain with games in hall

That night,

Till **that** was time
 The lord commanded light.
 Sir Gawain his leave **con nyme**,
 And to his bed him **dight**.

white | set off
 whiter | falls
 clad | neck
 wrapped up
 forehead | wrapped | muffled | all over
 embroidered | meshed | details
 so that | lady

those eyes | unpleasant | extraordinarily
 honorable | earth
 before

swollen | broad
 sweet | look
 the lady that | in | tow

gazed | splendid lady
 obtained | from | went | towards
 bowing
 embraces
 courteously | speaks
 ask | for his
 truly | them | it pleased

fireplace | particularly | ask for
 hastened
 cheerful
 courteously
 urged | at | times
 took | gaily
 urged | honor
 be had | Christmas time
 try | contend
 I | lose | garment
 words | merry

it

did | take
 took

⁷ A band of linen wrapped around the head and neck.

20

On the morn, as each man **mines that time**,
 That **Drihten** for our destiny to die was born,
Weal waxes in each **won** in **world**, for his sake;
 So did it there on that day, through danties many.
 Both at **mess** and at **meal**, **messes** full **quaint**
Derf men upon dais **dressed of the best**.
 The old ancient **wife** highest **ho** sits;
 The lord **lovely her by lent**, as I **trow**.
 Gawain and the gay **burde** together they sat,
Even in-mydddez, as the **mess meetly** came
 And **sythen** through all the **sale**, as **them** best **seemed**,
By each **grome** at his **degree graythely** was served.
 There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy,
 That for to tell thereof it me **tene** were,
And to **point** it yet I pained **me peradventure**.
 But yet I **wot** that **Wawen** and the **wale burde**
 Such comfort of their company **cayten** together,
 Through their **dear dalliance** of their **derne** words,
 With **clean** courteous **carp**, **closed** from **filth**,
 That their play was **passing** each princely game,
 In **vaires**.
 Trumpets and **nakerys**
 Much piping there **repairs**.
 Each man tended **his**,
 And they two tended theirs.

remembers | in that | season
 the Lord
 joy | home | the world

the buffet table | mealtime | dishes | fancy
 hardy | prepared | in | best way
 lady | she
 courteously | near | her | sat | believe
 woman
 exactly | in the middle | where | food | fittingly
 then | hall | to them | it seemed
 near | man | according to | rank | promptly

difficult
 if | describe | even | myself | as it happened
 know | Gawain | fair | lady
 had
 pleasant | conversation | discreet
 pure | talk | free | sin
 surpassing
 truth
 kettledrums
 makes
 to his own business

21

Much **dut** was there **driven** that day and **that other**,
 And **the** third as **thro thronge** in thereafter.
 The joy of Saint John's day was **gentle** to hear,
 And was the last of the **laik**, **ledes** there thought.
 There were guests to go upon the gray morn;
Forthi wonderly they woke, and the wine drank,
 Danced full **dregly** with **dear** carols.
 At the last, when it was late, they **latchen** their leave,
 Each one to **wend** on his way, that was **wighe** strong.
 Gawain gave them good day. The good man him **latches**,
 Leads him to his own chamber, the **chimney** beside,
 And there he **drags** him **on-dryghe**, and **dearly** him thanks,
Of the **wynne worship** that he **him waived** had,
 As to honor his house on that high **tide**,
 And **embellish** his **burg** with his **bele cheer**.
"I-wysse sir, while I live, **me worthes** the better,
 That Gawain has been my guest, at God's own **fest**."
"Grant mercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in God's faith it is yours:

joy | made | the | next
 on the | much | crammed
 pleasant
 entertainment | people

therefore | in good spirits
 continuously | merry
 took
 go | man
 takes
 fireplace
 holds | back | courteously
 for | delightful | honor | on him | bestowed
 occasion
 grace | castle | gracious | company
 indeed | to me | it redounds
 festival
 thank | you

All the honor is your own; the high king you reward.
 And I am, **wighe**, at your will, to **worch** your **hest**,
 As I am **halden** thereto, in **high** and in **low**,
 by right.”

The lord **fast can him pain**
 To hold longer the knight;
 To him answers Gawain,
 By no way **that** he might.

22

Then **frayned** the **freke** full fair **at himself**,
 What **derve** deed had him driven at that **dear** time,
 So **keenly** from the king's court to **kayre** all **his one**,
 Ere the holidays wholly were **haled** out of town?
 “**Forsooth**, sir,” quoth the **segge**, “ye say but the truth:
 A high **ernde** and a **hasty** me **had** from those **wonez**.
 For I am summoned myself to **seek** to a place,
 I **ne wot** in world **whitherward** to **wende**, it to find.
 I **no**ld, **but** if I it **nigh might** on New Year's morn,
 For all the land **in-with** Logres, so me our Lord help!
Forthi, sir, this **enquest** I **require** you here:
 That ye me tell with truth, if ever ye tale heard
 Of the Green Chapel, where it on ground stands,
 And of the knight that it keeps, of color of green?
 There was **stabled** by **statute** a **steven** us between,
 To meet that man at that **mere**, if I might **last**;
 And of that **ilk** New Year but **naked** now **wants**;
 And I would look on that **lede**, if God me let would,
Gladloker, by God's Son, **than** any good **wield**!
Forthi, **iwyss**e by your **will**, **wend me behoves**:
Naf I now to **busy** but barely three days,
 And **me** as **fain** to fall **feye as** fail of mine errand.
 Then laughing quoth the lord, “Now **leng** thee **behoves**,
 For I shall **teach** you to that **term** by the time's end,
 The Green Chapel upon ground. **Grieve you** no more:
 But ye shall be in your bed, **burne**, at thine ease,
While forth days, and **ferk** on the first of the year,
 And come to that **merk** at midmorn, to **make** what you like
 in **spenne**.

Dowellez while New Year's day,
 And rise, and **raykez** then.
Man shall you set **in** way
 It is not two mile **henne**.

sir | do | bidding
 bound | great matters | small

earnestly | did | himself | exert

to make him stay

asked | host | of | him
 momentous | festive
 boldly | ride | by | himself
 passed
 indeed | knight
 purpose | urgent | took | houses
 go
 don't | know | where | go
 wouldn't wish | except | near | might arrive
 in
 therefore | request | ask of

established | agreement | appointment
 place | live
 same | little time | is left before it arrives
 man
 more gladly | than I would have | thing
 therefore | indeed | leave | take | myself | I must
 have | achieve my goal
 I am | eager | dead | as to
 stay | must
 guide | place
 trouble | yourself
 sir
 for | the next few | travel
 place | do
 that place
 remain | until
 depart
 we | on your
 hence

23

Then was Gawain full glad, and **gomenly** he **laged**,
 “Now I thank you thoroughly **through** all other things!
 Now achieved is my **chance**: I shall at your will
Dwell, and else do what ye **deem**.”
 Then **seized** him the **sire**, and set him beside,
 Let the ladies be **fette**, to **like** them the better.
 There was **seem solace by themselves** still.
 The lord **let** for **love lotes** so merry,
 As **wyghe** that **would** of his **wit**, nor **wist** what he **might**.
 Then he **carped** to the knight, crying loudly,
 “Ye have **deemed** to do the deed that I bid;
 Will ye **hold** this **hes** here at this **once**?”
 “Yea, sir, **forsooth**,” said the **segge** true,
 “While I **bide** in your **borge**, **be bayn** to your **hest**.”
 “**For** ye have traveled,” quoth the **tulk**, “**towen** from **far**,
 And **sithen waked** me with, ye are not well **waryst**,
 Neither of sustenance nor of sleep, **soothly** I know.
 Ye shall **leng** in your **lofte**, and lie **in** your ease,
Tomorn while the **mess-while**, and to meat **wende**,
 When ye will, with my wife, that with you shall sit,
 And comfort you with company, till I to court **torne**.
 Ye **lende**,
 And I shall early rise.
On hunting will I **wende**.”
 Gawain grants all **thise**,
 Him **heldande**, as the **hende**.

24

“Yet further,” quoth the **freke**, “a **forward** we make:
 Whatsoever I win in the wood, it **worths** to **yours**;
 And what **chek** so ye achieve, **change** me **therefore**.
Sweet, swap we so, swear **with truth**,
 Whether, **lede**, so **lymp lere other** better.”
 “By God,” quoth Gawain the good, “I grant **theretill**.
And that you **list** for to **layke**, **lef** it **me thinks**.”
 “**Who** brings us this beverage, this bargain is made!”
 So said the lord of that **lede**. They laughed each one.
 They drank, and **daylyeden**, and **dalten untygel**,
 These lords and ladies, while **that** them **liked**;
 And **sithen** with **Frankish fare** and **fele fair lotez**
 They stood, and **stemed**, and **stilly** spoke,
 Kissed full **comelily**, and **kagten** their leave.
 With many **ledes** full **lygt**, and **lemande** torches,
 Each **burne** to his bed was brought at the last,
 full **soft**.

merrily | said
 above
 goal
 remain | advise
 took hold of | lord
 brought | please
 excellent | pleasure | between | them
 uttered | joy | sounds
 a man | was bereft | senses | knew | did
 spoke
 decided
 keep | promise | moment
 indeed | knight
 stay | castle | I shall be | bound | command
 as | host | journeyed | far off
 then | stayed up | recovered
 truly
 remain | room | at
 tomorrow | until | meal time | go

 return
 stay

 to | go
 this
 bowing | the noble man that he is

host | pact
 goes | you
 fortune | trade | for it
 good sir | on | your honor
 sir | it | turns out | worse | or
 what you ask
 if | it pleases | play | delightful | to me | seems
 once someone
 company
 chatted | made | merry
 it | pleased
 then | courtly | behavior | many | words
 stopped | softly
 courteously | took
 servants | eager | blazing
 man
 comfortable

To bed yet ere they **yede**,
Recorded covenants oft;
 The old lord of that **lede**
 Could well **hold layk aloft**.

went
 they recalled | their agreement
 host
 keep | a game | going

Part III

1

Full early before the day the folk arose.
 Guests that go would, their grooms they called,
 And they **busken** up **bilive**, **blonks** to saddle,
Tiffen their **tackles**, **trussen** their **males**,
Richen them **the richest**, to ride all arrayed,
 Leap up lightly, **latchen** their bridles,
 Each **wighe** on his way, where him well liked.
 The **lief** lord of the land was not the last
 Arrayed for the riding, with **renks** full many;
 Ate a **sop** hastily, when he had heard mass,
 With bugle to **bent** field he **busks bilive**.
 By **that** any daylight **lemed** upon earth,
 He with his **hathels** on high horses were.
 Then the **catchers** that could coupled their hounds,
 Unclosed the kennel door, and called them thereout,
 Blew bigly on bugles three bare notes.
Braches bayed therefore, and **breme** noise made,
 And they **chastised**, and **charred**, on chasing that went,
 A hundred of hunters, as I have heard tell,
 of the best.
 To **tristors vewters yod**;
Couples hunters off **kest**.
 There rose for **blastes gode**
 Great **rurd** in that forest.

hasten | quickly | horses
 prepare | gear | pack | bags
 dress | in the | noblest raiment
 take
 man
 dear
 men
 light meal
 hunting | hastens | quickly
 the time that | shone
 men
 huntsmen

hounds | fierce
 whipped | turned back

hunting stations | deerhound keepers | went
 leashes | cast
 blasts | good
 noise

2

At the first **quethe** of the **quest** quaked the **wild**.
 Deer **drof** in the dale, **doted for** dread,
 Hied to the **high**; but **heterly** they were
Restayed with the **stable**, that stoutly **ascried**.
 They let the harts **have the gate**, with the high heads.
 The **breme** bucks also, with their broad **paums**:
 For the **free** lord had **defended** in **fermysoun** time
 That there should no man **meve to** the male deer.
 The hinds were held in with “Hey!” and “War!”
 The does driven with great din to the deep **slades**.
 There might one see, as they **slipped**, **slenting** of arrows.
 At each **wende under wande wapped** a **flone**

baying | hounds | game
 fled | dazed | with
 high ground | vigorously
 turned back | by | beaters | shouted
 go | their | way
 splendid | antlers
 noble | decreed | closed season
 interfere | with

valleys
 were loosed | flying
 turn | in the | wood | flew | shaft

That bigly bit on the **brown**, with full broad heads.
What, they **brayen** and bleed; by **banks** they die.
 And **ay raches** in a rush **radly** them follow,
 Hunters with **high** horn haste them after,
 With such a **crackande** cry, as cliffs had **brusten**.
 What **wild** so escaped **wighes** that shot
 Were all **to-raced** and rent at the **resayt**.
Bi they were **tened at** the **high** and **taysed** to the waters,
 The **ledes** were so **learned** at the low **trysteres**,
 And the greyhounds so great, that **geten** them **bilive**,
 And them **tofylched**, as fast as **frekes** might look,
 there right.
 The lord for bliss **abloy**,
 Full oft **con launce** and **light**,
 And **drof** that day with joy,
 Thus to the dark night.

3

Thus **laykes** this lord by **lunde** wood's **eves**.
 And Gawain the good man in **gay** bed lies,
Lurks while the daylight **lemed** on the walls,
 Under coverlet full clear, curtained about.
 And as in slumbering he **slode**, **slegly** he heard
 A little din at his door, and **dernly** open;
 And he heaves up his head out of the clothes.
 A corner of the curtain he **caught** up a little,
 And **waits** warily thither-ward, **what** it be might.
 It was the lady, loveliest to behold,
 That drew the door after her full **dernly** and still,
 And **boged** toward the bed. And the **burne shamed**,
 And laid him down **lystyly**, and **let as** he slept.
 And she stepped stilly, and stole to his bed,
Kest up the curtain, and crept within,
 And set her full softly on the bedside,
 And **lenged** there **selly** long, to **look** when he wakened.
 The **lede** lay lurking a full long while,
Compassed in his **conscience** to what that **case** might
 Mean **other amount**. To marvel **him thought**;
 But yet he said to himself, "More seemly it were
 To **espy** with my **spell** in **space** what she would."
 Then he wakened, and **wroth**, and to her **ward** turned,
 And **unlocked** his eyelids, and **let as him wondered**,
 And **sayned him**, as by his **sage** the safer to **worth**,
 with hand.
 With chin and cheek full sweet,
 Both white and red **in-blande**,

brown hide
 lo | cry out | hillsides
 ever | hounds | swiftly
 loud
 ringing | burst
 game | men
 pulled down | receiving station
 after | harassed | from | high ground | driven
 men | skilled | stations
 they caught | quickly
 pulled down | men
 right | there
 was carried away
 did | gallop | alight
 passed

sports | linden | borders
 fair
 lies snug | shone

slept | warily
 saw it stealthily

raised
 looks | to see what

softly
 moved | man | was ashamed
 craftily | let on | as if

drew

remained | very | see
 knight
 pondered | mind | as to | situation
 or | amount to | a | to him | it seemed

find out | speech | time
 stretched | direction
 opened | let on | as if | he | was surprised
 crossed | himself | prayer | be

together

Full lovely **con** she **lete**,
With lips small **lagande**.

4

“Good morning, sir Gawain,” said that fair lady.
“Ye are a sleeper **un-slyghe**, **that man** may **slide** hither.
Now are ye taken **astit**, **but truce us** may **shape**:
I shall bind you in your bed, **that be ye trayst**.”
All **lagande** the lady **lanced** those **bourdes**.
“Good morning, **gay**,” quoth Gawain the **blithe**.
“**Me** shall **worth** to your will, and that me well **likes**.
For I yield me **yederly**, and **yege after grace**,
And that is the **best**, by my **dome**, for me **behooves need**.”
And thus he **bourded again** with many a **blithe** laughter.
“**But** would ye, lady lovely, then leave me grant,
And **depress** your prisoner, and pray him to rise,
I would **boge** of this bed, and **busk** me better.
I should **cover** the more comfort to **karp** you with.”
“Nay, for sooth, **beau sir**,” said that **sweet**.
“Ye shall not rise from your bed, I **rich** you **better**.
I shall **happe** you here **that other half** also,
And **sithen karp** with my knight that I caught have;
For I ween well, **iwyse**, sir **Wawen** ye are,
That all the world worships, whereso ye ride.
Your honour, your **hendelayk** is **hendely** praised
By lords, by ladies, by all that life bear.
And now ye are here, **iwyse**, and we **both** are **one**.
My lord and his ladies are **on length faren**;
Other **burnes** in their beds, and my **burdes** also;
The door **drawen**, and **dit** with a **derf hasp**.
And **sithen** I have in this house him that **all** likes,
I shall **ware** my **while** well, while it lasts,
with tale.

Ye are welcome to my **course**,
Your own **won** to **wale**.
Me **behooves** of **fine force**,
Your servant **be**, and **shale**.”

5

“In good faith,” quoth Gawain, “**gain it me thinks**
(Though I be not now **he** that ye of speak)
To **reach to** such reverence as ye rehearse here.
I am **wighe** unworthy, I **wot** well myself.
By God, I were glad, **and** you good thought,
In **sage other** in service that I **set** might
To the pleasure of your **price**. It **were** a pure joy.”

did | appear
laughing

unware | if | one | steal
in a moment | unless | a truce | we | reach
of that | certain
laughing | spoke | jesting words
gay woman | cheerful
I | submit | pleases
willingly | cry | for | mercy
best thing | judgment | to | do
jested | in return | cheerful
if
release
get out | dress
attain | talk
fair | sweet woman
will tell | something better
tuck in | on that | side
then | talk
indeed | Gawain

courtliness | graciously

indeed | two | alone
far | away | gone
men | maidens
closed | fastened | strong | pin
since | everyone
spend | time
in | conversation
company
pleasure | take
it behooves | pure | necessity
to be | so I shall

an achievement | to me | seems
such a man
be worthy | of
a man | know
if
word | or | devote myself
worthiness | would be

“In good faith, sir Gawain,” quoth the gay lady,
 “The **price** and the prowess that pleases all others,
 If I it **lacked**, **other set at light**, it were little **daynté**.
 But **it** are ladies enough, that **liefer** were now
Have ye, **hende**, in **hor** held, as I thee have.
 But I love that **ilk** lord that the **lyfte holds**.
 I have **hit** wholly in my hand that all desires,
 through **grace**.”

She made him so great cheer,
 That was so fair of face.
 The knight with speeces **skere**
 Answered to **each a case**.

6

“Madame,” quoth the merry man, “Mary you **yield**.
 For I have found, in good faith, your **fraunchis** noble,
 And **other** full **much** of other folk **fongen** by their deeds.
 But the **daynté** that they **deal**, for my desert **nys even**.
 It is the **worship** of yourself that naught but **well connes**.”
 “By Mary,” quoth the **menskful**, “**me think it another**.
 For were I worth all the **wone** of women alive,
 And all the wealth of the world were in my hand,
 And I should **cheapen** and choose to **cheve** me a **lord**,
 For the **costes** that I have **known upon** the knight here,
 Of beauty, and **debonerté**, and **blithe semblaunt**,
 And that I have **ere** hearkened, and held it were true,
 There should no **freke** upon **folde** before you be chosen.”
 “**Twysse**, **worthy**,” quoth the **wighe**, “**Ye have waled** well better.
 But I am proud of the **price** that ye put on me,
 And, **soberly** your servant, my sovereign I hold you,
 And your knight I become, and Christ you **foryield**.”
 Thus they **meled** of **much-what**, till mid-morn passed,
 And **ay** the lady let **like as** him loved much.
 The **freke ferde with defence**, and **feted full fair**.
 “Though I were **burde brightest**,” the **burde** in mind **had**,
 “The less **love** in his **lode**, for **lur** that he sought,
boute hone,
 The **dune** that should him **deve**,
 And needs it must be done.”
 The lady then spoke of **leave**;
 He granted **her full sone**.

7

Then she gave him good day, and with a **glent** laughed;
 And as she stood, she **stonied** him with full **stor** words:
 “Now he that **speeds** each speech, **this disport yield** you:

excellence
 disparaged | or | treated | as | trivial | courtesy
 there | more eager
 to have | gracious man | their power
 same | heavens | rules
 it
 His mercy

pure
 every one | of | her points

reward
 generosity
 besides | many | shown to be worthy
 honor | show me | to | is not | equal
 recognition | favorably | shows
 noble lady | to me | the matter | seems | otherwise
 value

bargain | acquire | husband
 qualities | seen | in
 courtesy | cheerful | disposition
 previously
 man | earth
 indeed | noble lady | man | could have | chosen
 value
 seriously
 reward
 talked | many things
 ever | on | as though she
 man | was | on | guard | behaved | courteously
 lady | fairest | lady | thought
 love would be | journey | sorrow
 without | delay
 blow | fell

leaving
 it to her | soon

glance
 astonished | harsh
 succeeds in | to this | jest | submit

But that ye be Gawain, it **gets** in **mind**.”
 “Wherefore?” quoth the **freke**, and **freschly** he asks,
Feared lest he had failed in **form** of his **castes**.
 But the **burde** him **blessed**, and “**By** this **skill**” said,
 “So good as Gawain **gainly** is **halden**,
 And courtesy is **closed** so **clean** in **himself**,
 Could not **lightly** have **lenged** so long with a lady,
 But he had craved a kiss, by his courtesy,
 By some **touch** of some trifle, at some tale’s end.”
 Then quoth **Wowen**, “**Twysse**, **worthe** as you **likes**,
 And **fire** lest it displease you, so plead it no more.”
 She comes nearer with that, and catches him in arms,
Loutes lovelike **adown**, and the **lede** kisses.
 They **comely** **bykennen** to Christ either other.
 She **dos** **her** forth at the door, without **din** more.
 And he **riches** him to rise, and **rapes** him **soon**,
Clepes to his chamberlain, chooses his **wede**,
Boges forth, when he was **boun**, **blithely** to mass.
 And then he **meved** to his **meat**, that **menskly** him **kept**,
 And made merry all day till the moon rose,
 with game.
 Was never **freke** fairer **fonge**,
 Between two so **dinge** **dame**,
 The older and the **yonge**.
 Much **solace** **set** they **same**.

8

And **ay** the lord of the land is **lent** on his games,
 To hunt in **holts** and heath, at hinds barren.
 Such a **sowme** he there slew by **that** the sun **heldet**,
 Of does and of other deer, **to** deem **were wonder**.
 Then **fersly** they flocked in **folk** at the last,
 And quickly of the **quelled** deer a quarry they made.
 The **best boged** thereto, with **burnes** enough,
 Gathered the greatest of **grease** that there were,
 And did them **dearly** **undo**, as the deed **asks**.
Searched them at the assay, some that there were;
 Two **fingers** they found **of** the **foulest** of all.
Sithen they slit the slot, **seized** the **erber**,
Schaued with a sharp knife, and the **schire knitten**.
Sithen ritte they the four limbs, and rent off the hide,
 Then **brek** they the **bale**, the bowels out took,
Lystily for loosening the **lere** of the knot.
 They **gripped** to the **gargulun**, and **grathely** **departed**
 The **wesaunt** from the wind-hole, and **walt** out the guts.
 Then **scher** they out the shoulders with their sharp knives,

is | doubt
 knight | quickly
 afraid | manner | speech
 lady | reassured | for | reason
 rightly | accounted
 contained | completely | him
 easily | remained

hint
 Gawain | indeed | let it be | wish
 proceed

bends | lovingly | down | knight
 fittingly | commend
 takes | herself | ado
 prepares | hurries | quickly
 calls | clothing
 goes | ready | cheerfully
 went | meal | suitably | awaited

man | entertained
 worthy | ladies
 younger
 pleasure | had | together

ever | away
 woods
 number | the time that | set
 so as to | it were | a wonder
 eagerly | throng
 hunted
 gentlemen | came | men
 fat
 neatly | cut | requires
 examined
 finger-breadths | in | poorest
 then | took | gullet
 scraped it | flesh | tied
 then | cut off
 cut open | belly
 deftly | to avoid | grip
 laid | hold of | throat | quickly | separated
 esophagus | tossed
 cut

Haled them by a little hole, to have whole sides.
Sithen britned they the breast, and **braiden** it in twain,
 And **eft** at the **gargulun begins** one then,
Rives it up **radly**, right to the **bight**,
Voids out the **avanters**, and verily thereafter
 All the **rimes** by the ribs **radly** they **lance**.
 So **ride** they off **by reason** by the **rigge** bones,
Evenden to the haunch, that hung all **samen**,
 And heaved **hit** up all whole, and hewed **hit** off there;
 And that they name **for** the **numbles**, by name as I **trow**,
by kind.

By the **bight** all of the thighs
 The **lappes** they **lance** behind.
 To hew **hit** in two they **hies**,
 By the backbone to unbind.

9

Both the head and the **hals** they hewed off then,
 And **sithen sunder** they the sides swift from the **chin**,
 And **corbeles fee** they cast in a **greve**.
 Then **thurled** they **either** thick side through, by the rib,
 And hung then **either** by **hoges** of the **fourches**,
 Each **freke** for his **fee**, as falls **forto** have.
 Upon a **felle** of the fair beast feed they their hounds,
 With the liver and the **lightes**, the **lether** of the **paunches**,
 And bread **bathed** in blood, **blende** there amongst.
Baldly they blew **prize**, bayed their **raches**.
Sithen fonge they their flesh, **folden** to home,
Strakande full stoutly many **stiff** notes.
 By **that** the daylight was done, the **douthe** was all **wonen**
 Into the **comely** castle, where the knight **bides**
full still.

With bliss and bright fire **bette**,
 The lord is come theretill.
 When Gawain with him met,
 There was but **weal at will**.

10

Then commanded the lord in that **sale** to **samen** all the **many**,
 Both the ladies **on loghe** to **light** with their **burdes**.
 Before all the **fold on** the **flette**, **frekes** he bids
 Verily his venison to fetch him before.
 And all **goodly** in **gomen** Gawain he called,
Teaches him to the tales of full **tayt** beasts,
 Shows him the **schire grease** shorn upon ribs.
 “How **thayes** you this **play**? Have I praise won?”

extracted
 then | cut up | pulled
 again | esophagus | starts
 cuts | promptly | fork of the legs
 clears | edible neck viscera
 membranes | quickly | loosen
 clear | according to | correct procedure | back
 trimmed | together
 it
 as | edible viscera | believe
 as is | proper
 fork
 skin | fold
 the carcass | hurry

neck
 then | separate | backbone
 raven's | portion | thicket
 pierced | each
 each | hocks | legs
 man | portion | to him to
 skin
 lungs | lining | stomachs
 steeped | mixed
 vigorously | the successful hunt | hounds
 then | took | turned
 sounding | loud
 the time that | company | come
 fair | abides
 quietly
 kindled

delight | in | their minds

hall | gather | company
 from | their dwelling | descend | maids
 company | in | hall | men

courteously | merriment
 regales | with | nimble
 shining | flesh
 pleases | sport

Have I thoroughly **thanks** through my **craft served**?"
 "Yes **iwyse**," quoth that other **wighe**. "Here is **wayth** fairest
 That I saw this seven years in season of winter."
 "And **all** I give you, Gawain," quoth the **gome** then.
 "For by **accord** of **covenant** ye **crave** it as your own."
 "This is sooth," quoth the **segge**. "I say you that **ilk**:
 What I have **worthily wommen** this **wones** within,
Iwisse with as good will it **worths to** yours."
 And kisses him as **comelily** as he **couth advise**.
 "Take you there my **chevicaunce**; I **checked** no more.
 I **vouch** it **safe, finely though feler** it were."
 "It is good," quoth the good man. "**Grant mercy therefore**.
 It may be **such** it is **the** better, **and** ye me **breve** would
 Where ye won this **ilk weal**, by **wit of yourself**?"
 "That was not **forward**," quoth he. "**Frayst** me no more.
For ye have taken what you **tides, trawe** no **other**
 ye **mowe**."

They laughed and made them **blithe**,
 With **lotes** that were to **lowe**.
 To supper they **yede aswithe**,
 With dainties new **enow**.

11

And **sithen** by the **chimney** in **chamber** they sat.
Wighes the **wall** wine **weghed** to them oft.
 And **efte** in their **bourding** they **baythen** in the morn
 To **fill** the same **forwards** that they before made.
 What **chance** so **betides**, their **chevysaunche** to **change**,
 What **news** so they **nome**, at night when they meet.
 They **accorded of** the covenants before the court all.
 The beverage was brought forth in board at that time.
 Then they **lovelike leghten** leave at the last;
 Each **burne** to his bed **busked bilive**.
 By **that** the cock had crowed and cackled but thrice,
 The lord **was lopen of** his bed, **the ledes** each one,
 So that the **meat** and the mass were **meetly delivered**.
 The **douthe dressed** to the wood, ere any **day sprenged**,
 to **chase**.

Hey with **hunt** and horns
 Through plains they pass **in space**.
 Uncoupled among the thorns
Raches that ran on **race**.

accolades | skill | earned
 indeed | man | meat

 all of it | man
 the rules | our agreement | may claim
 knight | same thing
 honorably | won | house
 indeed | shall | become
 graciously | was | able
 winnings | achieved
 grant | freely | and fully | even if | more
 thank | you | for it
 that | for the | if | tell
 same | prize | your | own | cleverness
 the agreement | ask
 as | are owed | expect | more
 may
 merry
 words | be praised
 went | straightaway
 enough

then | fireplace | the hall
 men | fine | brought
 again | jesting | agreed
 fulfill | agreement
 fortune | befalls | winnings | exchange
 new things | took
 agreed | to

courteously | took their
 man | went | quickly
 the time that
 had | leapt | out of | and the | men
 meal | fittingly | completed
 company | went | dawn | broke
 the hunt
 eagerly | hunstmen
 soon | after

hounds | the trail

12

Soon they call of a **quest** in a **kerr** side.
 The hunt **rehayted** the hounds, that **hit** first **minged**.
 Wild **words him warp** with a **wrast** noise:
 The hounds that **hit** heard hastened **thither swithe**,
 And fell as fast to the **fuyt**, forty at once.
 Then such a **glauer** and **glam** of **gedered raches**
 Rose, that the **rocheres** rang about;
 Hunters **hem hardened** with horn and with mouth,
 Then all in a **semblé swayed** together.
 Between a **flosche** in that **frith**, and a **foo** crag,
In a knot, by a cliff, at the **kerr** side,
 There **as** the rough rocks **unridely** were fallen,
 They **ferden** to the finding, and **frekes** them after.
 They **umbekesten** the **knarre** and the **knot** both,
Wighes while they **wisten** well within them it were,
 The beast that there **breved** was **with** the bloodhounds.
 Then they beat on the bushes and bade him up rise,
 And he **unsoundly out** sought **segges overthwert**,
One the **sellokest swine swaged** out there,
 Long **sithen** from the **sounder** that **sighed** for **old**;
 For he was **breme** boar **alther** greatest,
 Full grim when he **gronyed**. Then **grieved** many,
 For three at the first **thrust** he **thright** to the earth,
 And **sparred** forth **good** speed, **boute spit** more.
 These others **hallowed**, “Hi!” full **high** and “Hey! Hey!” cried,
Haden horns to mouth, **heterly rechated**.
 Many was the merry **mouth** of men and of hounds,
 That **busks** after this boar, with **bost** and with noise,
 To **quell**.
 Full oft he **bides the** bay
 And maims the **mute** in **melle**.
 He hurts **of** the hounds and they
 Full **gomerly** yowl and yell.

13

Schalks to shoot at him **showen to** then,
Haled to him **of her** arrows, hit him oft;
 But the points **payred** at the **pith** that **pight** in his **shelds**,
 And the barbs **of** his brow bite none would,
 Though the **schauen** shaft **schindered** in pieces.
 The head **hipped** again, wheresoever **hit** hit;
 But when the **dints** him **deared of** their **drighe** strokes,
 Then, **brain-wod** for **bate**, on **burnes** he rushes,
 Hurts **hem** full **heterly** where he forth hies,
 And many **arged** thereat, and **onlyte drogen**.

for | search | marsh
 encouraged | it | scented
 cries | to them | they shouted | loud
 it | there | quickly
 trail
 babble | clamor | assembled | hounds
 rocky banks
 them | encouraged
 company | rushed
 pool | wood | forbidding
 on | rocky hill | marsh
 where | in confusion
 rushed | men
 surrounded | crag | hill
 men | because | knew
 announced | by

unwisely | escape | through the line | of men
 one of | most marvelous | boars | rushed
 since | herd | had separated | old age
 a fierce | of all the
 grunted | were dismayed
 charge | threw
 sprang | at great | without | harm
 shouted | loudly
 put | vigorously | blew the recall
 cry
 hastens | clamor
 kill
 stands | at
 pack | the middle
 some of
 piteously

men | pressed | forward
 shot | at | with | their
 failed | toughness | was | shoulders
 into
 smooth | shattered
 rebounded | it
 blows | hurt | by | ceaseless
 frenzied | fighting | men
 them | savagely
 feared | back | drew

But the lord on a **light** horse **launces** him after.
 As **burne** bold upon **bent** his bugle he blows.
 He **rechated** and rode through **rones** full thick,
Suande this wild swine till the sun **schafted**.
 This day with this **ilk deed** they **drive on** this **wise**,
 While our **lovelike lede** lies in his bed,
 Gawain **grathely** at home, in **geres** full rich
 of hue.

The lady not **forgate**
 Came to him to **salue**.
 Full early she was him **ate**,
 His mood for to **remue**.

14

She comes to the curtain and at the knight **totes**.
 Sir **Wawen** her welcomed **worthly on** first,
 And **ho him yields** again. Full **gerne of** her words,
 Sets her softly by his side. And **swithely** she laughs.
 And with a loving look she **laid** him these words:
 “Sir, if ye be **Wawen**, **wonder me thinks**,
Wigh that is so well **wrast** always to good,
 And can not of **company** the **costs undertake**;
 And if **man kens** you them to know, ye cast them **of** your mind.
 You have forgotten **yederly** what yesterday I taught
 By **alder-truest token** of talk that I **cowthe**.”
 “What is that?” quoth the **wighe**. “**Iwisse I wot never**.
 If it be **sooth** that ye **beve**, the blame is mine own.”
 “Yet I **kend** you of kissing,” quoth the **clear** then.
 “**Whereso countenance** is **couthe**, quickly to claim,
 That becomes such a knight, that courtesy **uses**.”
 “**Do way**,” quoth that **derf** man, “my dear, that speech.
 For that **durst** I not do, lest I **devayed** were.
 If I were **werned**, I **were** wrong **iwisse**, if I **proffered**.”
 “**Ma fay**,” quoth the merry wife, “ye may not be **werned**.
 Ye are **stiff** enough to constrain with strength, if you like,
 If any were so villainous that you **devaye** would.”
 “Yea, by God,” quoth Gawain, “good is your speech.
 But threat is **unthruande** in **thede** where I **lend**,
 And each gift that is given not with good will;
 I am at your commandment, to kiss when you like.
 Ye may **latch** when you **list**, **leave** when you **think**,
 in **space**.”

The lady **loutes adown**,
 And **comlily** kisses his face.
 Much speech they there **expoun**,
 Of **druryes greme** and **grace**.

nimble | gallops
 warrior | battlefield
 sounded the call | bushes
 pursuing | set
 same | activity | pass | in | way
 good | knight
 pleasantly | clothes

forgetting
 greet
 with
 influence

peeps
 Gawain | courteously | at
 her | he | receives | eager | for
 robustly
 said to
 Gawain | strange | to me | it seems
 a man | disposed
 polite society | rules | follow
 someone | teaches | from
 already
 the truest | knowledge | know
 man | indeed | know | not
 truth | say
 taught | fair lady
 wherever | favor | evident
 practices
 leave | off | brave
 dare | refused
 refused | would | indeed | had offered
 in | faith | refused
 strong
 refuse

unworthy | country | dwell

take one | like | leave off | see fit
 time
 bends | down
 graciously
 share
 love's | grief | joy

15

“I would **wit at** you, **wighe**,” that **worthy** there said,
 “**And** you **wratheth** not therewith, what **were** the **skill**
 That so young and so **yep** as ye at this time,
 So courteous, so knightly as ye, are known **out**?
And of all chivalry to **choose**, the chief thing **alosed**,
 Is the **lel layk** of love, the **lettrure** of arms;
 For to tell of these **teueling** of these true knights,
 It is the **tytelet token** and text of their works:
 How **ledes** for their **lel** love their lives have **auntered**,
 Endured for their **drury** doleful **stoundes**,
 And **after venged** with their valor and **voided** their care,
 And brought bliss into **bower**, with **bounties** their own.
 And ye are knight **comlokest kid** of your **eld**.
 Your **word** and your **worship walks anywhere**;
 And I have sat by **yourself** here **sere** twice,
 Yet heard I never **of** your head **held** no words
 That ever **longed** to love, less nor more.
 And ye, that are so courteous and **coint** of your **hetes**,
 Ought to a **young think yearn** to show,
 And teach some tokens of true love’s crafts.
 Why! Are ye **lewed**, that all the **los wilds**,
Other else ye deem me too dull, your **dalliance** to **hearken**?
 For shame!
 I come hither **single**, and sit
 To learn **at** you some game.
 Do teach me of your wit,
 While my lord is **fro hame**.”

16

“In good faith,” quoth Gawain, “God you **foryield**!
 Great is the good glee, and **gomen** to me huge,
 That so **worthy** as ye would **win** hither,
 And **thine you** with so poor a man, **as play** with your knight,
 With **anyskinnes countenance**; it **covers** me **ease**.
 But to take the **toruayle** to myself to true love expound,
 And **touch** the themes of **text**, and tales of arms,
 To you that, I **wot** well, **wields** more **slight**
Of that art, by the half, **or** a hundred of such
 As I am, **other** ever **shall**, in **erde** while I live,
 It were a folly **fele-folde**, my **free**, by my **troth**.
 I would your **wilning worche** at my **might**,
 As I am highly beholden, and ever more will
 Be servant to yourself, so save me **Drighten**!”
 Thus him **frayned** that **free**, and **fondet** him oft,
For to have **wonnen** him to woo, **whatso** she **thought** else,

learn | from | sir | noble lady
 if | were angered | do you think is | reason
 sprightly
 about
 indeed | practice | to be praised
 true | observance | knowledge
 deeds
 inscribed | title
 men | true | offered
 love | times
 afterwards | avenged | expunged
 a woman’s bower | virtues
 noblest | known | age
 fame | honor | are known | everywhere
 you | on occasions
 from | come forth
 pertained
 polite | vows
 young person | be | eager

ignorant | renown | enjoys
 or | conversation | hear

alone
 from

away from | home

reward
 pleasure
 worthy a woman | come
 trouble | yourself | as to | converse
 any kind of | favor | gives | pleasure
 hard task
 touch upon | story
 know | has | skill
 in | than
 or | shall be | Earth
 several times over | worthy woman | upon | word
 desires | carry out | within | power

God
 tested | noble lady | tempted
 in order | caused | whatever | had in mind

But he defended him so fair, that no fault **seemed**,
Nor no evil on neither **half**. Nothing they **wisten**

But bliss.

They laughed and **layked** longe;
At the last she **con** him kiss.
Her leave fair **con** she **fonge**
And went her way **iwisse**.

17

Then **ruthes** him the **renk** and rises to the mass,
And **sithen** their dinner was **dight** and **dearly** served.
The **lede** with the ladies **layked** all day,
But the lord over the lands **launched** full oft,
Swegh his **oncely swine** that **swings** by the **banks**
And **bote** the best of his **braches** the backs asunder.
There he **bode** in his bay, till bowmen it broke
And made him, **mawgref** his **head**, for to move **outer**.
So fell **flones** there **flet**, when the folk gathered;
But yet the **stiffest** to **start by stounds** he made,
Till at the last he was so **mat** he might no more run
But, in the **hast** that he might, he to a hole **wins**.
Of a rasse, by a rock, there runs the **boerne**.
He gets the bank at his back, begins to **scrape**.
The froth foamed at his mouth **unfair** by the **wikes**,
Whets his white tusks. **With** him then **irked**
All the **burnes** so bold that him by stood,
To **nye** him **on-ferum**. But **nege** him none durst

For **wothe**.

He had hurt so many **beforene**
That all **thought** then full loath
Be more with his tusks torn
That **breme** was and **brain-wod** both.

18

Till the knight came himself, **catchande** his **blonk**,
Saw him **bide** at the bay, his **burnes beside**.
He **lights lovelike adown**, leaves his courser,
Braides out a bright **bront**, and **bigly** forth strides,
Founds fast through the ford, where the **fell bides**.
The **wild** was **ware** of the **wighe** with weapon in hand.
Hef **highly** the **here**, so **hetterly** he **finast**,
That **fele** feared for the **freke**, lest **fell** him the worst.
The **swine sets** him out on the **segge even**,
That the burne and the boar were both **upon heaps**.
For the man marks him well, as they meet first.
Set **sadly** the **sharp** in the **slot even**,

appeared
side | knew

amused themselves
did
did | take
indeed

bestirs | knight
then | prepared | splendidly
knight | enjoyed himself
galloped
pursues | fearsome | boar | rushes | hillsides
bit | hounds
stood
despite | desire | into the open
many | arrows
bravest | flinch | at | times
exhausted
fastest way | gets
in | bank | stream
paw the ground
hideously | corners
of | wearied
men
harass | from afar | approach
danger
before
were
to be
fierce | frenzied

urging on | horse
stand | men | beside him
dismounts | graciously | down
pulls | sword | mightily
hastens | fell beast | waits
wild beast | aware | man
he raised | high | bristles | fiercely | snorted
many | knight | befall
boar | rushes | man | straight
so that | in a | heap

he set | firmly | sharp blade | breast | directly

Hit him up to the hilt, that the heart **schindere**.
 And he **yarrande** him **yield**, and **yedown** the water,
 Full **tit**.
 A hundred hounds him **hent**,
 That **bremely con** him bite.
Burnes him brought to **bent**,
 And dogs to death **endite**.

19

There was blowing of **prize** in many **breme** horn,
Heghe hallooing on high, **with hathels** that **might**.
Brachets bayed **that** beast, as **bidden** the masters,
 Of that **chargeaunt** chase that were chief **hunts**.
 Then a **wighe** that was wise **upon** wood crafts
 To **unlace** this boar **lovely** begins.
 First he hews off his head and on high sets
 And **sithen** rends him all **rough** by the **ridge after**,
Braids out the bowels, **brenns** them on **glede**;
 With bread **blent** therewith his **braches rewards**.
Sithen he **britnes** out the **brawen** in bright broad **chelds**
 And **hats** out the **hastlets**, as **highly** beseems.
 And yet them **halches** all whole the halves together,
 And **sithen** on a **stiff stange** stoutly them hangs.
 Now with this **ilk swine** they **swengen** to home.
 The boar's head was borne before the **burne's selven**,
 That him **forferde** in the ford, through force of his hand
 so strong.
 Till he saw sir Gawain,
 In hall **him thought** full long.
 He called and he came **gain**,
 His **fees** there for to **fong**.

20

The lord full loud with **lote** and laughter merry,
 When he sees sir Gawain with **solace** he speaks.
 The good ladies were **geten** and gathered the **many**.
 He shows them the **schelds**, and **shapes** them the tale
 Of the **largesse**, and the length, the **lithernes** also
 Of the **were** of the wild **swine**, in wood where he fled.
 That other knight full **comely** commended his deeds
 And praised it as great **prize**, that he proved had.
 For such a **brawn** of a beast, the bold **burne** said,
 Nor such sides of a **swine**, saw he never **ere**.
 Then handled they they hog's head. The **hende** man it praised,
 And **let lodly** thereat the lord for to hear.
 "Now Gawain," quoth the good man, "this **gomen** is your own,

burst
 snarlingly | yielded | went down in
 quickly
 caught
 fiercely | did
 men | the battlefield
 brought him

the capture call | loud
 loud | shouting | by | men | could
 hounds | at that | commanded
 hard | huntsmen
 man | in
 cut up | eagerly

then | roughly | backbone | afterwards
 takes | burns | hot coals
 mixed | hounds | he feeds
 then | cuts | flesh | slabs
 takes | entrails | fitly
 fastens
 then | strong | pole
 same | boar | hasten
 knight | himself
 had killed

to him | it seemed
 straightaway
 payment | receive

speech
 joy
 brought | household
 slabs | tells
 great size | fierceness
 fighting prowess | boar
 graciously
 excellence
 flesh | man
 boar | before
 courteous
 expressed | horror
 prize

By **fine forward** and **fast, faithfully** ye know.”
 “It is sooth,” quoth the **segge**, “and as **siker** true.
 All my **get** I shall **you** give again, by my **troth**.”
 He **hent** the **hathel** about the **halse**, and **hendely** him kisses,
 And **effe-sones** of the same he served him there.
 “Now we are even,” quoth the **hathel**, “in this eventide.
 Of all the coventants that we **knit**, **sithen** I came hither,
 by law.”
 The lord said, “By saint Gile
 Ye are the best that I know.
 Ye **ben** rich in a while
 Such **chaffer and** ye **drowe**.”

21

Then they **teldet** tables trestles **aloft**,
Kesten clothes upon. **Clear light** then
Wakened by **woghes**, waxen torches,
Segges set and served in **sale** all about.
 Much **glam** and glee **glent** up therein,
 About the fire **upon flet**, and **on fele wise**.
 At the supper and after, many **athel** songs,
 As **coundutes** of Christmas, and carols new,
 With all the mannerly mirth that men may of tell.
 And ever our **lovelike** knight the lady beside.
 Such **semblaunt** to that **segg seemly** she made,
 With **still stolen countenance**, that **stalworth** to please,
 That all **forwondered** was the **wighe**, and wroth with himself.
 But he **molde** not for his **nurture nurne** her **again**,
 But dealt with her all in **dainty**, howsoever the **deed** turned
 towrast.
 When they had played in hall
 As long as their will **hom** last,
 To chamber **he con** them call
 And to the **chimney** they passed.

22

And there they drank and **dalten**, **deemed eft** anew
 To **norne** on the same **note**, on New Year’s even.
 But the knight **craved** leave to **kayre** on the morn,
 For it was nigh **at** the **term** that he **to** should.
 The lord him **letted** of that, to **lenghe him resteyed**,
 And said, “As I am **true segge**, I **siker** my troth,
 That shall **cheve** to the Green Chapel, thy **charres** to **make**,
Lede, on New Year’s **light**, long before prime.⁸
Forthy thou lie in thy **loft**, and **latch** thine ease,

⁸ The hour of prime, or six a.m.

ratified | agreement | binding | truly
 knight | surely
 gains | to you | word
 clasped | lord | neck | courteously
 again immediately
 knight
 made | since

will be
 trade | if | carry on

set up | upon
 put | coverings | bright | lights
 kindled | walls
 men | hall
 merrymaking | sprang up
 in | the hall | in | many | ways
 noble
 traditional songs

gracious
 demeanor | knight | sweetly
 secret | stealthy | looks | stalwart man
 astonished | man
 could | good breeding | repel | in return
 courtesy | affair
 amiss

might
 the lord | did
 fireplace

talked | decided | again
 bargain | terms
 asked | depart
 upon | time | go
 dissuaded | stay | upon him | prevailed
 a faithful | man | pledge
 get | business | attend to
 knight | morning
 therefore | chamber | take

And I shall hunt in this **holt**, and **hold** the **towches**,
Change with the **chevisaunce**, **by that** I **charre** hither.
 For I have **fraysted** thee twice, and faithful I find ye.
 Now 'Third time proves best' **think** on the morn.
 Make we merry while we may, and **minne** upon joy,
 For the **lur** may man **latch**, when so man likes."
 This was **graiethely** granted, and Gawain is **lenged**.
Blithe brought was him drink, and they to bed **yeden**,
 with **light**.

Sir Gawain lies and sleeps,
 Full still and soft all night.
 The lord that his **crafts keeps**,
 Full early he was **dight**.

23

After mass a morsel he and his men took.
Merry was the morning; his **mounture** he **asks**.
 All the **hathels** that on horse **should helden** him after
 Were **boun busked** on their **blonks**, before the hall gates.
Ferly fair was the **fold**, for the frost **clenged**.
 In red, **rudede** upon **rack**, rises the sun,
 And full clear coasts the clouds of the **welkyn**.
 Hunters **unhardeled** by a **holt** side.
Rocheres rungen by **rys**, for **runde** of their horns.
 Some fell **in** the **fute**, where the fox **bade**.
 Trails oft a **traueres**, by **traunt** of their wiles.
 A **kenet** cries thereof; the **hunt** on him calls.
 His fellows fall him to, that **fnasted** full **pike**,
 Running forth in a rabble, in his **right fare**.
 And he **fiskes** them before; they found him **soon**.
 And when they saw him with sight, they **sued** him fast,
Wregande him full **weterly** with a **wroth** noise.
 And he **trantes** and **tornayes** through many **tene greve**,
Hamlounes and **hearkens**, by hedges full oft.
 At the last by a little ditch he leaps over a **spenné**,
 Steals out full **stilly** by a **strothe rande**,
Went have **wild of** the wood, with wiles from the hounds.
 Then was he **went**, ere he **wist**, to a **wale trister**.
 There three **thro at** a **thrich thrat** him at once,
 all **gray**.
 He **blenched** again **bilive**
 And **stiffly start onstray**.
 With all the woe on **live**,
 To the wood he went away.

forest | hold to | agreement
 exchange | for | winnings | with | which | return
 tested
 remember
 think
 sorrow | find
 promptly | made to stay
 cheerfully | went
 lights

affairs | attends to
 dressed

pleasant | mount | asks for
 men | were to | follow
 ready | mounted | horses
 wondrously | earth | clung
 fiery | clouds
 sky
 unleashed the hounds | wood
 rocky banks | rang | the woods | the noise
 to | trail | abode
 went from | side to side | dint
 small hound | hunter
 panted | hard
 very | track
 scampers | quickly
 pursued
 denouncing | loudly | fearsome
 dodges | doubles back | a rough | thicket
 waits | listens
 thorny hedge
 stealthily | thicket | edge
 hoped to | escaped | out of
 come | knew | fair | hunting station
 fierce hounds | in | rush | attacked
 greyhounds
 swerved | quickly
 boldly | started | away
 earth

24

Then was it **list** upon life to **listen** the hounds.
 When all the **mute** had him met, **menged** together,
 Such a **sorge** at that sight they set on his head,
 As all the **clamberande** cliffs had clattered **on** heaps.
 Here he was hallooed, when **hathels** him met.
 Loud he was **gained**, with **yarande** speech;
 There he was **threted**, and oft thief called,
 And **ay** the **titleres** at his tail, **that** tarry he **ne** might.
 Oft he was run at, when he **out rayked**,
 And oft **reeled** in again, so Reynard⁹ was wily.
 And yea he led them **by lagmon**, the lord and his **many**,
 On this manner by the **mounts**, **while mid-over-under**,
 While the **hende** knight at home **wholesomely** sleeps,
 Within the **comely** curtains, on the cold morn.
 But the lady for love **let** not to sleep,
 Nor the purpose to **pare**, that **pight** in her heart,
 But rose her up **radly**, **raiked her** thither
 In a **merry** mantle, **mete** to the earth,
 That was furred full fine with **felles**, well **pured**.
 No hues good on her head, but the **hager** stones
 Traced about her **tressour**, by twenty in clusters.
 Her **thriven** face and her throat **throwen** all naked,
 Her breast bare before, and **behind eke**.
 She comes within the chamber door, and closes it her after,
Waves up a window, and on the **wighe** calls,
 And **radly** thus **rehayted** him, with her **rich** words,
 with cheer:

“Ah, man, how may thou sleep?
 This morning is so clear!”
 He was in drowsing deep,
 But then he **con** her hear.

25

In **dreg** drooping of dream **daveled** that **noble**,
 As **man** that was **in mourning of** many **thro** thoughts:
How that destiny should that day deal him his **wyrde**,
 At the Green Chapel, when he the **gome** meets,
 And **behoves** his **buffet abide**, without debate more.
 But **when** that **comely** he **covered** his wits,
Swenges out of the **sweuens**, and **swares** with haste.
 The lady **lovelike** came **lagande sweet**,
Fell over his fair face, and **fetly** him kissed.
 He welcomes her **worthily**, with a **wale cheer**.

joy | listen to
 pack | joined
 curse
 as though | clustering | in
 men
 greeted | chiding
 reviled
 ever | relay hounds | so that | never
 in the open | came
 turned
 at | his heels | company
 hills | until | afternoon
 gracious | soundly
 fair
 allowed herself
 weaken | was fixed
 quickly | took | herself
 gay | reaching
 skins | trimmed
 well-wrought
 hair net
 fair | were
 her back | also

raises | man
 sternly | rebuked | noble

did

heavy | muttered | noble knight
 a man | beset | upon | by | oppressive
 the way | fate
 man
 must | blow | endure
 at the time | properly | recovered
 he comes suddenly | dreams | answers
 lovely | laughing | sweetly
 bent | daintily
 courteously | fair | manner

⁹ Reynard is a standard name for the fox in medieval stories.

He sees her so glorious and gayly attired,
 So faultless **of** her features, and of **so** fine **hues**.
 With **wallande** joy warmed his heart.
 With **smooth** smiling and **smolt** they **smeten** into mirth,
That all was bliss and **bonchef**, that **broke** them between,
 and **winne**.
 They **lanced** words good;
 Much **weal** then was therein.
 Great peril between them stood,
Nif Mary of her knight **minne**.

26

For that princess of **price** depressed him so **thick**,
Nurned him so nigh the **thread**, that **need** him behoved
Other latch there her love, **other** lodly refuse.
 He **cared** for his courtesy, lest **cretin** he **were**,
 And more for his **mischief**, if he should **make** sin,
 And be traitor to that **tulk**, that that **teld agt**.
 “God **shield**,” quoth the **schalk**. “That shall not befall!”
 With **love-laging** a **light**, he **laid** him **beside**
 All the speeches of **specialty** that sprang **of** her mouth.
 Quoth that **burde** to the **burne**, “Blame ye deserve,
Yif ye love not that life that ye lie **next**,
Before all the **wighes** in the world, wounded in heart,
But if ye have a **lemman**, a lover, that you likes better,
 And **folden** faith to that **free**, **fastened** so **hard**,
 That you **lausen ne list**, and that I **lieve nouthe**.
 And that ye tell me that, now truly I pray you,
 For all the loves upon **live**, **layne** not the **sooth**,
 for guile.”
 The knight said, “By Saint John,”
 And **smethely con** he smile.
 “In faith I **wield right** none,
 Nor none will **wield the** while.”

27

“That is a word,” quoth that **wight**, “That worst is of all.
 But I am **swared for sooth**, that **sore me thinks**.
 Kiss me now **comely**, and I shall **catch hethen**.
 I may not mourn upon **molde**, as **may** that much loves.”
Sykande she **swege** down and seemly him kissed.
 And **sithen** she **severs** him from and says as she stands,
 “Now, dear, at this departing, **do** me this **ease**:
 Give me **somewhat of** thy gift, thy glove if it were,
 That I may **minne** on thee, man, my mourning to lessen.”
 “Now **iwyssse**,” quoth that **wighe**, “I would I had here

in | such | colors
 welling
 courteous | gently | fell
 so that | happiness | was shared
 joy
 spoke
 delight

 unless | take care

great worth | pressed | hard
 urged | limit | it
 either | accept | or | rudely
 attended | to | a boor | seem
 own welfare | commit
 man | castle | owned
 forbid | knight
 playful | light laugh | set | aside
 fondness | from
 lady | man
 if | next to
 more than | women
 except | mistress
 have pledged | free woman | pledged | firmly
 break faith | do not | desire | believe | now

earth | hide | truth

gently | did
 have | at all
 have | for a

lady
 inclined | to | believe | painful | to me | seems
 graciously | go | hence
 the earth | may a woman
 sighing | bent
 then | departs
 give | consolation
 something | as
 think
 indeed | man

The **liefest** thing for thy love that I in land **wield**.
 For ye have deserved, **forsooth**, **sellily** oft
 More reward by **reason** than I **reach** might.
 But to **deal** you **for drurye** that **dawed** but **neked**.
 It is not your honour to have at this time
 A glove for a **garysoun**, of Gawain's gifts.
 And I am here **an errand** in **erdes uncouth**,
 And have no men with no **males**, with **menskful** things.
 That **mislikes** me, lady, for **love** at this time.
 Each **tulk** must do as he is **tan**, take **to** not ill,
 nor **pine**."

"Nay, **hende** of high honours,"
 Quoth that **lovesome** under **line**,
 "Though I had naught of yours,
 Yet should ye **have** of mine."

28

She **ragt** him a rich ring of red gold **works**,
 With a **starande** stone, **stondande aloft**,
 That **bere blushande** beams as the bright sun.
Wit ye well, it was worth **weal** full huge.
 But the **renk** it **renayed**, and readily he said,
 "I **will** no gifts for God, my **gay**, at this time.
 I have none you to **norne**, **ne** naught will I take."
 She **bede** it **him** full **busily**, and he her **bode wernes**,
 And **swere** swift by his **sooth**, that he **hit seize nolde**.
 And she **sore** that he **forsook**, and said thereafter,
 "If ye **renay** my ring, to **rich for** it seems,
Ye would not so **highly halden** be to me,
 I shall give you my girdle, that **gains** you less."
 She **lagt** a **lace lightly**, that **leke umbe** her sides,
Knit upon her **kirtle**, under the **clear** mantle.
Geared it was with green silk, and with gold **shaped**,
Naught but **around braiden**, **beten** with **fingers**.
 And that she **bede** to the burne, and **blithely besought**
 Though it unworthy were, that he **hit** take would.
 And he **nay** that he **nolde neghe** in no **wise**,
 Neither gold nor **garysoun**, ere God him grace send,
 To achieve **to** the **chaunce** that he had **chosen** there.
 "And therefore, I pray you, displease you naught,
 And **let be** your **business**, for I **baythe** it you never
 to **graunte**.

I am **dearly** to you **behold**,
 Because of your **semblaunt**,
 And ever **in hot and cold**
 To be your true **servaunt**."

best | have
 in truth | exceedingly
 right | provide
 give | as | a love token | would achieve | little

keepsake
 on a | mission | regions | strange
 bags | valuable
 displeases | your sake
 man | given | it
 grieve
 gracious man
 lovely lady | linen

have something

offered | workmanship
 blazing | set | on top
 cast | shining
 mark | a fortune
 knight | refused
 wish for | good lady
 offer | and
 offered | to him | earnestly | gift | refuses
 swore | honor | it | take | would not
 grieved | refused
 refuse | costly | because
 if you | deeply | indebted
 profits
 took | a belt | quickly | was fastened | around
 tied | gown | bright
 fashioned | trimmed
 nowhere | at the edges | embroidered | set | stones
 presented | cheerfully | asked
 it
 said | would not | touch it | way
 treasure
 success in | adventure | undertaken

leave | aside | urging | consent
 grant
 deeply | obliged
 behavior
 for | better | or | worse
 servant

29

“Now **forsake** ye this silk,” said the **burde** then,
 “**For** it is simple in itself? And so it well seems!
 Lo! So it is little, and less it is **worthy**;
 But whoso knew the **costs** that knit are therein,
 He would it **praise** at more **price**, peradventure.
 For **what gome** so is girt with this green lace,
 While he **hit** had **hemely halched** about,
 There is no **hathel** under heaven to **hew** him that might.
 For he might not be slain, **for slight** upon earth.”
 Then **kest** the knight, and it came to his **heart**,
 It **were** a **jewel for** the jeopardy, that **him iugged** were,
 When he achieved to the chapel, his **chek** for to **fetch**.
 Might he have **slipped** to be unslain, the **slegt** were noble.
 Then he **thulged** with her **threpe**, and **tholed** her to speak;
 And she **bere** on him the belt, and **bede** it him **swithe**
 (And he **granted**, and him **gafe** with a good will)
 And **besought** him, for her sake, **discover** it never,
 But to **lelly lain** from her lord. The **lede** him **accords**
 That never **wighe** should it **wit**, **iwyse**, but they twain,
 for **nogte**.
 He thanked her oft full **swithe**,
 Full **through** with heart and thought.
 By **that** on **thrinne sithe**,
Ho had kissed the knight so **togt**.

30

Then **latches ho** her leave, and leaves him there,
 For more **mirth of** that man might she not get.
 When she was gone, sir Gawain **geres** him **soon**,
 Rises, and **riches** him in array noble,
Lays up the lovelace, the lady him **ragt**,
 Hid **hit** full **holderly**, where he **hit eft fonde**.
Sithen chevely to the chapel **choses** he the way,
Prevely approached to a priest, and **prayed** him there
 That he would **list** his **lif**, and **learn** him better,
 How his soul should be saved, when he should **seye hethen**.
 There he **schrof** him **schirly**, and **showed** his misdeeds,
 Of the **more** and the **minne**, and mercy beseeches,
 And **of** absolution he on the **segge** calls.
 And he absolved him surely, and **sette** him so **clean**,
 As doomsday should have been **dight on** the morn.
 And **sithen** he makes him as merry among the **free** ladies,
 With **comely** carols and all **kinnes** joy,
 As never he did **but** that day, to the dark night,
 with bliss.

refuse | lady
 because
 of value
 virtues
 esteem | value
 whatever | man
 it | neatly | fastened
 man | slay
 by | any means
 pondered | mind
 would be | talisman | against | to him | assigned
 fortune | meet
 escaped | device
 was patient | insisting | allowed
 pressed | offered | earnestly
 consented | surrendered
 she implored | to reveal
 loyally | conceal it | knight | agrees
 anyone | know | indeed
 any reason
 heartily
 earnestly
 the time he did so | three | times
 she | brave

takes | she
 pleasure | from
 dresses | immediately
 clothes
 puts | away | had given
 it | carefully | it | again | might find
 then | quickly | finds
 privately | beseeched
 hear | confession | teach
 go | hence
 confessed | fully | recounted
 greater | lesser
 for | man
 made | pure
 appointed | for
 then | noble
 pleasant | kinds of
 except on

Each man had **dainty** there,
Of him, and said, "Iwysse,
Thus merry he was never ere,
Since he came hither, ere this."

31

Now **him lenge** in that **lee**, where love him **betides**.
Yet is the lord in the **land**, leading his games.
He has **forfaren** this fox, that he **folged** long.
As he **sprent** over a **spenné**, to spy the **shrew**
(Where as he heard the hounds that **hasted** him **swithe**,
Reynard came **richangde** through a rough **greve**,
And all the rabble in a rush, right at his heels),
The **wighe** was **ware** of the **wild**, and warily **abides**,
And **braides** out the bright **bronde**, and at the beast **casts**.
And he **shunt** for the **sharp**, and **should** have **arered**.
A **rach** rapes him to, **right ere** he might,
And right before the horse feet they fell on him all,
And worried he this **wily** with a wroth noise.
The lord **lights bilive**, and **latches** him **soon**,
Rased him full **radly** out of the **rach** mouths,
Holds high over his head, halloos **fast**,
And there bay at him many **brath** hounds.
Hunters hied them thither, with horns full many,
Ay rechatande aright till they the **renk segen**.
By **that** was come his company noble,
All that ever bore bugle blew at once,
And all the others hallooed, that had no horns.
It was the merriest **mute** that ever men heard,
The **rich rurd** that there was raised for Reynard's soul,
with **lote**.
Hor hounds they there reward;
Her heads they **fawn** and **frote**.
And **sithen** they take Reynard
And **tirven** off his coat.

32

And then they **helden** to home, for it was nigh night,
Strakande full **stoutly** on their **store** horns.
The lord is **light** at the last at his **lef** home,
Finds fire upon **flet**, the **freke** there beside,
Sir Gawain the good, that glad was withal.
Among the ladies for **love** he **ladde** much joy.
He wore a **bleaunt** of blue, that **bradde** to the earth.
His surcoat **seemed** him well, that soft was furred,
And his hood of that **ilk** hung on his shoulder.

courteous treatment
indeed

let him | stay | comfortable place | befalls
field
killed | pursued
leaped | thorny hedge | villain
harried | eagerly
making his way | thicket

man | aware | animal | waits
pulls | sword | strikes
swerved | because of | blade | would | retreated
hound | rushes | just | before

wily beast
dismounts | quickly | takes | right away
snatched | quickly | dogs'
holds him | loudly
fierce

always | blowing recall | correctly | lord | saw
that time

noise
great | outburst
clamor
their
their | stroke | rub
then
strip

turned
sounding | loudly | mightly
arrived | beloved
hall | knight

friendship | had
silk tunic | hung
suited
same material

Blande all of **blanner** were both all about.
He meets **me** this good man in **myddes** the floor,
 And all with **gomen** he him greets, and goodly he said,
 “I shall **fill** upon **first** our **forwards** now,
 That we **speedly** have **spoken**, when spared was no drink.”
 Then **acoles** he the knight, and kisses him thrice,
 As **sauerly** and **sadly** as he **hem set** could.
 “By Christ,” quoth that other knight, “ye **catch** much **sele**,
 In **chevisaunce** of this **chaffer**, if ye had **good cheaps**.”
 “Yea, of the **cheap no charge**,” quoth **cheffy** that other.
 “As is **pertly** paid the **cheaps** that I **agte**.”
 “Mary,” quoth that other man, “mine is **behind**.
 For I have hunted all this day, and naught have I gotten,
 But this foul fox **fell**, the Fiend take the goods.
 And that is full poor, for to pay for such **price** things,
 As ye have **pright** me here **thro**, such three kisses,
 so good.”
 “Enough,” quoth Sir Gawain.
 “I thank you, by the **rode**.”
 And how the fox was slain
 He told him, as they stood.

33

With mirth and minstrelsy, with **meats** at their **will**,
 They made as merry as any men might,
 With laughing of ladies, with **lotes** of **bordes**,
 Gawain and the good man so glad were they both,
But if the **douthe** had **doted**, **other** drunken been **other**.
 Both the men and the **many** made many **japes**,
 Till the **season** was **segen**, that they **sever** must;
Burnes to their bed **behoved** at the last.
 Then **logly** his leave of the lord first
Foches this **free** man, and **fair** he him thanks.
 “For such a **selly** sojourn, as I have had here,
 Your honour, at this high **fest**, the High King you **yield**!
 I **yef** you **me** for one of **yours**, if yourself likes
 (For I must needs, as ye **wot**, **meue** tomorn)
And ye me **take** some **tulk**, to teach, as ye **hight**,
 The **gate** to the Green Chapel, **as** God will me **suffer**
 To **deal**, on New Year’s day, the **dome** of my **wyrdes**.”
 “In good faith,” quoth the good man, “with a good will.
 All that ever I you **hight**, **halde** shall I **rede**.”
 There assigns he a servant, to set him on the way,
 And conduct him by the downs, that he no **drech** had,
 For to **ferk** through the **firth**, and **fare** in the **gaynest**,
 by **greve**.

adorned | with | ermine
 Gawain | him | the middle of
 joy
 fulfill | as the | agreement
 in good fortune | entered

 eagerly | firmly | the kisses | plant
 enjoy | good fortune
 receipt | merchandise | a good | bargain
 about | bargain | it is no | matter | quickly
 openly | goods | received
 inferior

 skin
 valuable
 bestowed upon | warmly

cross

food | pleasure

 words | jest

 as | company | lost their wits | or | else
 company | jests
 time | come | part
 men | had to go
 humbly
 takes | noble | courteously
 excellent
 festival | reward
 give | myself | your men
 know | leave
 if | assign | man | promised
 way | then | allow
 receive | outcome | fate

 promised | readily | grant

 delay
 travel | wood | proceed | shortest way
 the thicket

The lord Gawain **con thonk**;
 Such **worship** he would him **weave**.
 Then of the ladies **wlonk**,
 The knight has ta'en his leave.

34

With care and with kissing he **carps** them **till**.
 And **fele thryuande** thanks he **thrat** them to have;
 And they **yielden** him again **yeply that ilk**.
 They **bikende** him to Christ, with full **cold** sighs.
Sithen from the **many** he **menskly** departs.
 Each man that he met he gave him thanks,
 For his service, and his solace, and his **sere pine**,
 That they with **business** had been about him to serve.
 And each **segge** as **sore**, to **sever** with him there,
As they had **wonde worthily** with that **wlonk ever**.
 Then with **ledes** and lights he was led to his chamber,
 And **blithely** brought to his bed, to be at his rest.
 If he **ne** sleep soundly, say **ne** dare I,
 For he had much on the morn to **minne**, if he would,
 in thought.
 Let him lie there still;
 He has **near** what he sought.
And ye will a while be still;
 I shall tell you **how** they **wrought**.

Part IV

I

Now **nighs** the New Year, and the night passes.
 The day drives out the dark, as **Drighthen** bids.
 But wild **weathers** of the world **wakened** thereout.
 Clouds **kesten kenly** the cold to the earth,
 With **nighe** enough from the north, the **naked** to **tene**.
 The snow **snitered** full **snart**, that **snaythed** the wild.
 The **werbeland** wind **wrapped** from the **high**,
 And drove each dale full of drifts full great.
 The **lede** listened full well, that lay in his bed.
 Though he **locks** his lids, full little he sleeps.
 By each cock that crowed, he knew well the **steven**.
Deliverly he **dressed** up, ere the day **sprenged**,
 For there was light of a lamp, that **lemed** in his chamber.
 He called to his chamberlain, that **cofly** him **swared**,
 And bade him bring him his **bruny**, and his **blonk** saddle.
 That other **ferks** him up, and fetches him his **wedes**,
 And **grathes** him sir Gawain **upon a great wise**.

did | thank
 honor | show
 noble

speaks | with
 many | hearty | pressed
 returned | promptly | the | same
 commended | sad
 then | company | courteously

special | trouble
 care
 man was | pained | part
 as if | lived | honorably | noble man | always
 servants
 joyfully
 did not | so
 think about

nearby
 if
 what | did

draws nigh
 the Lord
 storms | arose
 cast | sharply
 bitterness | ill-clad | torment
 came | bitterly | nipped
 shrill-blowing | rushed | heights

knight
 shuts
 time
 quickly | got | broke
 shone
 promptly | answered
 mail coat | horse to
 gets | clothes
 dresses | in | splendid | manner

First he clad him in his clothes, the cold for to **were**,
 And **sithen** his other **harness**, that **holdely** was kept.
 Both his **paunce**, and his **plates**, **piked** full **clean**,
 The rings **rolled** of the rust, of his **rich bruny**.
 And all was **fresh** as **upon first**, and he was **fain** then
 to **thank**.
 He **hade upon** each piece
 Wiped full well and **wlonk**,
 The **gayest here** to Greece.
 The **burne bade** brought his **blonk**.

2

While the **wlonkest wedes** he **warp** on himself,
 His coat, with the **conysaunce** of the **clear works**,
Ennurned upon velvet **virtuous** stones,
 About **beten**, and **bounden**, emroidered seams,
 And **fair** furred within with fair **pelures**.
 Yet left he not the lace, the lady's gift:
 That forgot not Gawain, for good of himself.
By he had belted the **brond** upon his **balge haunches**,
 Then **dressed** his **drurye** double him about,
Swythe swethled umbe his **swange sweetly**, that knight,
 The girdle of the green silk, that **gay** well **beseemed**,
 Upon that royal red cloth, that **rich** was to show.
 But wore not this **ilk wighe** for **weal** this girdle,
 For pride of the pendants, that **tholyst** they were,
 And though the glittering gold **glent upon** ends,
 But for to save himself, when **suffer him behooved**,
 To **bide bale** without **debate** of **bronde** him to **were**,
other knife.
 By **that** the bold man **boun**,
Wynnes thereout **bilive**.
 All the **many** of renown
 He **thankez** oft full **rive**.

3

Then was Gringalet **graythe**, that great was and huge,
 And had been **sojourned saurely**, and in a **siker wise**.
Him list prik for **point**, that proud horse then.
 The **wighe wins** him to, and **wites** at his **lire**,
 And said soberly **himself**, and by his **sooth** swears,
 "Here is a **many** in this **moat**, that on **menske** thinks.
 The man them maintains, joy may they have.
 The **lief** lady, on life **love** her **betide**.
 If they for charity **cherisen** a guest,
 And hold honour in their hand, the Hathel them **yield**.

ward off
 then | armor | carefully
 stomach armor | armor plates | polished | bright
 rolled free | splendid | mail coat
 as clean | when | it was new | eager
 give thanks
 put | on
 lovely
 handsomest | from here
 knight | ordered | horse

noblest | clothes | put
 showing | excellent | workmanship
 set | potent
 set | adorned
 well | furs

when | sword | smooth | haunches
 bound | love-token
 quickly | wound | around | waist | happily
 the good knight | suited
 splendid
 same | man | show
 polished
 gleamed | at the
 submit | he | had to
 await | death | benefit | sword | defend
 or
 the time that | was ready
 he goes | quickly
 company
 thanks | much

prepared
 stabled | well | secure | way
 he | was ready to | gallop | all the resting
 man | goes | looks | coat
 to himself | word
 company | castle | courtesy

dear | all her | may regard | befall
 entertain
 Lord | reward

And if I might life upon **land** lead **any while**,
 I should **rech** you some reward readily, if I might.”
 Then stepped he into stirrup, and **strides** aloft.
 His **schalk showed** him his shield. On shoulder he it laid,
Gordes on Gringalet, with his gilt heels,
 And he **starts** on the stone; stood he no longer
 to prance.

His **hathel** on horse was then,
 That bore his spear and lance.
 “This castle to Christ I **ken**.
 He give it **ay** good **chance**!”

4

The bridge was **braide** down, and the broad gates
 Unbarred and **borne** open, upon both **halves**.
 The **burne** blessed him **bilive**, and the **bredes** passed,
 Praises the porter, **before** the prince kneeled,
Gave him God and good day, that Gawain he **save**,
 And went on his way, with his **wighe one**,
 That should teach him to **tourne** to that **tene** place,
 Where the **rueful race** he should receive.
 They **bogen** by banks, where **boges** are bare.
 They **clomben** by cliffs, where clings the cold.
 The **heaven** was up **halt**, but **ugly** thereunder.
 Mist **muged** on the moor, **malt** on the mountains.
 Each hill had a hat, a **mist-hakel** huge.
 Brooks boilded and **broke**, by banks about,
Schire shattering on shores, where they down **showed**.
Wela wille was the way, where they **by** wood **should** go,
 Till it was soon **season** that the sun rises,
 That **tide**.

They were on a hill full high;
 The white snow lay beside.
 The **burne** that rode him **by**
 Bade his master **abide**.

5

“**For** I have **wonnen** you hither, **wighe**, at this time.
 And now **nar** ye not far from that **note** place,
 That ye have **spied** and **spuryed to** specially after.
 But I shall **say** you for sooth, **sithen** I you know,
 And ye are a **lede** upon **life** that I well love:
 Would ye **worch by** my **wit**, ye **worthed** the better.
 The place that ye **prece** to, full perilous is **halden**.
 There **wones** a **wighe** in that waste, the worst upon earth.
 For he is **stiff**, and **sturne**, and to strike loves,

Earth | for any | length of time
 give
 mounts
 man | gave
 spurs
 springs forward

man

 commend
 ever | fortune

let
 laid | sides
 knight | crossed | quickly | planks | traversed
 who before
 wished | keep safe
 man | only
 go | perilous
 grievous | stroke
 traveled | branches
 climbed
 cloud layer | high | threatening
 drizzled | melted
 mist-cloak
 foamed
 brightly | dashing | pressed
 all | meandering | through the | must
 time
 time

man | with
 wait

now | brought | sir
 are not | noted
 sought | asked | very
 tell | since
 man | earth
 acted | on | advice | would fare
 hasten | considered
 dwells | man
 strong | grim

And **more** he is than any man upon middle-earth;
 And his body bigger than the best four
 That are in Arhthur's house, Hector **other** other.
 He **cheves that chaunce** at the Chapel Green
There passes none by that place, so proud in his arms
 That he **ne dinnes** him to death, with **dint** of his hand.
 For he is a man **methles**, and mercy none **uses**,
 For be it churl **other** chaplain that by the chapel rides,
 Monk **other** mass priest, **other** any man else,
Him think as **queme** him to **quell**, as **quick go** himself.
Forthy I say thee as sooth as ye in saddle sit:
 Come ye there, ye be killed, **may** the knight **rede**.
Trow ye **me** that truly, though ye had twenty lives
 to spend.
 He has **woned** here full **yore**.
 On **bent** much **baret bend**;
 Against his **dintez sore**
 Ye may not you defend."

6

"**Forthy**, good sir Gawain, let the **gome one**
 And go away **some** other **gate**, **upon** God's **half**.
Caires by some other **kith**, where Christ might you **speed**.
 And I shall hie me home again and **hete** you further,
 That I shall swear by God, and all his good **halghes**,
 As help me God and the **halydam**, and oaths enough,
 That I shall **lelly** you **layne**, and **lance** never tell,
 That ever ye **fondet** to flee, **for freke** that I **wist**."
 "Grant mercy," quoth Gawain, and **gruching** he said,
 "**Well worth thee, wighe**, that would'st my good,
 And that **lelly** me **layne**, I **lieve** well thou would'st!
Founded for **ferde** for to flee, in **form** that thou tellest,
 I were a knight coward; I might not be excused.
 But I **will** to the chapel, **for chance** that may **fall**,
 And **talk** with that **ilk tulk** the **tale** that **me list**,
Worth it weal **other** woe, as the **wirde likes**
 it have.
 Though he be a **sturn knape**
 To **stigtel** and stand with **stave**,
 Full well can **Drighthen shape**,
 His servants for to save."

7

"Mary!" quoth that other man, "Now thou so much **spell**
 That thou wilt thine own **nye nime** to thyself.
And thee list lose thy life, thee **lette** I **ne keep**."

greater

or

causes | to | occur

that there

does not | strike | blow

violent | shows

or

or | or

he | thinks it | pleasant | kill | alive | be

therefore

if | has his way

believe | of me

lived | long

battlefield | strife | caused

blows | harsh

therefore | man | alone

by some | path | for | sake

ride | land | protect

promise

saints

holy relics

faithfully | protect | the secret

decided | because of | any man | know

reluctantly

good | luck | to you | sir

faithfully | protect | believe

deciding | fear | the manner

will go | whatever | outcome | occur

exchange | same | man | words | I | wish

be | it for | or | fate | will

fearsome | fellow

deal with | club

God | bring about

as say

harm | take

if | you | wish to | hinder | do not | wish

Have here thy helm on thy head, thy spear in thy hand,
 And ride you down this **ilk rake**, by yon rock side,
 Till thou be brought to the bottom of the **breme** valley.
 Then look a little on the **launde**, on thy left hand,
 And thou shalt see in that **slade** the **self** chapel,
 And the **borelich burne** on **bent**, that it keeps.
 Now fare well **on** God's **half**, Gawain the noble.
 For all the gold upon **ground** I **no**ld go with ye,
 Nor **bear** thee **fellowship** through this **frith** one foot further."
By that the **wighe** in the wood **wends** his bridle,
 Hit the horse with the heels, as hard as he might,
 Leaps him over the **launde**, and leaves the knight there,
 all **one**.

"By God's self," quoth Gawain,
 "I will neither **grete** nor groan.
 To God's will I am full **bayn**,
 And to him I have me **tone**."

8

Then **girds** he to Gringalet and **geders** the **rake**,
Shoves in by a **shore** at a **schage** side,
 Rides **through** the rough **bank**, right to the dale.
 And then he **waited** him about, and wild it **him thought**;
 And saw no sign of **resette**, **besides** nowhere,
 But high banks and **brent**, upon both **halves**,
 And rough, **knokled knarres**, with **knorned** stones.
 The **skwez of** the **scowtes skayned him thought**.
 Then he **hoved**, and withheld his horse at that time,
 And oft changed his **chere**, the chapel to seek.
 He saw none such on no side, and **selly him thought**,
 Save a **little** on a **launde**, a **lawe** as it were:
 A **balz berg**, by a bank, the **brim** beside,
 By a fork of a **flood**, that **ferked** there.
 The **borne** bubbled therein **as** it boiled had.
 The knight **catches** his **caple** and comes to the **lawe**,
Lights down **lovelily**, and at a **lind taches**
 The reins and his **rich**, on a rough branch.
 Then he **boges** to the **berg**. About it he walks,
 Debating with himself what it be might.
 It had a hole at the end, and on either side,
 And overgrown with grass in **glodes anywhere**,
 And all was hollow within, **nobot** an old cave,
 Or a **crevice** of an old crag, he could it **naught deem**
 with spell.

"**We**, Lord," quoth the gentle knight,
 "Whether this be the Green Chapel?

take
 same | path
 wild
 glade
 valley | same
 strong | man | battlefield
 for | sake
 the earth | would not
 keep | company | wood
 with | man | turns

field
 alone

weep
 obedient
 committed

puts the spurs | starts down | path
 makes his way | hillside | small wood
 over | slope
 looked | to him | seemed
 shelter | about there
 steep | sides
 rugged | crags | gnarled
 clouds | by | rocks | were touched | it | seemed
 halted
 viewpoint
 a strange thing | to him | it seemed
 little way off | field | mound
 smoothly rounded | barrow | water's edge
 stream | ran
 stream | as if
 urges on | horse | mound
 gets | quickly | tree | fastens
 noble steed
 goes | mound

patches | everywhere
 nothing but
 fissure | not | judge
 words
 alas

Here might about midnight
The Devil his matins tell!”

9

“Now **iwyss**,” quoth **Wowain**, “**wisty** is here.
This **oritory** is ugly, with **erbes** overgrown.
Well **beseems** the **wighe wruxled** in green
Deal here his devotion, in the Devil’s **wise**.
Now I feel it is the Fiend, in my five wits,
That has **stoken** me this **steven**, to **strye** me here.
This is a chapel of **mischance**; that **check** it **betides**.
It is the **corsedest kirk** that ever I came in!”
With high helm on his head, his lance in his hand,
He roams up to the roof of the rough **wones**.
Then heard he from that hill, in a hard rock,
Beyond the brook, in a bank, a **wonder breme** noise.
What! It clattered in the cliff, as it cleave would,
As one upon a **grindelstone** had ground a scythe.
What! It whirled and **whette**, as water at a mill.
What! It rushed, and rang, **rawthe** to hear.
Then “By God,” quoth Gawawin, “that **gear** as I **trowe**
Is **riched at the reverence**, me, **renk**, to meet,
by **rote**.
Let God **worche** ‘We loo’;
Hit helps me not a **mote**.
My life though I **foregoo**
Dread **dotz** me no **lote**.”

10

Then the knight **con** call full **high**,
“Who **stigtles** in this **stead**, my **steven** to **hold**?
For now is good Gawain **going** right here.
If any **wigh aught will**, **winne** hither fast,
Other now **other** never, his **needs** to **speed**.”
“Abide,” quoth one on the bank, above over his head,
“And thou shalt have all in haste that I thee **hight** once.”
Yet he **rushed** with that **surde**, **rapely** in **throwe**,
And with whetting **a-wharf**, ere he would **light**.
And **sithen** he **kevers** by a crag, and comes **of** a hole,
Whirling out of a **wro**, with a fell weapon,
A Danish ax new **dight**, the **dint** with to **yield**,
With a **borelich bit**, **bent** to the **halme**,
Filed on a **fylor**, four foot large.
It was no less, **by** that **lace** that **lemed** full bright.
And the **gome** in the green **geared as** first,
Both the **lire** and the legs, locks and beard,

indeed | Gawain | desolate it
chapel | weeds
it suits | man | clad
to perform | manner

imposed on | appointment | destroy
ill fortune | omen | signifies
most accursed | church

dwelling

wondrously | loud
lo
grindstone
lo | ground
horrible
behavior | believe
prepared | out | of | respect | the knight
as is | proper
say
it | bit
forego
makes | noise

did | loudly
rules | place | appointment | keep
present
person | anything | wishes | let him come
either | or | business | conduct

promised
still | continued | noise | quickly | time
turned aside | come down
then | makes his way | out of
nook
made | blow | repay
massive | blade | curved | shaft
sharpened | grindstone
measured by | thong | shone
man | was dressed | as at
face

Save that **faire** on his foot he **foundez** on the earth,
 Set the steel to the **stone**, and stalked beside.
 When he **wan** to the water, there he wade **molde**.
 He **hipped** over on his ax and **orpedly** strides
Bremly brothe on a **bent**, that broad was about,
 on snow.

Sir Gawain the knight did meet,
 He **ne lutte** him nothing low.
 That other said, "Now, sir sweet,
Of steven man may thee **trow**."

11

"Gawain," quoth that green **gome**, "God thee **mot look**!
Iwysse thou art welcome, **wighe**, to my place.
 And thou hast timed thy **travail** as **true** man should;
 And thou knowest the covenants **kest** us between:
 At this time twelvemonth thou **took** what **thee falled**,
 And I should at this New Year **yePLY** thee **quite**.
 And we are in this valley, verily **our one**.
 Here are no **renkes** us to **ride**, **rele** as **us likes**.
Have thy helm off thy head, and have here thy pay.
Busk no more **debate** than I thee **bede** then,
 When thou **wipped** off my head at a **wap one**."
 "Nay, by God," quoth Gawain. "That me **ghost lante**.
 I shall **gruch** thee no **grwe**, for **grem** that **falls**.
 But **stigtel** thee **upon** one stroke, and I shall stand still,
 And **warp** thee no **werning**, to **worch** as thee likes,
 no where."

He leaned with the neck and **lutte**
 And showed that **schire** all bare
 And **let as** he naught **dutte**:
 For dread he would not **dare**.

12

Then the **gome** in the green **graythed him swythe**,
 Gathers up his grim **tole**, Gawain to smite.
 With all the **bur** in his body he bore it aloft,
Munt as mightily as **marre** him he would.
 Had it driven **adown**, as **dreg** as he **atled**,
 He had been dead of his **dint**, that doughty was ever.
 But Gawain on that **giserne glifte** him **beside**
 As it came gliding adown, on **glode** him to **schende**,
 And shrank a little with the shoulders, **for** the sharp iron.
 That other **schalk** with a **shunt** the **schene** withholds.
 And then reproved he the prince with many proud words:
 "Thou art not Gawain," quoth the gome, "that is so good **halden**,

firmly | walked
 ground
 came | would not
 vaulted | boldly
 fiercely | grim | field

did not | bow

as to | appointments | one | trust

man | may | guard
 indeed | sir
 journey | a true
 made
 accepted | to thee | befell
 promptly | repay
 by | ourselves
 men | separate | we may fight | we | like
 take
 make | resistance | offered
 struck | blow | single
 soul | gave
 bear | grudge | harm | occurs
 limit | to
 offer | resistance | do
 in no | case
 bent down
 flesh
 let on | as if | feared
 recoil

man | prepared | himself | quickly
 weapon
 strength
 mightily | destroy
 down | fiercely | intended
 blow
 battleax | glanced | sideways
 the ground | destroy
 for fear of
 man | jerk | bright blade
 considered

That never **arged** for no **here**, by hill nor by vale,
 And now thou **fles** for **ferde**, ere thou feel harms.
 Such cowardice of that knight could I never hear.
 Neither **fiked** I, nor fled, **freke**, when thou **mintest**,
 Nor **cast** no **cavellation**, in king's house Arthur,
 My head flew to my foot, and yet flew I never.
 And thou, ere any harm **hent**, **arges** in heart.
 Wherefore the better **burne me burde** be called
 therefore."

Quoth Gawain, "I **shunt ones**,
 And so will I no more.
 But though my head fall on the stones,
 I can not it restore.

13

"But **busk**, **burne**, by thy faith, and bring me to the **point**.
 Deal to me my destiny, and do it out of hand.
 For I shall **stand** thee a stroke, and **start** no more,
 Till thine ax has me hit, **have** here my **troth**."
 "Have at thee then," quoth that other, and heaves it aloft,
 And **waits** as **wrothly** as he **wode** were.
 He **mintes** at him mightily, but not the man **rines**:
 Withheld **heterly** his hand, ere it hurt might.
 Gawain **grathely** it **bides**, and **glent** with no **member**,
 But stood stilly as the stone, **other** a stump either,
 That **ratheled** is in rocky ground, with roots a hundred.
 Then merrily **efte** did he **mele**, the man in the green,
 "So now thou hast thy heart whole, **hit** me behoves.
Halde thee now the high **hode**, that Arthur thee **ragt**,
 And **keep** thy **kanel** from this **kest**, if it **keuer** may."
 Gawain full **gryndelly** with **greme** then said,
 "Ah! Press on, thou **thro** man, thou threat'nest too long.
 I **hope** that thy heart **arge** for thine own self."
 "For sooth," quoth that other **frekke**. "So **felly** thou speak'st,
 I will no longer in **lite lette** thine **ernde**,
 right now."

Then takes he him **strithe** to strike
 And frowns both lip and brow.
 No marvel that him **mislike**
 That hoped of no **rescow**.

14

He lifts **lightly** his **lome** and lets it down fair,
 With the **barb** of the **bit** by the bare neck.
 Though he **homed** **heterly**, hurt him no more,
 But **snirt** him on that one side, **that severed** the **hide**.

feared | army
 flinch | fear

flinched | fled | struck
 raised | objection

occurred | shrinks
 man | I | ought to

flinced | once

hurry | man | end

take from | cringe
 take | word

looks | fiercely | as if | mad
 feints | touches

suddenly
 duly | awaits | flinched | limb
 or

entwined
 again | speak
 to strike
 may protect | order of knighthood | gave
 protect | neck | blow | manage
 fiercely | anger

fierce
 believe | fears
 man | fiercely
 delay | hinder | mission

stance

displeased
 rescue

quickly | weapon
 edge | blade
 struck | fiercely
 nicked | so that | was cut | skin

The **sharp shrank** to the flesh through the **schire grease**,
That the **schene** blood over his shoulders shot to the earth.
 And when the **burne** saw the blood **blenk** on the snow,
 He **sprit** forth **spenne foot** more than a spear length,
Hent heterly his helm, and on his head **cast**,
Shot with this sholders his fair shield **under**,
Braides out a bright sword, and **bremely** he speaks.
 Never since **that** he was **burne** born of his mother
 Was he never in this world **wighe** half so **blythe**.
 “**Blinne**, burne, from thy **bur**, **bede** me no more.
 I have a stroke in this **stead** without **strife hent**,
 And if thou **rechest** me any more, I readily shall **quite**,
 And **yield yederly** again, and thereto ye trust,
 and **foo**.

But one stroke here me **falls**
 The covenant **schop** right so,
Fermed in Arthur’s halls.
 And therefore, **hende**, now **hoo!**”

15

The hathel **heldet** him from, and on his ax rested,
 Set the shaft upon **shore**, and on the **sharp** leaned,
 And looked at the **lede**, that on the **land yede**,
 How that **doughty** dreadless **dervely** there stands,
 Armed full **agtez**; in heart it him **likes**.
 Then he **meles** merrily, with a **much steven**,
 And with a **rykande rurde** he to the **renk** said,
 “**Bold burne**, on this **bent** be not so **gryndel**.
 No man here unmannerly thee **misboden** has,
 Nor **kyd** but as covenanted, at king’s court **shaped**.
I hight thee a stroke, and thou it hast. **Halde** thee well paid.
 I release thee of the remnant, of **rights** all other.
 If I **deliver** had been, a **buffet paraunter**
 I could **wrotheloker** have **waret**, to thee have **wrought anger**.
 First I **mansed** thee **merrily**, with a **mint one**,
 And **rove** thee with no **rofsore with** right I thee proffered,
For the **forward** that we **fest** in the first night.
 And thou **tristily** the **troth** and truly **me heldest**.
 All the **gain** thou me gave, as **good** man should.
 That other **munt** for the morn, man, I thee proffered.
 Thou kissedest my **clear** wife, the kisses me **ragtest**.
 For both two here I thee **bede** but two **bare mints**,
bout scathe.
 True man **true** restore,
 Then there man **dread** no **wathe**.
 At the third thou failed **thore**,

sharp blade | cut | fair | tissue
 so that | bright
 knight | gleam
 leaped | feet | together
 seized | quickly | put it
 tossed | in front
 pulls | fiercely
 the time that | man
 a man | happy
 desist | blows | offer
 way | resistance | received
 givest | repay
 reply | promptly
 fiercely
 befalls
 said
 confirmed
 sir | stop

turned
 the ground | sharp ax
 knight | field | stood
 doughty man | boldly
 undaunted | pleases
 speaks | loud | voice
 ringing | sound | knight
 man | field | fierce
 ill used
 behaved | agreed
 promised | consider
 claims
 nimbler | blow | perhaps
 more harshly | dealt | done | harm
 threatened | in jest | feint | single
 rent | wound | which by
 according to | agreement | made
 faithfully | compact | with me | have kept
 profit | a good
 feint
 fair | gavest
 offered | mere | feints
 without | harm
 must honestly
 need fear | danger
 there

And therefore that tap **ta'** thee.

16

“For it is my **wede** that thou wearest, that **ilk** woven girdle.
 Mine own wife it thee wove, I **wot** well for sooth.
 Now know I well thy kisses, and thy **costes** also,
 And the wooing of my wife; I **wrought** it myself.
 I sent her to **assay** thee, and soothly **me thinks**,
One the **fautlest freke**, that ever on foot **yede**.
 As a pearl than the white pea is of **price** more,
 So is Gawain, in good faith, than other gay knights.
 But here you lacked a little, sir, and **lewte** you wanted;
 But that was for no **wilide** work, nor wooing neither,
 But **for** ye loved your life; thee less I you blame.”
 That other **stiff** man in study stood a great while,
 So aggrieved for **greme** he **gried** within.
 All the blood of his breast **blent** to his face,
That all he shrank for shame **what** the **schalk** talked.
 The first word upon **folde** that the **freke** **meled**:
 “Cursed **worth** cowardice and **covetise** both!
 In you is villainy and vice, that virtue destroys.”
 Then he **kagt to** the knot, and the **kest** loosens,
Braide **brothely** the belt to the **burne selven**:
 “Lo! There the **falsing**, **foul** may it **fall**!
 For **care** of thy **knock** cowardice me taught
 To accord me with **covetise**, my kind to forsake,
 That is **largesse** and **lewte**, that **longes** to knights.
 Now am I faulty and false, and **feared** have been ever
 Of treachery and **untruth**: both **betide** **sorge**
 and care!

I **biknowe** you, knight, here **still**:
 All faulty is my **fare**.
 Let me **overtake** your will,
 And **eft** I shall be **ware**.”

17

Then laughed that other **lede**, and **lovely** said,
 “I **hold** it **hardily** whole, the harm that I had.
 Thou art confessed so **clean**, **beknownen** of thy **misses**,
 And hast the penance **apert** at the point of mine **edge**.
 I hold thee **polysed** of that **plight**, and **pured** as clean,
 As thou hadst never **forfeited**, **sithen** thou wast first born.
 And I give thee, sir, the girdle that is gold hemmed.
For it is green as my gown, sir Gawain, ye may
 Think upon this **ilk threpe**, where thou forth **thringest**
 Among princes of **price**; and **this** a **pure** token

take

garment | same
 know
 conduct
 set it up
 test | I | think you are
 one of | most faultless | men | went
 value

loyalty
 treacherous
 because
 strong
 grief | shuddered
 went
 as | entirely | at what | man | had said
 earth | knight | uttered
 be | greed

took hold | of | fastening
 flung | angrily | man | himself
 faith-breaking | ill luck | befall
 fear | blow
 greed
 generosity | loyalty | belongs
 afraid
 disloyalty | bring | sorrow

confess to | privately
 behavior
 do
 afterwards | on guard

man | pleasantly
 consider | completely made
 cleanly | absolved | faults
 paid | sword
 absolved | offense | purified
 as if | sinned | since
 as
 same | contest | ridest
 high worth | this may be | excellent

Of the **chance** of the Green Chapel, with chivalrous knights.
 And ye shall in this New Year **again** to my **wones**,
 And we shall **revel** the remnant of this **rich fest**,
 full **bene**."

There **lathed** him **fast** the lord
 And said, "With my wife, I ween,
 We shall you well **accord**,
 That was your enemy keen."

18

"Nay, for sooth," quoth the **segge**, and seized his helm,
 And **has** it off **hendely**, and the **hathel** thanks.
 "I have **sojourned sadly**. **Sele** you **betide**,
 And He **yield** it you **yare**, that **yarkkes** all **menskes**!
 And commend me to that **courteous**, your comely **fair**,
 Both that one and that other, mine honoured ladies,
 That thus their knight with their **kest** have **koyntly** beguiled.
 But it is no **ferly though** a fool made,
 And through wiles of women be **wonen** to sorrow.
 For so was Adam on earth with one beguiled,
 And Solomon with **fele sere**, and Samson **eft sones**.
 Delilah dealt him his **wirde**, and David thereafter
 Was **blended** by Bathsheba, **that** much **bale tholed**.
Now these were **wrathed** by their wiles, it were a **win** huge
 To love them well, and leave them not, **a lede** that could.
 For these were **forne** the **freest** that **folged** all the **sele**,
 Excellently **of** all the others, under **heaven-rich**,
 that **mused**;
 And all they were **be-wiled**,
 With women that they **used**.
 Though I be now beguiled,
Me think **me burde** be excused."

19

"But **your** girdle," quoth Gawain, "God you **foryield**!
 That will I **wield** with good will, not for the **winne** gold,
 Nor the **saint**, nor the silk, nor the side pendants;
 For wealth, not for **worship**, nor for the **wlonk works**,
 But **in** sign of my **surfet** I shall see it oft,
 When I ride in renown, **remorse** to myself
 The fault and the frailty of the flesh **crabbed**,
 How **tender** it is to entice **teches** of **filth**.
 And thus, when pride shall me prick, for prowess of arms,
 A look at this lovelace shall **lethe** my heart.
 But **one** I would you pray, **displeases** you never.
 Since ye be lord of the yonder land, where I have **lent** in,

adventure
 come again | house
 celebrate | noble | festival
 pleasantly
 invited | earnestly

reconcile

takes | courteously | man
 stayed | long enough | may joy | befall
 give | fully | grants | honors
 courteous lady | fair wife

trickery | cleverly
 wonder | though to be
 brought

many | various ones | in the same | way
 fate
 deluded | he who | misery | suffered
 since | brought to grief | gain
 were there a | man
 of old | noblest | achieved | success
 above | heaven
 lived
 ruined
 dealt with

I | I | ought to

for your | reward
 wear | delightful
 belt
 honor | lovely | workmanship
 as a sign | misdeed
 remember in remorse
 perverse
 easy | spots | sin

humble
 one thing | may it displease
 stayed

With you with **worship** — the **Wighe it** you **yield**
 That **upholds** the heaven and on high sits —
 How **norne** ye your right name, and **then** no more?”
 “That shall I tell ye truly,” quoth that other then.
 “Bertilak de Hautdesert I **hat** in this land,
 Through **might** of Morgan le Fay, that in my house **lenges**,
 And **koyntyse** of **clergy**, by crafts well learned,
 The **maystres** of Merlin, many has taken.
 For she has **dealt drawry** full **dear some** time
 With that **conable clerk**, that knows all your knights
 at **hame**.

Morgan the goddess

Therefore it is her name.

Weldez none **so** high **hawtesse**

That she cannot make full tame.

20

“She **wayned** me in this **wise** to your **winne** hall
 For to **assay** the **surquidre**, if it sooth were,
 That **rennes** of the great renown of the Round Table.
 She **wayned** me this wonder, your wits to **reve**,
 For to have grieved Guinevere and **gart** her to die
 For **glothing** of that **ilk gomen**, that ghostly spoke,
 With his head in his hand before the high table.
 That is she that is at home, the ancient lady;
 She is even thine aunt, Arthur’s half sister,
 The duchess’s daughter of Tintagelle, that dear Uther **after**
 Had Arthur upon, that **athel** is now.
 Therefore I **ethe** thee, **hathel**, to come to thine aunt,
 Make merry in my house; my **many** thee loves.
 And I will thee as well, **wighe**, by my faith,
 As any **gome** under God, for thy great **troth**.”
 And he **nicked** him nay, he **noide** in no way.
 They **acolen** and **kissen**, and **kennen** either other
 To the prince of paradise, and parted right there,
 on **cold**.

Gawain on **blonk** full **bene**

To the king’s **burg busks** bold.

And the knight in the **enker** green

Wither-ward wherever he **wold**.

21

Wild ways in the world **Woven** now rides
 On Gringalet, that the **grace** had **geten** of his life.
 Oft he **harbored** in house, and oft all **thereout**;
 And **many** adventures in vales, and vanquished oft,

honor | Lord | for it | reward

rules

say | then I ask

am called

the power | dwells

skill | magical knowledge

arts

has had | a love affair | passionate | at one

excellent | wizard

home

there is | of such | pride

sent | manner | splendid

test | fame

exists

sent | befuddle

caused

fear | same | man

afterward

renowned

entreat | knight

household

sir

man | faithfulness

said to | would not

embrace | kissed | commended

cold ground

steed | fine

city | hastens

bright

goes forth | would

Gawain

gift | received

stayed | outdoors

he had many

That I **ne tight**, at this time, in tale to **remene**.
 The hurt was whole, that he had **hent** in his neck,
 And the **blikkande** belt he bore thereabout,
Abelef as a baldric, **bounden** by his side,
Locked under his left arm, the lace, with a knot,
In tokening he was **tane** in **tech** of a fault;
 And thus the comes to the court, knight all in **sound**.
 There **wakened weal** in that **wone**, when **wist** he **great**,
 That good Gawain was come. **Gain** it **him thought**.
 The king kisses the knight, and the queen also.
 And **sithen** many **siker** knights, that sought him to hail,
 Of his **fare** that him **frayned**; and **ferlily** he tells,
Biknowez alle the **costes** of **care** that he had:
 The **chance** of the chapel, the **cheer** of the knight,
 The love of the lady, the lace at the last.
 The **nirt** in the neck he naked them showed,
 That he **lagt** for his **unleute** at the **lede's** hands,
 for blame.
 He **tened** when he should tell;
 He groaned for grief and **grame**.
 The blood in his face did **melle**
 When he it should show, for shame.

22

“Lo! Lord,” quoth the **lede**, and the lace handled,
 “This is the **bend** of this blame I bear in my neck.
 This is the **lathe** and the loss, that I **lagt** have,
 Of cowardice and **covetise**, that I have **cagt** there.
 This is the token of **untruth**, that I am ta'en in,
 And I must needs it wear, while I may last.
 For man may hide his harm, but **unhap ne** may **hit**,
 For where it once is attached, **twinne** will it never.”
 The king comforts the knight, and all the court also,
 Laughed loud thereat, and **lovelily accords**,
 That lords and ladies that **longed** to the Table,
 Each **burne** of the brotherhood a baldric should have,
 A band, **abelef** him about, of a bright green,
 And that, for sake of that **segge**, in **sweet** to wear.
 For that was **accorded** the renown of the Round Table,
 And he honoured that it had, evermore after,
 As it is **breved** in the best book of romance.
 Thus in Arthur's day this **aunter betide**,
 The Brutus books thereof bears witness.
Sithen Brutus, the bold **burne**, **boged** hither first,
 After the siege and the assault was ceased at Troy,
 Iwysse.

do not | intend | recount
 received
 shining
 across | fastened
 secured
 as a | sign | found guilty | commission
 good health
 arose | joy | castle | learned | the great king
 a good thing | to him | it seemed

then | brave
 journey | asked | of marvels
 relates | experiences | hardship
 adventure | behavior

hurt
 received | disloyalty | man's

was pained
 embarrassment
 rush

knight
 cause
 injury | received
 greed | acquired
 unfaithfulness

remove | never | it
 go away

graciously | agrees
 belonged
 man
 wrapped
 knight | similar fashion
 granted for

told
 adventure | occurred

since | warrior | came

indeed

Many **aunterez** here **beforne**
 Have **fallen such** ere **this**.
 Now **that** bore the crown of thorn,
He bring us to his bliss!

strange events | before
 occurred | like this | now
 he that
 may he

Amen.

Hony Soyt Qui Mal Pence.¹⁰

Notes on the Adaptation

Modernizing the text: My adaptation uses a word-by-word approach. This approach is possible because, after adjusting for outdated spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, Late Middle English is not that far from the Early Modern English of Shakespeare. That form of English is archaic, but largely comprehensible, to modern ears.

Starting with the original text, I have modernized each word as much as possible without, in my judgment, disrupting the way that the sound of the word contributes to the poem. In most lines, the important sounds are the initial consonants, the number of syllables, and the emphasized syllables. In the final five lines of each stanza (the “bob and wheel”), the final syllables have rhyming sounds, which I have attempted to preserve.

In most cases, the result is a modern English word,¹¹ which I have rendered in Roman text. The two remaining cases are (1) the result is “modern-looking,” i.e., it looks like a modern English word, but its meaning is unfamiliar; and (2) the result is unlike any modern English word. In each of cases (1) and (2) I have rendered the word in bold face and provided a gloss in the margin.

Where I could find an alternate spelling for a Middle English word that is closer to modern English, I have used the alternate spelling. For example, I have rendered *leue* as *lief* and *welde* or *weld* as *wield*. This approach increases the number of modern and modern-looking words in the text, so it aids both comprehension and pronunciation.

In some cases I have retained an older spelling for a word with a modern equivalent where doing this seemed necessary to preserve the rhyme. For example, in I.11, pronouncing *courtesy* in the modern way would disrupt the rhyme, so I kept the spelling *courtasye* with the intent that it be pronounced *KUR-tes-eye*.

Pronouncing the text: Middle English pronunciation is very different from modern English pronunciation. For example, in Middle English pronunciation, the word *mete* would be pronounced like the modern English word *mate*, and the word *mite* would be pronounced like the modern English word *mete*.¹²

In the adapted text, modern and modern-looking words should obviously be pronounced in the modern way. It is less clear how to pronounce words that are unfamiliar to modern English speakers. In general, I suggest pronouncing these as if they were modern English words, as one does for the nonsense words in poems by Lewis Carroll and Dr. Seuss. For words of French derivation (e.g., *bobbaunce*), a French pronunciation seems appropriate. Because much of modern English pronunciation is essentially arbitrary, it does not seem possible to settle on a single “correct” pronunciation of these words. However, it should be possible to pick a pronunciation and use it to render the modernized text in a pleasing way. By doing this, modern English speakers can appreciate both the sound and the sense of the original poem without learning Middle English vocabulary and pronunciation.

¹⁰ Shamed be the one who thinks evil of it.

¹¹ That is, a word that can be found in a standard dictionary of contemporary English, even if it is obscure or archaic.

¹² This change is called the Great Vowel Shift. In general the sounds associated with the long e and long i shifted from what they were in Latin (ay and ee) to what they are now (ee and eye).

I am working on a recording of the text. What I have done so far is available here:

<https://rob-bocchino.net/Professional/Diversions.html>

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